

**George Peele's
Complete Plays:
Retellings**

David Bruce

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In this retelling, as in all my retellings, I have tried to make the work of literature accessible to modern readers who may lack some of the knowledge about mythology, religion, and history that the literary work's contemporary audience had.

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**Dedicated to Carl Eugene Bruce and Josephine
Saturday Bruce**

My father, Carl Eugene Bruce, died on 24 October 2013. He used to work for Ohio Power, and at one time, his job was to shut off the electricity of people who had not paid their bills. He sometimes would find a home with an impoverished mother and some children. Instead of shutting off their electricity, he would tell the mother that she needed to pay her bill or soon her electricity would be shut off. He would write on a form that no one was home when he stopped by because if no one was home he did not have to shut off their electricity.

The best good deed that anyone ever did for my father occurred after a storm that knocked down many power lines. He and other linemen worked long hours and got wet and cold. Their feet were freezing because water got into their boots and soaked their socks. Fortunately, a kind woman gave my father and the other linemen dry socks to wear.

My mother, Josephine Saturday Bruce, died on 14 June 2003. She used to work at a store that sold clothing. One day, an impoverished mother with a baby clothed in rags walked into the store and started shoplifting in an interesting way: The mother took the rags off her baby and dressed the infant in new clothing. My mother knew that this mother could not afford to buy the clothing, but she helped the mother dress her baby and then she watched as the mother walked out of the store without paying.

My mother and my father both died at 7:40 p.m.

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THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

The Olympian Gods and Goddesses

Jupiter, king of all the gods. He is often called Jove.

Juno, queen of the gods.

Apollo, god of music, medicine, and the Sun.

Bacchus, god of wine and revelry.

Diana, goddess of hunting and chastity. An alternate name for Diana is Phoebe.

Mars, god of war.

Mercury, Jupiter's messenger.

Neptune, ruler of the seas.

Pallas, goddess of war and wisdom. Pallas is Pallas Athena, whose Roman name is Minerva.

Pluto, ruler of the underworld: the Land of the Dead. Pluto is also known as Dis.

Venus, goddess of beauty and sexual passion.

Vulcan, the blacksmith god.

Minor Gods and Goddesses

Pan, god of flocks and herdsman.

Faunus, god of fields.

Silvanus, god of forests.

Saturn, god of agriculture.

Pomona, goddess of orchards and gardens.

Flora, goddess of flowers and gardens.

Até, goddess of discord.

Clotho, one of the Fates. She spins the thread of life.

Lachesis, one of the Fates. She measures the thread of life.

Atropos, one of the Fates. She cuts the thread of life. When a person's thread of life is cut, the person dies.

The Muses, protectors of the arts.

A *Nymph* of Diana.

Rhanis, a nymph.

Mortals

Paris, a shepherd, son of King Priam of Troy.

Colin, a shepherd.

Hobbinol, a shepherd.

Diggon, a shepherd.

Thenot, a shepherd.

Oenone, a nymph, at one time beloved by Paris.

Helen, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta. The most beautiful woman in the world.

Thestylis, a mortal woman beloved by Colin.

Cupids, Cyclopes (plural), Shepherds, Knights, etc.

Setting

The valleys and woods of Mount Ida, near Troy, in Asia Minor.

Notes

In this culture, the word “wench” was not necessarily used negatively. It was often used affectionately.

A nymph is a nature spirit who looks like a beautiful young woman. They live in natural settings such as woods.

In George Peele’s play, Até is confused with her mother, Eris, the goddess of strife. It was Eris who brought the golden ball (aka the golden apple) to the wedding of the mortal Peleus and the nymph Thetis, parents of Achilles, and caused strife.

The cover photograph shows a red apple, but Até’s apple was golden.

George Peele’s play concerns the Judgment of Paris, in which Paris, Prince of Troy, judges a beauty contest among three goddesses: Venus, Juno, and Pallas. He chooses Venus, causing Juno and Pallas to accuse him of bias, an accusation that leads to him being put on trial and judged by some male gods.

After the play concludes, Paris travels to Sparta, from which he runs away with Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world. She, of course, becomes known as Helen of Troy.

Check out Peter Lukac’s excellent elizabethandrama.org edition of the play here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yxbnd37g>

PROLOGUE (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

Até, the goddess of discord, speaks now to you, the reader of this book. Consistent with her character, she regards you as a damned soul:

“Condemned soul, from lowest hell and the deadly rivers of the infernal Jove — Pluto, ruler of the Land of the Dead — where bloodless ghostly souls in pains of endless duration fill ruthless, pitiless ears with never-ceasing cries, behold, I, Até, have come to this place, and I bring in addition the bane of Troy!”

She held up a golden apple and said, “Behold, the fruit of fate, torn from the golden tree of Proserpine, goddess of vegetation!

“Proud Troy must fall, so the gods above have ordered, and stately Ilium’s lofty towers must be razed and torn down by the conquering hands of the victorious foe.”

Ilium is another name for Troy.

Até continued, “And King Priam’s younger son, the shepherd youth, Paris, the unhappy organ of the Greeks, must die.”

Paris, Prince of Troy, is the organ or agent of the Greeks in that he is the reason the Greeks will make war against the Trojans.

“King Priam’s Trojan palace must be laid waste with flaming fire, whose thick and foggy smoke, piercing the sky, must serve as the messenger of sacrifice, to appease the anger of the angry heavens.

“When the gods on Mount Olympus see the smoke of burning Troy, they will know that what was fated to happen has been accomplished.

“So, averse to and weary of her heavy load, and surcharged with the burden that she will no longer sustain, the Earth complains to Pluto, ruler of the hellish Land of the Dead.

“So many dead will lie on the plains of Troy that the Earth will complain to Pluto, who will then receive the dead’s ghostly souls into the Land of the Dead.

“The three Fates, who are impartial daughters of Ananke, goddess of Necessity, will be her aides in her petition complaining about the deaths of so many people in such a short period of time during the fall of Troy.

“And so the twine that holds old Priam’s house, the thread of Troy, Dame Atropos with her knife cuts asunder.”

The three Fates commanded the pulse of life; they controlled human life. Clotho spun the thread of life. Lachesis measured the thread of life, determining how long a person lived. Atropos cut the thread of life; when the thread was cut, the person died.

Até continued, “Done must be the pleasure of the powers above, whose commands men must obey, and I must perform my part in the valleys around Mount Ida.

“Lordings, adieu. Imposing silence for your task, I end my speech, until the just assembly of the goddesses makes me begin the tragedy of Troy.”

Até exited with the golden apple.

CHAPTER 1 (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 1.1 —

Pan, Faunus, and Silvanus, with their attendants — a shepherd, a hunter, and a woodman — stood and talked together.

Pan's shepherd had a lamb, Faunus' hunter had a fawn, and Silvanus' woodman had an oak bough laden with acorns. The animals and the oak branch laden with acorns were gifts.

All of them were here to welcome three goddesses who were expected to appear soon: Juno, Pallas, and Venus.

Pan, Faunus, and Silvanus, however, were afraid that they had arrived later than they ought to in order to greet the goddesses. Pan was afraid that either Flora, the goddess of flowers and gardens, or Faunus had made them arrive late.

“Silvanus, either Flora does us wrong, or Faunus made us tarry all too long, for by this morning mirth it would appear that the Muses or the three goddesses are near,” Pan said.

The Muses are goddesses of the arts.

“My fawn was nimble, Pan, and dashed madly about,” Faunus said. “Happily we caught him up at last — he is the fattest, fairest fawn in all the woods where game animals live. I wonder how the knave could skip so fast.”

“And I have brought a twagger — a fat lamb — for the occasion, a bunting — plump — lamb,” Pan said. “Please, touch it — you will feel no bones. Believe me now that I am much mistaken if ever Pan has felt a fatter lamb than this.”

One characteristic of these gods (and the goddesses) is that they often spoke of themselves in the third person.

Silvanus said, “Sirs, you may boast about your flocks and herds that are both fresh and fair, yet Silvanus has walks in the woods, truly, that stand in wholesome air, and, look, the honor of the woods, the gallant oaken bough, I do bestow as a gift, laden with acorns and with mast enough!”

Mast is food such as nuts; in this case, the acorns.

“Peace, man, for shame!” Pan said. “Quiet! We shall have both lambs and dames and flocks and herds and all, and all my pipes to make the glee and mirth; we don’t meet now to brawl and quarrel.”

Pipes are wind instruments that can be made from wood or reed.

“There’s no problem, Pan,” Faunus said. “We are all friends assembled hither to bid Queen Juno and her companions most humbly welcome hither. The presence of Diana, mistress of our woods and goddess of the hunt, will not be lacking. Her courtesy to all her friends, we know, is not at all scanty. Her consideration for her friends is abundant.”

— 1.2 —

Pomona, goddess of orchards, arrived with her gift of fruit.

She said, “So, Pan, you have traveled no farther than this, and yet you had a head start on me? Why, then, Pomona with her fruit comes in good time enough, I see.

“Come on a while; like friends, we venture forth with the bounty of the country.

“Do you think, Faunus, that these goddesses will accept our gifts kindly and value them?”

“Yes, doubtless,” Faunus answered, “for I shall tell thee, dame, it is better to give a thing, a token of love, to a mighty person or a king than to a rude and barbarous peasant who is bad and basely born, for the gentleman gently takes a token of love that often the peasant will scorn.”

“You say the truth,” Pan said. “I may say that to thee because I myself have given good plump lambs to Mercury, to Phoebus Apollo, and to Jove. And to a country lass, indeed, I have offered all their dams — ewes — and played my pipe and prayed to no avail to get the lass, and fruitlessly I have ranged about the grove.”

Pomona said, “God Pan, your kissing in corners is what makes your flock so thin, and makes you look so lean.”

“Well said, wench,” Pan said affectionately, “but you mean some other thing.”

The “some other thing” is more advanced than kissing.

“Yeah, jest it out until it go alone,” Pomona said.

“Go it alone” indicates independent action. Pomona may have meant 1) “... jest it out until you are the only one laughing,” or 2) “... jest it out until you begin having sex with yourself by masturbating.”

“But marvel where we miss fair Flora all this merry morn,” Pomona added. “Make jokes all you like, but where is Flora?”

“I have some news,” Faunus said. “Look, and you can see where she is. She is coming.”

— 1.3 —

Flora entered the scene.

Pan said, “Flora, well met, and for the pains you have taken, we poor country gods remain thy debtors. We are obliged to you.”

As goddess of flowers and gardens, Flora made beautiful things grow. She had decorated this area with flowers in preparation for the arrival of the goddesses.

Flora said, “Believe me, Pan, not all thy lambs and ewes, nor, Faunus, all thy vigorous bucks and does — but that I have been taught well to know what duty I owe to the hills and valleys — could have persuaded me to do so strange a toil as to enrich this fine, brilliant soil with so many flowers.”

“But tell me, wench,” Faunus asked, “have you done it so neatly, indeed, in order that heaven itself may wonder at the deed?”

“Iris, goddess of the rainbow, in her splendor and finery, does not adorn her arch with such variety,” Flora said. “Nor does the Milky-white Way in the frosty night sky appear as

fair and beautiful in sight as do now these fields and groves and sweetest bowers, strewn and adorned with multi-colored flowers, along the bubbling brooks and silver stream that in their beds do in silence slide.”

Flora then made a reference to Phoebe, which is another name for Diana, goddess of the hunt and of woods.

“The water-flowers and lilies on the banks, like blazing comets, all bloom in ranks. Under the hawthorn and the poplar tree, where sacred Phoebe may delight to be, the primrose, and the purple hyacinth, the dainty violet, and the wholesome mint plant, the double daisy, and the cowslip, queen of summer flowers, overlook the green grassy area.

“And round about the valley as you pass, you may not see the grass because of the many peeping flowers.

“I, the Queen of Flowers, have prepared a second spring so that the mighty Juno, and the rest, may well and boldly think themselves to be welcome guests on the hills of Ida — my flowers will show that they are welcome.”

Silvanus asked, “Thou gentle nymph, what thanks shall we repay to thee who have made our fields and woods so gay?”

Instead of answering the question, Flora described the gifts that she had brought the goddesses: She had made their portraits out of flowers.

Flora said, “Silvanus, when it is thy good fortune to see my workmanship in portraying all the three goddesses, you will marvel.

“First I portrayed stately Juno with her elegant bearing and grace, her robes, her fine linen clothing, her small crown, and her scepter of office. This picture made of yellow oxlips bright as burnished gold would make thee marvel.”

Pomona said, “It is a rare device, and Flora, by God, has well painted Juno yellow because of her jealousy.”

Juno was very jealous of her husband, Jupiter, king of the gods, because of his many affairs with immortal goddesses and mortal women.

Flora said, "I have made Pallas' portrait in flowers of red hue and colors. Her plumes of feathers decorating her helmet, her lance, the Gorgon's head, her trailing tresses of long hair that hang flaring round, of July-flowers so planted in the ground, in such a way that, trust me, sirs, whoever did see the cunning, skillful work would at a blush suppose it to be she."

Pallas is Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom; she is a notable warrior. Her shield depicted the head of the Gorgon Medusa, who had snakes for hair.

"Good Flora, I swear by my flock," Pan said, "that it was very good to dress her entirely in red that resembles blood."

Flora said, "I made the portrait of fair Venus of sweet violets in blue, with other flowers inserted for changes of hue. Her plumes, her pendants, bracelets, and her rings, her dainty fan, and twenty other things, her gay cloak waving in the wind, and every part in color and in suitable kind. And as for her wreath of roses, she would not dare to compare it with Flora's cunning counterfeit portrait.

"So that whatever living person shall chance to see these goddesses, each placed as befits her social status, portrayed by Flora's workmanship alone, must say that art and nature have met in one."

Silvanus said, "A dainty portrait that lays Venus down in blue, the color that commonly betokens loyalty."

He was being ironic because Venus, the goddess of beauty and sexual passion, was not associated with loyalty. She had had a famous affair with Mars, god of war. She also had affairs with other gods and with mortals.

Flora said, "I have prepared this piece of work, composed of many a flower, and well laid in at the entrance of the bower where Phoebe — Diana — means to make this royal meeting."

"Have they yet descended from the heavens, Flora?" Pomona said. "Tell us, so that if they have we may go to meet them on the way."

“That shall not be necessary,” Flora said. “They are near at hand by this time, and the head of their procession is a nymph named Rhanis.

“Juno left her chariot long ago, and she has returned her peacocks by her rainbow. Splendidly, as becomes the wife of Jove, she honors our grove with her presence.”

Peacocks pulled Juno’s chariot. After Juno got out of the chariot, the peacocks used the rainbow as a road to take her chariot back to the top of Mount Olympus, home of the major gods and goddesses.

Flora continued, “Fair Venus has let her sparrows fly, to tend on her and make her melody. Her turtledoves and her swans are unyoked and flicker near her side for company.”

Venus sometimes traveled in a chariot drawn by swans and turtledoves. Swallows were sacred to her.

Flora continued, “Pallas has set her tigers loose to feed, commanding them to wait until she has need of them.”

Pallas’ chariot was usually pulled by horses, but on this occasion it may have been pulled by tigers.

Flora continued, “Hitherward with proud and stately pace, to do us honor in the sylvan hunting ground, Juno the wife and sister of King Jove, the warlike Pallas, and the Queen of Love march, similar to the pomp of heaven above.”

Pan said, “Pipe, Pan, for joy, and let thy shepherds sing. Never shall any age forget this memorable thing.”

Flora said, “Clio, the sagest of the Nine Sisters, to do observance to this divine dame, lady of learning and of chivalry, has here arrived in fair assembly, and wandering up and down the untrodden paths, sings sweet songs of praise of Pallas through the wood.”

The Nine Sisters are the Muses; Clio is the Muse of History.

Pomona said, “Listen, Flora, Faunus! Here is melody — a chorus of birds that is more than ordinary.”

Birds sang.

Pan said, “The innocent birds make mirth; we would do them wrong, Pomona, if we would not bestow an echo to their song.”

All the gods and goddesses who were in sight sang about Mount Ida:

“O Ida, O Ida, O Ida, happy hill!

“This honor done to Ida may it continue still [always]!”

The Muses, who were out of sight, sang:

“Ye country gods that in this Ida won [live],

“Bring down your gifts of welcome,

“For honor done to Ida.”

The gods and goddesses who were in sight sang:

“Behold, in sign of joy we sing.

“And signs of joyful welcome bring.

“For honor done to Ida.”

The Muses, who were out of sight, sang:

“The Muses give you melody to gratulate this chance,

“And Phoebe, chief of sylvan chace, commands you all to dance.”

The phrase “to gratulate this chance” meant “to joyfully welcome this opportunity.”

The phrase “chief of sylvan chace” meant “goddess of the woodland hunting area.”

The gods and goddesses who were in sight sang:

“Then round in a circle our sportance [sportive activity] must be,

“Hold hands in a hornpipe, all gallant in glee.”

Everybody danced to a tune performed on a hornpipe.

The Muses, who were out of sight, sang:

“Reverence, reverence, most humble reverence!”

The gods and goddesses who were in sight sang:

“Most humble reverence!”

— 1.4 —

Juno, Pallas, and Venus entered the scene, with the nymph Rhanis leading the way.

Pan sang solo:

*“The God of Shepherds, and his mates,
 “With country cheer salutes your states,
 “Fair, wise, and worthy as you be.
 “And thank the gracious ladies three
 “For honor done to Ida.”*

Juno said, “Venus, what shall I say? For, although I am a divine dame, this welcome and this melody exceed these wits of mine.”

Venus replied, “Believe me, Juno, as I am called the Sovereign of Love, these rare delights in pleasures surpass the banquets of King Jove.”

Pallas said, “Then, Venus, I conclude that it easily may be seen that in her chaste and pleasant walks fair Phoebe is a queen.”

Phoebe, aka Diana, is a chaste and virgin goddess, as is Pallas.

Rhanis said, “Divine Pallas, and you sacred dames, Juno and Venus, honored by your names, Juno, the wife and sister of King Jove, and Fair Venus, the lady-president and presiding goddess of love, if any entertainment in this place that can provide only what is homely, rude, and rustic does please your godheads and divine natures to accept graciously, that gracious thought shall be our happiness.

“My mistress Diana, this right well I know, for love that to this presence she does owe, accounts more honor done to her this day, than ever before in these woods of Ida.

“And as for our country gods, I dare be bold to say that they make such cheer, your presence to behold, such jousance — such mirth, and such merriment — as nothing else could make their mind more content.

“And that you do believe it to be so, fair goddesses, your lovely looks do show. In short, it remains, in order to confirm what I have said, that you deign to pass along to Diana’s walk, where among her troop of maidens she awaits the fair arrival of her welcome friends.”

“And we will wait with all observance due,” Flora said, “and do just honor to this heavenly crew.”

“Juno, before thou go, I — the God of Shepherds — intend to bestow a lamb on thee,” Pan said.

“I, Faunus, high gamekeeper in Diana’s hunting grounds, present a fawn to Lady Venus’ grace,” Faunus said.

“I, Silvanus, give to Pallas’ deity this gallant bough torn from the oak tree,” Silvanus said.

“To them who do this honor to our fields, poor Pomona gives her mellow apples,” Pomona said.

“And, gentle gods,” Juno said, “these signs of your goodwill we accept graciously, and we shall always accept them graciously.”

Venus said, “And, Flora, I say this to thee among the rest — thy workmanship comparing with the best, let it suffice thy cunning and learning to have the power to call King Jove from out of his heavenly bower. If thou had a lover, Flora, believe me, I think thou would bedeck him gallantly.

“But we must go on: Lead the way, Rhanis, you who know the painted — decorated with flowers — paths of pleasant Ida.”

— 1.5 —

Paris and Oenone talked together. Paris was a prince of Troy, and Oenone was a nymph whom he was courting.

Paris said, “Oenone, while we are here until we are disposed to walk, tell me what shall be the subject of our talk? Thou have a number of pretty tales in your head — I dare say that no nymph in the woods of Ida has more: Again, in addition to thy sweet alluring face, in telling your tales

thou have a special grace. So then, please, sweetheart, tell some pretty thing — some pleasing trifle that from thy pleasant wit does spring.”

“Paris, my heart’s contentment and my choice, play thou thy pipe, and I will use my voice,” Oenone said, “and so thy just request shall not be denied, and it will be time well spent, and both of us will be satisfied.”

“Well, gentle nymph, although thou do me wrong, me who cannot tune my pipe to play accompaniment to a song, I choose this once to accompany you, Oenone, for thy sake, and so I will undertake this leisure-time task.”

They sat under a tree together.

“And on which subject, then, shall be my roundelay — my song?” Oenone said. “For thou have heard my store of stories long before now, I dare say:

“How Saturn divided his kingdom long ago to Jove, to Neptune, and to Dis below.”

Saturn actually had to be forced to give up his kingdom. Saturn was the father of Jupiter, Neptune, and Dis. His sons rebelled against him, overthrew him, and divided the earth among themselves. Jupiter became the god of the sky, Neptune became the god of the sea, and Dis, aka Pluto, became the god of the Land of the Dead. As the king of the gods, Jupiter exerted the most power over the land.

Oenone continued:

“How mighty men made foul and unsuccessful war against the gods and the state of Jupiter.”

A race of Giants, including Otis and Ephialtes, fought the Olympian gods for supremacy, but the Olympians defeated the Giants.

Oenone continued:

“How Phorcys’ imp, who was so trim and fair, who tangled Neptune in her golden hair, became a Gorgon because of her lewd misdeed.”

Phorcys was a sea god whose children included Medusa, whom Oenone called an imp. Medusa had an affair with

Neptune in a temple dedicated to Pallas, and Pallas punished her by turning her hair into snakes and making her face so horrible that any mortal who looked at it turned to stone.

Oenone added, “This is a pretty fable, Paris, for you to read. It is a piece of cunning, trust me, and it makes this point: That wealth and beauty alter men to stones.”

Medusa had wealth and beauty, but she became a monster that turned men who saw her to stone. In other cases, a woman of wealth and beauty can also ruin a man.

Readers who know about the Trojan War may be thinking of Helen of Troy right now.

Oenone continued:

“How Salmacis, resembling idleness, turns men to women all through wantonness and lewd behavior.”

Salmacis was a nymph who fell in love with Aphroditus, son of Venus and Mercury. He rejected her advances, but she hugged him close to her and prayed never to be separated from him. Their two bodies grew together, and they became Hermaphroditus, the god of hermaphroditism and intersexuality. Hermaphroditus then cursed a fountain to make it turn men to women; the fountain was named after Salmacis.

Oenone continued:

“How Pluto caught Queen Ceres’ daughter thence, and what did follow of that love-offence.”

Proserpine, whose Greek name was Persephone, was picking flowers when Pluto, god of the Land of the Dead, kidnapped her, took her to the Underworld, and made her Queen of the Land of the Dead. Ceres, the goddess of agriculture whose Greek name was Demeter, mourned, and because she mourned, nothing would grow. Jupiter arranged an agreement with Pluto that allowed Proserpine to spend six months of every year in the Land of the Living and the other six months in the Land of the Dead. When Proserpine is in the Land of the Dead, winter occurs.

Oenone continued:

“Of Daphne turned into the laurel-tree, a tale that shows a mirror — a good example — of virginity.”

The god Apollo fell in love with the nymph Daphne, who ran from him, who pursued her. She prayed to her father, a river-god, for help, and he transformed her into a laurel tree.

Oenone continued:

“How fair Narcissus staring at his own image, rebukes scorn, and tells how beauty does vanish.”

Narcissus was a beautiful man who scorned the love of both Echo (a nymph) and Ameinias (a young man). Before committing suicide, Ameinias prayed to Nemesis, goddess of retribution, to punish Narcissus. She made him fall in love with his own reflection in a stream. He continually loved and looked at it as he wasted away.

Oenone continued:

“How cunning Philomela’s needle tells what force in love and what intelligence in sorrow dwell.”

Philomela was an Athenian princess who was raped by her sister’s husband, Tereus, who cut out her tongue so that she could not tell anyone that he had raped her. Philomela wove a tapestry, however, that revealed the rape and rapist.

Oenone continued:

“What pains unhappy souls endure in hell, they say because on earth they lived not well — Ixion’s wheel, proud Tantalus’ pining woe, Prometheus’ torment, and many more.”

Ixion, who violated proper guest-host relations, was bound to a continually spinning fiery wheel in the Land of the Dead. Among his sins was attempting to seduce Juno while he was one of Jupiter’s guests.

Tantalus, the father of Pelops, killed him, cooked him, and served him to the gods as a test of their intelligence. One goddess, Ceres, ate some of Pelops’ shoulder before the trickery was discovered, and so he was outfitted with a shoulder made of ivory. The gods brought Pelops back to life and sentenced his father, Tantalus, to everlasting punishment

in the Land of the Dead. He stands in a stream of water with fruit-bearing branches above his head. Whenever he stoops to drink, the water level lowers and the stream dries up. Whenever he reaches for fruit to eat, the wind blows the branches just out of his reach. He is forever thirsty and hungry, and water and fruit are always just out of his possession.

Prometheus, who was a Titan (one of the primordial — which means existing from the beginning of time — beings who ruled the Earth until Jupiter conquered them), stole fire from the gods and gave it to early Humankind. Jupiter punished Prometheus by chaining him to a rock and sending an eagle to devour his liver, which grew back each night so the eagle could devour it again the following day.

Oenone continued:

“How Danaus’ daughters ply their endless task.”

The fifty sons of Aegyptus wanted to marry the fifty daughters of Danaus. Danaus was suspicious of Aegyptus and his fifty sons, so he fled with his fifty daughters, but Aegyptus and his fifty sons pursued them. To avoid a battle, Danaus told his fifty daughters to marry the fifty sons of Aegyptus, but although he allowed the marriages to be performed he also ordered his fifty daughters to kill the fifty sons of Aegyptus. All of his daughters except Hypermnestra, who had married Lynceus, obeyed. Hypermnestra spared Lynceus because he treated her with respect and did not force her to have sex with him their first night together. The gods did not like what the forty-nine women who had killed their husbands had done, and so those forty-nine daughters are punished in the Land of the Dead with meaningless work. They are condemned to spend all their time trying to fill up with water a container that has a big leak and so can never be filled. Only one daughter avoided this eternal punishment.

Oenone continued:

“What toil the toil of Sisyphus does ask.”

When Sisyphus was on his deathbed, he ordered his wife not to give his corpse a funeral. After his death, his spirit went to the Land of the Dead and complained to Pluto, King of the Dead, that he had not yet had a funeral. Pluto allowed him to return to the Land of the Living so that he could tell his wife to give him a funeral, but once he was back in the Land of the Living, he refused to return to the Land of the Dead. He lived to an advanced old age and then died again. Now he is forced to forever roll a boulder up a hill. Just as he reaches the top of the hill, he loses control of the boulder and it rolls back to the bottom of the hill again. Sisyphus can never accomplish this task, which has no value, and so his punishment is endless meaningless work.

Oenone continued:

“I know that all these tales are old and well known, yet, if thou will hear any tales, choose some of these because if you don’t, believe me, Oenone has not many tales.”

Paris said, “No, you choose whichever one you want, but since my skill does not compare with yours, start with a simple song that I can play upon this pipe of mine.”

Oenone said, “There is a pretty sonnet, then, that we call ‘Cupid’s Curse’: ‘They who do change old love for new, please, gods, make it so that they change for worse!’

“The tune is fine and also quick; the message of the song will agree, Paris, with that same vow you made to me upon our poplar tree.”

Paris had carved into a poplar tree his vow that he would always love Oenone.

“No better thing,” Paris said. “Begin it, then. Oenone, thou shall see our music present the love that grows between thee and me.”

They sang the song, and whenever Oenone sang solo, Paris played his pipe.

Oenone sang:

“Fair and fair, and twice so fair,

“As fair as any may be;

*“The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.”*

Paris sang:

*“Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady.”*

Oenone sang:

*“My love is fair, my love is gay,
As fresh as bin [are] the flowers in May,
And of my love my roundelay,
My merry merry roundelay,
Concludes with Cupid’s curse —
They that [who] do change old love for new.
Pray gods they change for worse!”*

Paris and Oenone sang together:

*“They that [who] do change old love for new.
Pray gods they change for worse!”*

Oenone sang:

*“Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be.”*

Paris sang:

*“Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady.”*

Oenone sang:

*“My love can pipe, my love can sing.
My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring
My merry merry roundelays,
Amen to Cupid’s curse,
They that [who] do change old love for new.
Pray gods they change for worse!”*

Paris sang:

“They that [who] do change old love for new.”

“Pray gods they change for worse!”

Paris and Oenone sang together:

“Fair and fair, and twice so fair,

“As fair as any may be.”

Now that the song was over, they stood up.

Oenone said, “Sweet shepherd, for Oenone’s sake learn from this song, and keep thy love, and love thy choice, or else thou do her wrong.”

The song was a warning: Those who reject an old love for a new love can change a good love for a worse love. Paris had chosen Oenone for his love; if he were to reject her and choose another love, then bad things could happen to him.

Paris said, “My vow is made and witnessed, the poplar tree will not start and tremble, nor shall my love for the nymph Oenone leave my breathing heart.”

If Paris had made a false vow to love Oenone, then the poplar tree upon which Paris had carved his vow would start and tremble.

Paris continued, “I will go accompany thee on thy way, my flock are here behind, and I will have a lover’s fee; they say that those who are unkind are unkind.”

The lover’s fee is a kiss.

They exited.

CHAPTER 2 (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 2.1 —

Juno, Pallas, and Venus talked together.

Venus said, “But please, tell me, Juno, was what Pallas told me here about the tale of Echo true?”

Echo was a nymph who kept Juno distracted while her husband, Jupiter, conducted affairs with other nymphs. When Juno discovered what Echo was doing, Juno punished her by making her unable to form words on her own; instead, Echo could only repeat the last words that others had said.

Juno replied, “Echo was a nymph indeed, as Pallas told you. She was a walker, such as in these thickets dwells.”

The word “walker” meant 1) walker in the forest, and 2) prostitute, as in “streetwalker.”

Juno continued, “And as Pallas told what cunning and deceitful tricks Echo played with Juno, so she told the ‘thanks’ Echo got: She was a tattling trull — prostitute — to come at every call, and now, truly, she has neither tongue nor life at all.”

According to Juno, Echo was a talkative whore who came at every call, but now she has neither voice nor life. Now Echo can only repeat the last words that others say. Because of that, she was unable to tell Narcissus effectively that she loved him, and so she had been forced to watch him as he died while staring at his reflection, unable to move away from it and eat and drink. After he died, she wasted away with mourning until all that was left was her voice.

Juno continued, “And though perhaps she was a help to Jove, and held me back with chat while he might court his love of the time, believe me, dames, I am of this opinion: He took but little pleasure in the minion. And whatsoever his escapades have been besides, I dare say for him that he never strayed so wide: A lovely nut-brown lass or lusty whore has the power perhaps to make a god a bull.”

Jupiter enthusiastically engaged in affairs, but Juno, his wife, blamed the females he slept with for enticing him into having affairs. In one of his affairs, Jupiter fell in lust with the Phoenician woman Europa; he then assumed the form of a bull and carried her away to Crete. He had sex with her, and she gave birth to a boy who became King Minos of Crete.

“Much thanks, gentle Juno, for that jest,” Venus said. “In faith, that item was worth all the rest.”

The jest was that Jupiter did not enjoy his affairs. No one who knew Jupiter — other than Juno — would believe that.

“No matter, Venus, howsoever you scorn, my father Jove at that time wore the horn,” Pallas said.

When he transformed into a bull, Jupiter wore horns on his head. Pallas was also alluding to the joke that cuckolds — men with unfaithful wives — wore invisible horns on their heads, and so she was suggesting that Juno had been unfaithful to Jupiter.

Juno tended to get revenge on the women her husband slept with instead of getting revenge on her husband by being unfaithful. But there is one story in which she gave birth to a child without Jupiter being the father. She did that to get revenge for Jupiter’s giving birth to a goddess.

Pallas had been born — fully armed — when Jupiter suffered a tremendous headache that was so bad that he had another god split his head open. (According to myths, which often vary, either Pallas had no mother or Zeus had swallowed a pregnant goddess.) Pallas sprang out from the wound.

To get back at Zeus for giving birth to a goddess, Juno gave birth to Vulcan, the blacksmith god. Zeus was not the father. Supposedly, Juno impregnated herself, although Venus and Pallas are likely to believe that as much as they believe that Jupiter does not enjoy having affairs.

Juno said, “Had every wanton god above not had better luck, Venus, then heaven would be a pleasant park, and Mars a lusty buck.”

In other words, the gods can easily enough find humans to seduce; if they could not, they would regard the abode of the gods as a happy hunting ground for lovers, and many goddesses would be having affairs with Mars, god of war.

Juno was alluding to the affair that Venus had had with Mars: The two had fallen in lust although Venus, the goddess of sexual passion, was married to Vulcan, the gifted blacksmith god. Vulcan learned of the affair, so he set a trap for the illicit lovers. He created fine chains that bound tightly, he placed the chains above his bed, and then he pretended to leave his mansion to journey abroad. Mars ran to Aphrodite and invited her to join him in Vulcan’s bed, and together they ran to bed. Mars and Venus lay down in bed together, and then the chain snared them, locked together in lust.

Venus said, “Tut, Mars has horns to butt with, although no bull he shows; he never needs to mask in nets, and he fears no jealous woman’s frowns.”

Mars may have affairs, but the females he sleeps with, such as Venus, also have affairs, and so in a way he has the horns of a cuckold, although he never married. But Mars need not turn himself into a bull or wear masks or disguises that can be as easily seen through as nets — Jupiter’s disguises seem to work only for a while, as Juno quickly becomes aware of them.

Juno replied, “Truly, the better it would be for Mars if he did turn himself into a bull as a disguise, for if he speaks too loudly, he must find some means to shadow and hide him: a net or else a cloud.”

Of course, hiding under a net is a bad way for Mars to hide himself, but Juno was again alluding to Venus’ being trapped in a net with Mars while engaged in the act of sex.

After Vulcan had captured the pair, he invited the gods and goddesses to come and laugh at them. The gods came and laughed, but the goddesses were embarrassed and stayed away.

“No more of this, fair goddesses,” Pallas said. “Don’t put on display your shames, as if you were standing all naked on display to the world, you who are such heavenly dames.”

“Nay, Pallas,” Juno said. “That’s a common trick with Venus, well we know, and all the gods in heaven have seen her naked long ago.”

The gods had seen Venus naked when she was trapped with Mars in Vulcan’s net.

Venus replied, “And then she — me, Venus — was so fair and bright, and lovely and so fine, as Mars is to Venus’ liking, and she will take her pleasure with him. And — but I don’t wish here to make a comparison of Mars with Jove — Mars is no ranger, Juno, but Jupiter can be found in every open grove.”

A ranger is a 1) gamekeeper, or 2) chaser after females.

“We have had too much of this wrangling,” Pallas said. “We wander far, and the skies begin to scowl. Let’s retire to Diana’s bower, for the weather will be foul.”

A storm of thunder and lightning passed overhead. Até arrived and rolled the golden ball toward the three goddesses, crying “*Fatum Trojae* — the Fate of Troy!”

Juno picked up the golden ball and said, “Pallas, the storm is past and gone, and Phoebus Apollo clears the skies, and — look! — behold a ball of gold, a fair and worthy prize!”

Venus examined the ball closely. It had writing on it: a posey, or short inscription.

She said, “This posey says that the apple is to be given to the fairest. So then it is mine, for Venus is called the fairest of we three goddesses.”

The fairest goddess is the most beautiful goddess. Beauty, however, can appear in many forms. It need not only be physical beauty.

“The fairest here, since fair is meant, am I,” Pallas said. “You do me wrong. And if the fairest must have it, to me it does belong.”

“Then Juno may not enjoy it, so every one says,” Juno said. “But I will prove myself the fairest, before I lose it.”

They read the posey.

Juno said, “The brief is this — ‘*Detur pulcherrimae*, let this to the fairest given be, to the fairest of the three’ — and I am she.”

“*Detur pulcherrimae*” is Latin for “Let it be given to the most beautiful.”

Pallas said, “‘*Detur pulcherrimae*, let this to the fairest given be, to the fairest of the three’ — and I am she.”

Venus said, “‘*Detur pulcherrimae*, let this to the fairest given be, to the fairest of the three’ — and I am she.”

“My face is fair,” Juno said, “but yet the majesty that all the gods in heaven have seen in me has made them choose me of the seven planets to be the wife of Jove and queen of heaven.

“If, then, this prize is to be only bequeathed to beauty, I am the only she who wins this prize.”

The seven planets known to the Elizabethans include five that were named after gods: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; the Elizabethans also considered the Moon and Sun to be planets.

Juno considered the fairest to be the goddess with the most majesty. None of the seven planets was named after her, but she considered herself to be a luminary worthy of being wed to the king of the gods. Juno, however, was associated with the Moon.

Venus said, “This proves that Venus is the fairest: Venus is the lovely Queen of Love: The name of Venus is indeed

but beauty, and men call me the fairest above all — the fairest *par excellence*.

“If, then, this prize is to be only bequeathed to beauty, I am the only she who wins this prize.”

Venus considered the fairest to be the goddess with the greatest physical beauty.

Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, said, “To insist on the definition of beauty as you define it, believe me, ladies, is but to mistake it. The beauty that this ingenious prize must win is not outward beauty, but beauty that dwells within. Examine it as and however you please, and you shall find, this beauty is the beauty of the mind.

“This fairness is in general called virtue, which has many distinct parts. This beauty is called wisdom, the goddess of which I am worthily appointed by heaven. And look how much the mind, the better part, does surpass the body in merit — by so much the mistress of those divine gifts excels thy beauty and that state of thine.

“If, then, this prize is to be only bequeathed to beauty, I am the only she who wins this prize.”

Pallas considered the fairest to be the goddess with the most wisdom.

Venus said, “No, Pallas, with your permission let me say that you are completely on the wrong track. We must not define ‘beauty’ as you have, but instead take the sense as it is plainly meant. I am content to let the fairest have it.”

“Our arguments will be infinite, I trust, unless we agree on some other way of awarding the golden ball,” Pallas said. “Here’s none, I think, disposed to yield, and none but will with words maintain the field and defend our ground.”

“So then, if you agree, to avoid a tedious grudge, let us refer the question of who gets the golden ball to the sentence of a judge,” Juno said. “Whoever comes next to this place, let him bestow the ball and end the case.”

“If we do that, it cannot go wrong with me at all,” Venus said.

“I am agreed, however it befall,” Pallas said. “And yet by common opinion, so may it be, I may be said to be the fairest of the three.”

Seeing Paris coming toward them, Juno said, “Look yonder — that shepherd swain is he who must be umpire in this controversy!”

Each goddess was confident that an impartial judge would choose her as the fairest and award her the golden ball.

— 2.2 —

Paris entered the scene. Although he was a prince of Troy, he was raised as a shepherd. Because a prophecy had stated that he would be the downfall of Troy, he was exposed as an infant on the slopes of Mount Ida. A she-bear suckled him, and then a herdsman sheltered him and raised him as a shepherd. Perhaps he knew now that he was a prince of Troy, but he spent much time on Mount Ida courting Oenone and working as a shepherd.

Venus said, “Juno, in this happy time, I accept the man as our judge. It seems by his looks that he knows some skill of love.”

Paris said to himself, “The nymph Oenone has gone, and I, all solitary and oppressed with melancholy, must make my way to tend my sheep. This day (or else my shepherd’s skill fails me) will bring me surpassing good or surpassing ill. My shepherd’s intuition says that either something very good or something very bad will happen to me today.”

Juno said to Paris, “Shepherd, don’t be astonished, although suddenly thus thou have arrived accidentally among us three, who are not earthly but are divine goddesses. Our names are Juno, Pallas, and Venus.

“Nor should you fear to speak because of reverence of the place. You have been chosen to judge and end a hard and

unsettled case. This golden apple, look — don't ask from where it came — is to be given to the fairest dame!

“And the fairest is, neither she, nor she” — Juno surreptitiously indicated Venus and Pallas — “but she whom, shepherd, thou shall name to be the fairest. This is thy charge; fulfill it without offence, and she who wins shall give thee recompense.”

“Fulfill it without offence” is ambiguous. It can mean 1) “fulfill it without causing offense,” or 2) “fulfill it and your judgment will not cause offense.”

Because all three goddesses wanted to be awarded the prize, it is hard to see how Paris could award the golden ball to one goddess without offending the other two goddesses.

Pallas said, “Don't be afraid to speak, for we have chosen thee, since in this case we cannot be the judges.”

Venus said, “And, shepherd, say that I am the fairest, and thou shall win a good reward for doing so.”

Juno said, “Nay, shepherd, look upon my stately grace, because the pomp that belongs to Juno's mace — symbol of authority — thou may not see; and think Queen Juno's name, to whom old shepherds give the credit for works of fame, is mighty, and may easily suffice to gain a golden prize at Phoebus' hand.”

Juno wanted to be awarded the golden ball because of her majestic bearing. The gods, however, cannot reveal their full majesty to human beings, as shown in this story: Jupiter had an affair with the mortal woman Semele, to whom he had made an inviolable oath to grant her what she wished. After he had sex with her, Semele said that she wanted to see him in his full glory. Because his oath was inviolable, he granted her wish, but the sight of Jupiter in his full glory incinerated her.

Phoebus Apollo was the god who drove the Sun-chariot across the sky. Because the goddesses found the golden ball only after a storm passed and the Sun came out, they may

have thought that the golden ball metaphorically came from Phoebus Apollo's hand.

Juno continued, "And for thy reward, since I am queen of riches, shepherd, I will reward thee with great monarchies, empires, and kingdoms, heaps of solid gold, elaborately made scepters and diadems, rich robes of sumptuous workmanship and cost, and a thousand things whereof I make no boast. The earth upon which thou tread shall be of the Tagus River's sands that are mixed with gold, and the Xanthus River shall run liquid gold for thee to wash thy hands. And if thou prefer to tend thy flock, and not from them to flee, their fleeces shall be curled gold to please their master's eye. And last, to set thy heart on fire, give this one fruit to me, and, shepherd, look, this tree of gold will I bestow on thee!"

Using divine magic, Juno created a show for Paris: A tree of gold, laden with diadems and crowns of gold, rose from out of the earth.

Juno said, "The ground whereupon it grows, the grass, the root are of gold, the body and the bark are of gold, all glistening to behold, the leaves are of burnished gold, the fruits that thereon grow are diadems set with pearl in gold, in gorgeous glistening show. And if this tree of gold in compensation may not suffice, then demand a grove of golden trees, as long as Juno carries away the prize."

The golden tree sank into the earth.

Juno was offering Paris the rule of cities and great wealth.

Pallas said to Paris, "I choose not to tempt thee with decaying wealth, which is debased by lack of vigorous health."

Excess wealth can cause dissipation, which leads to ill health.

Pallas continued, "But if thou have a mind to fly above and achieve loftier ambitions, crowned with fame, near the seat of Jove, if thou aspire to wisdom's worthiness, of which

thou may not see the brightness” — this was true; Paris was not a wise man — “if thou desire honor of chivalry, to be renowned for happy victory, to fight it out, and in the open battlefield to shroud thee under Pallas’ warlike shield, to prance on armored steeds, this honor I myself as a reward shall bestow on thee! And as encouragement for you to award the golden ball to me, thou may see what famous knights Dame Pallas’ warriors are — look! In Pallas’ honor here they come, marching along with the sound of thundering drums.”

Using divine magic, Pallas created a show for Paris: Nine armored knights treaded a warlike march to the music of drum and fife, and then they marched away again.

The Nine Knights were probably the Nine Worthies. All of them were warriors. Three were pagans: Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar. Three were Jews: Joshua, King David, and Judas Maccabeus. Three were Christians: King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boullion, who was famous for being a leader in the First Crusade.

Some of them were from the future, but Paris would have recognized Hector of Troy: Hector was his brother.

Pallas was offering Paris mightiness as a warrior.

Venus said, “Come, shepherd, come, sweet shepherd, look at me. These alarms — calls to arms — are too hot and dangerous for thee: But if thou will give me the golden ball, Cupid my boy shall have it to play with, with the result that, whenever this apple he shall see, the god of love himself shall think on thee. And he will tell thee to look and choose, and he will wound wherever thy fancy’s object shall be found. And merrily when he shoots, he does not miss.”

If Paris awards the golden ball to Venus, then her son Cupid, the god of love, will make any woman Paris desires fall in love with him.

Venus continued, “And I will give thee many a lovely and loving kiss and come and play with thee on Ida here, and

if thou will love a face that has no peer, a gallant girl, a lusty paramour, who can give thee thy bellyful of sexual entertainment and will make all thy veins beat with joy, here is a lass of Venus' court, my boy. Here, gentle shepherd, here's for thee a piece, the fairest face, the flower of gallant Greece."

Using divine magic, Venus created a show for Paris:

Helen, splendidly dressed, entered the scene with four cupids — cherubs — attending on her, each having his fan in his hand to fan fresh air in her face.

She then sang this song:

*"Se Diana nel cielo è una stella
 "Chiara e lucente, piena di splendore,
 "Che porge luc' all' affanato cuore;
 "Se Diana nel ferno è una dea
 "Che da conforto all' anime dannate,
 "Che per amor son morte desperate;
 "Se Dian, ch' in terra è delle ninfe
 "Reina imperativa di dolei fiori,
 "Tra bosch' e selve da morte a pastori;
 "Io son un Diana dolce e rara,
 "Che con li guardi io posso far guerra
 "A Dian' infern' in cielo, e in terra."*

Helen sang in Italian. Henry Morley (1822-1894) translated her song into English:

*"If Diana in Heaven is a star,
 "Clear and shining, full of splendor,
 "Who gives light to the troubled heart;
 "If Diana in Hell is a goddess
 "Who gives comfort to the condemned souls,
 "That [Who] have died in despair through love;
 "If Diana who is on earth is of the nymphs
 "The empress queen of the sweet flowers,
 "Among thickets and woods giving death to the
 shepherds;
 "I am a Diana sweet and pure,*

*“Who with my glamour can give battle
 “To Dian of Hell, in Heaven or on earth.”*

Diana was considered a triple deity. In Heaven, she was Luna, goddess of the Moon. (Other goddesses, such as Juno, were also associated with the Moon.) In Hell, she was Hecate, goddess of witchcraft. On earth she was Diana, goddess of the hunt.

Helen, having sung her song that acknowledged that love can cause distress and death, exited.

Venus was offering Paris success in love — or at least success in lust.

Paris said, “Most heavenly dames, there was never a man like I, a poor shepherd swain, so fortunate and unfortunate. Even the least of these delights that you devise are able to enrapt and dazzle human eyes.

“But since my silence may not be pardoned and I must appoint which is the fairest she, then pardon me, most sacred dames, since only one, and not all, by Paris’ judgment must have this golden ball.

“Thy beauty, stately Juno dame divine, that similar to Phoebus Apollo’s golden beams does shine, approves itself to be most excellent.”

Paris praised Juno’s beauty despite not awarding the golden ball to her. He neglected to praise Pallas’ beauty despite not awarding the golden ball to her.

Paris continued, “But that fair face that most delights me, since fair, fair dames, is neither she nor she” — he pointed to Juno and Pallas — “but she whom I shall judge to be fairest — that face is hers who is called the Queen of Love, whose sweetness does both gods and creatures move. And if the fairest face deserves the ball, fair Venus, ladies, bears it away from you all.”

He gave the golden ball to Venus.

Venus said, “And in this ball does Venus more delight than in seeing her lovely boy fair Cupid. Come, shepherd,

come. Sweet Venus is thy friend, no matter how thou offend other gods.”

Venus and Paris exited.

Juno said, “But he shall rue and curse the dismal day in which his Venus carried the ball away, and heaven and earth shall be just witnesses that I will revenge it on his family.”

Pallas said, “Well, Juno, whether we are willing or unwilling, Venus has taken the apple from us both.”

CHAPTER 3 (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 3.1 —

Colin, a shepherd who was in love with a young woman named Thestylis, sang this love song:

“Oh, gentle Love, ungentle [unkind] for thy deed,

“Thou mak’st [make] my heart

“A bloody mark

“With piercing shot to bleed!”

Colin was complaining because Cupid, god of Love, had shot him with an arrow and made him fall in love.

Colin continued singing:

*“Shoot soft [gently and carefully], sweet Love, for fear
thou shoot amiss [thou miss],*

“For fear too keen [sharp]

“Thy arrows been,

“And hit the heart where my beloved is.”

Colin wanted Cupid to shoot his (Colin’s) beloved with an arrow so she would return his (Colin’s) love.

Colin continued singing:

“Too fair that fortune were, nor never I

“Shall be so blest,

“Among the rest,

“That Love shall seize on her by sympathy.

*“Then since with Love my prayers bear no boot [have
proven to be useless],*

“This doth [does] remain

*“To cease my pain, I take [receive] the wound, and die
at Venus’ foot.”*

Colin was complaining that he has not had the good fortune for Cupid to take pity on him and so he will just have to die of unrequited love.

Colin then exited.

— 3.2 —

Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot talked together. They were shepherd friends of Colin's.

Hobbinol said, "Poor Colin, woeful man, thy life predetermined by love, what strange fit, what malady, is this that thou do experience?"

Diggon said, "Either Love is completely void of medicine, or Love's our common ruin, which gives us poison to bring us low, and lets us lack medicine."

This Love is Venus, Queen of Love, who excited sexual passion in mortals and immortals.

Hobbinol said, "How odd that Love was ever revered by naive shepherd swains! Perhaps Love hurts them most who most might bear their pains."

Love can hurt people when it is not returned, but if one successfully pursues the loved one, then one's pains are often richly rewarded.

Using a nickname, Thenot said, "Hobbin, it is some other god who cherishes her sheep, for surely this Love does nothing else but make our herdsmen weep."

"Her sheep" are mortals: the shepherds. According to Thenot, Venus does not care about her "sheep" because she causes them pain by making them feel passion. Sometimes she did this by asking her son, Cupid, to shoot them with an arrow.

Diggon said, "And what an event is this, I say, when all our woods rejoice because of the visit of the three goddesses, for Colin thus to be denied his young and lovely choice: Thestylis?"

Thenot said, "Thestylis indeed is known to be so fresh and fair that well it is for thee that Colin and Nature have been thy friend and made it so that Cupid could not see you. If Cupid had seen you instead of Colin, he would have shot you with an arrow and made you love a woman who would not return your love."

Hobbinol asked, “And whither wends yonder Colin, the unsuccessful swain? He is like the stricken deer that seeks dictamnium for his wound within our forest here.”

Dictamnium is an herb that deer eat to help heal their wounds, including wounds made with arrows.

Diggon said, “He wends his way to greet the Queen of Love, who is in these woods, with mirthless lays to make complaint to Venus about her son.”

Colin was going to see Venus and sing sad songs complaining about the love — unrequited — that her son Cupid is making him feel.

Thenot said, “Ah, Colin, thou are entirely deceived! Venus dallies with her son, and closes her eyes to all his wanton pranks, and she thinks thy love is only a trifle.”

Hobbinol said, “Then leave him to his luckless love and let him endure his fate. His sore is festering entirely too much, and our comfort comes too late.”

Diggon said, “Although Thestylis is the scorpion that breaks his sweet assault, yet will Rhamnusia take vengeance on Thestylis’ disdainful fault.”

A scorpion is a catapult. In a military metaphor, Colin had tried to conquer Thestylis and win her love, but she had repulsed him. Because Diggon was Colin’s friend, he (and the other shepherds) regarded Thestylis’ rejection of Colin’s love as wrong.

Thenot said, “Look, yonder comes the lovely nymph, who in these Ida vales plays with Amyntas’ lusty boy — Paris — and caresses him in the dales!”

Vales and dales are valleys.

Hobbinol said, “Thenot, I think her mood has changed, her mirthful looks are laid to rest, she frolics not; I pray to god that the lad has not beguiled the maiden!”

He was hoping that Paris had not deceived Oenone with a false promise of love.

— 3.3 —

Oenone entered the scene. She was wearing a wreath of poplar on her head. Paris had carved into a poplar tree his vow that he would always love Oenone.

Oenone said to herself, “Beguiled, disdained, and out of love! Live long, thou poplar tree, and let thy letters of the vow Paris carved grow in length, to witness this with me. Ah, Venus, if not for my reverence of thy sacred name, I might account it blame for thee to steal a naive maiden’s love! And if the tales I hear, and blush to repeat, are true, thou do me wrong to leave the plains and dally out of sight. False, disloyal Paris, this was not thy vow, when thou and I were one, to wander and exchange old love for new, but now those days are gone. But I will find and visit the goddess so that she may read thy vow, and I will fill these woods with my laments for thy unhappy deed.”

Hobbinol said, “She has so fair a face, and yet so foul a thought harbors in Paris’ breast! Thy hopes are ruined, poor nymph, and thy luck is worse than all the rest.”

Seeing Paris’ friends, Oenone said, “Ah, shepherds, you are full of wiles, and whet your wits on books, and enrapt poor maidens with music pipes and songs, and sweet alluring looks!”

Diggon said to her, “Don’t wrongly criticize all shepherds because of Paris’ misdeed. There are those who keep flocks who never chose any but one woman, and have never tricked a woman in love with false vows.”

“False Paris is not one of those faithful shepherds,” Oenone said. “His faithless double deed — vowing love to two women — will hurt many shepherds who otherwise might go near to success.”

Thenot said, “Poor Colin, that is ill for thee, who are as true in trust to thy sweet smart — Thestylis, who causes you pain — as Paris has been unjust to his nymph.”

“Ah, well is the woman whom Colin will win because he will have no other love!” Oenone said. “And woe is me, my luck is loss, my pains arouse no pity!”

Hobbinol said, “Farewell, fair nymph, since he who gave you the wound is the only man who must heal it. There grows on Dame Nature’s ground no herb with such healing power.”

The shepherds Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot exited.

— 3.4 —

Mercury, who wore winged sandals and a winged hat and carried a winged staff called a caduceus, and some of Vulcan’s Cyclopes, one of whom was named Pyracmon, entered the scene.

Vulcan’s Cyclopes were one-eyed giants who helped the god in his blacksmithing work. Mercury’s job was to carry messages from Jupiter, king of the gods.

Seeing the nymph Oenone, Mercury said to one of the Cyclopes, “Here is a nymph who sadly sits, and she likely can tell us some news, Pyracmon, about the jolly swain we seek. I dare to wage my wings that the lass is in love because she looks so bleak and thin out of anger or out of grief, but I will begin to talk with her.”

“Swain” can mean shepherd or lover. They were seeking Paris, who was both.

Oenone said to herself, “Break out, poor heart, and complain in song — moving even the mountain flocks — about what a proud repulse and thankless scorn thou have received from love.”

Mercury said, “She sings; sirs, be hushed a while.”

Oenone sang her lament as she sat:

“Melpomene, the Muse of tragic songs,

*“With mournful tunes, in stole [a robe] of dismal hue
[color],*

“Assist a silly [naïve] nymph to wail her woe,

“And leave thy lusty [vigorous] company behind.”

Epic poets such as Homer and Virgil began their epic poems with invocations to a Muse or to all the Muses to assist them in creating their poems.

Oenone continued:

“Thou luckless wreath! becomes not me [it is not fitting for me] to wear

“The poplar tree for triumph of my love:

“Then, as my joy, my pride of love, is left,

“Be thou unclothed of thy lovely green;”

This means: Let your lovely green leaves fall, poplar wreath.

Oenone continued:

“And in thy leaves my fortune written be;”

This culture believed that one’s fortune could be discovered in leaves. Interestingly, the Cumaean Sibyl had visions that she wrote down on leaves that she kept in her cave. As long as the leaves were undisturbed, they stayed in the correct order. But if someone opened the door to her cave and the winds blew in, the leaves were blown out of order. The prophetess did not sort the leaves and did not restore them to their correct order.

Oenone continued:

“And them some gentle wind let blow abroad,

“[So] That all the world may see how false of love

“False Paris hath [has] to his Oenone been.”

The song ended, Oenone remained sitting.

Mercury said, “Good day, fair maiden. You are likely weary with the following of your game: the one you love. I wish thee the cunning ability to be able to spare or strike as you wish the one you love.”

Oenone said, “I thank you, sir. My game — my prey, who is Paris — is quick, and clears a length of ground, and yet I am deceived, or else he has received a deadly wound.”

She was punning on “quick,” which meant both 1) alive and 2) fast.

Mercury said, "Your hand perhaps did move and your arrow went awry and so only wounded him."

"Or else it was my heart," Oenone said.

"Then surely he applied his footmanship and escaped by running quickly away from you," Mercury said.

"He played a ranging part," Oenone said.

Paris was a rover (one who ranged): 1) a wanderer in the woods and 2) a chaser after females other than Oenone.

"You should have given him a deeper wound," Mercury said.

"I could not do that because of pity," Oenone said.

"You should have eyed him better, then, so you could aim at him better," Mercury said.

"Blind love was not so witty," Oenone said.

"Why, tell me, sweet, are you in love?" Mercury asked.

"Oh, I wish I were not so," Oenone said.

"You mean because he does you wrong," Mercury said.

"Certainly, the more my woe," Oenone said.

"Why, do you mean Love, or him whom you loved?" Mercury asked.

Mercury was asking who wronged Oenone: the man she loved, or the Queen of Love?

"Well may I mean them both," Oenone said.

"Is love to blame?" Mercury asked.

"The Queen of Love has made him false to his vow," Oenone said.

"Do you mean, indeed, the Queen of Love?" Mercury asked.

"Yes, wanton Cupid's mother," Oenone said.

"Why, was thy love so lovely, then?" Mercury asked.

"His beauty is his shame," Oenone said. "He is the fairest shepherd on our green."

"Is he a shepherd, then?" Mercury asked.

"And for some time he kept a bleating flock," Oenone said.

"Enough, this is the man," Mercury said.

Mercury had been looking for Paris, and he had heard enough to know that Oenone was in love with Paris.

Mercury continued, "Where does he live, then?"

"About these woods, far from the poplar tree," Oenone said.

"What poplar tree do you mean?" Mercury asked.

"The poplar tree that is the witness of the vows between him and me," Oenone said. "Come and wend a little way, and you shall see his skill."

Paris' skill was carving false vows into a poplar tree.

"Sirs, stay here," Mercury said to the Cyclopes.

"No, let them go," Oenone said.

"No, not unless you will go," Mercury said. "Instead of going, stay, nymph, and listen to what I say about him thou so blame. Believe me, I have a sad discourse to tell thee before I go. Know then, my pretty lass, that I am named Mercury. I am the messenger of heaven, and I have flown hither to seize upon the man whom thou do love, to summon him before my father Jove, to answer a matter of great consequence. And know that Jove himself will not be long away from here."

Oenone replied, "Sweet Mercury, have poor Oenone's cries because of Paris' sin pierced the impartial skies and been heard by the unbiased gods?"

"The same is he, that jolly shepherd's swain," Mercury said.

Oenone described Paris: "His flock does graze upon the plain of Aurora, goddess of the dawn. The color of his coat is bright green. I wish that these eyes of mine had never seen his enticing curled hair, his ivory-white forehead. If I had not seen him, then I, poor I, would not have been made unhappy."

Mercury said, "It is no marvel, wench, that we cannot find him, when all too recently the Queen of Heaven is paying attention to him."

In this culture, the word "wench" was not negative.

The Queen of Heaven is Juno, who is married to Jupiter, the king of the gods. Because Paris had given the golden ball to Venus, Juno was angry at him. Because of that, Mercury thought that Venus might be keeping Paris out of sight.

Mercury continued, "But if thou will have medicine for thy sore, let others who wish to pay attention to him do so, but thou remember him no more. Find some other game — another man — and get thee gone. For here lusty suitors will come soon, too hot and lusty for thy dying vein. They are such as are never accustomed to make their suits in vain."

Jupiter and other gods — who were very successful in pursuing females and making them pregnant — were soon to arrive.

Mercury exited with the Cyclopes.

"I will go sit and pine under the poplar tree," Oenone said, "and I will write my answer to his vow, so that every eye may see it."

— 3.5 —

Venus, Paris, and the shepherds Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot talked together. The shepherds had told Venus about Colin's death, which had been caused by Thestylis not returning his love. Venus was carrying the golden ball that Paris had awarded to her.

As the Queen of Love, Venus usually wanted male lovers to be successful in their pursuit of females, and so she was upset by Thestylis' rejection of Colin and by his death.

"Shepherds," Venus said, "I am happy for this sweet shepherd's sake to take a strange revenge upon the maiden named Thestylis and her disdain. Let Colin's corpse be brought here now and buried in the plain. And let this be the inscription on his tomb:

"The love whom Thestylis has slain."

“And, trust me, I will chide my son for partiality, who gave the swain so deep a wound, and let her not be won by him.”

“Alas, that ever Love was blind, to shoot so far amiss!” one of the shepherds said.

Cupid, god of love, had shot badly, causing Colin to fall in love with the wrong woman: a woman who did not return his love.

“Cupid my son was more to blame,” Venus said. “The fault is not mine, but his.”

The shepherds exited.

Paris said to Venus, “Oh, madam, if you yourself would condescend to perform the task of the handling of the bow, you yourself would have more skill and more justice than your son Cupid.”

“Sweet shepherd, did thou ever love?” Venus asked.

“Lady, I loved a little once,” Paris replied.

“And are thou changed?” Venus asked.

“Fair Queen of Love, I loved not all at once,” Paris said.

He was able to love one female, and then love another. He was able to spread his love around.

“Well, wanton, if thou were wounded as deeply as some have been” — Venus may have been thinking of Colin the shepherd — “then it would take a cunning cure to heal your wound, and your wound would be rueful to be seen.”

Paris asked, “But tell me, gracious goddess, for a start and false offence, does Venus or her son have the power at pleasure to give dispensation for it?”

Paris had started Oenone — made her come out of a place that ought to be safe — her innocence — and had made a false vow to her. Now he was wondering whether Venus and/or Cupid could forgive such an offence.

Venus replied:

“My boy, I will instruct thee with a piece of poetry

“That perhaps thou have not previously heard: In hell there is a tree,

“Where once a day do sleep the souls of false forsworn lovers,

“With open hearts; and there about in swarms the number hovers

“Of poor forsaken ghosts, whose wings from off this tree do beat

“Round drops of fiery Phlegethon [river of fire in hell] to scorch false hearts with heat.

“This pain did Venus and her son entreat the prince of hell

“To impose on such as were faithless to such as loved them well.

“And, therefore, this, my lovely boy, fair Venus does advise thee:

“Be true and steadfast in thy love, beware thou do disguise thee;”

In other words, don't lie (disguise your true self) when you say you love someone.

Venus continued:

“For he who makes love only a jest, when it pleases him to start [pursue a female],

“Shall feel those fiery water-drops consume his faithless heart.”

In other words, be faithful in love, for if you are not, punishment in hell awaits you.

“Are Venus and her son so full of justice and severity?” Paris asked.

Venus said, “It would be a pity if love could not be linked with indifference. However lovers can cry out for hard success in love, trust me, some more than common cause that painful fortune does move.”

According to Venus, although lovers cry for success in love — for the loved one to return their love — rejection affects the lover more strongly than would common cause, aka mutual love. Rejection can cause the lover to feel much more strongly than would acceptance.

We may wish that love not be linked with indifference — that is, we may wish that love should always be returned. For Venus, however, that would be a pity. She went on to explain that love linked with indifference is a very effective punishment.

Venus continued, “Cupid’s bow is not alone his triumph, but his rod to punish people. Nor is he only just a boy, for he is called a mighty god. They who do him reverence have reason for the same: His shafts keep heaven and earth in awe, and shape ‘rewards’ for shame.”

Cupid’s arrows make people fall in love, but that love is not always returned. This shows Cupid’s power: Not only can he make people very happy, but also he can make people very unhappy. As we have seen, Colin was so unhappy that he died. Cupid’s arrows are so potent that they affect the immortals just as they do the mortals. When Cupid uses his arrows to punish people, the “rewards” he gives them are actually punishments.

Paris asked, “And has Cupid a reason to explain why Colin died for love?”

“Yes, he has a good reason, I promise thee, to explain why Colin’s death might be necessary,” Venus said.

“Then let the name of Love be adored,” Paris said. “Cupid’s bow is full of might.”

Paris added, “Cupid’s wounds are all but for desert and merit. Cupid’s laws are all but right.”

These sentences are ambiguous. The word “but” can mean 1) just, or 2) except. And so we have:

1) Paris added, “Cupid’s wounds are all just for desert and merit. Cupid’s laws are all just right.”

2) Paris added, “Cupid’s wounds are all except for desert and merit. Cupid’s laws are all except right.”

Venus said, “Well, for this once I wish to apply my speeches to thy sense, and Thestylis shall feel the pain for Love’s supposed offence.”

Venus believed that Paris wanted Thestylis to be punished for failing to return Colin's love, thus causing him to die of a broken heart.

The shepherds Hobbinol, Diggon, and Thenot brought in Colin's coffin on a bier, and then they sang a song titled "Welladay, Welladay," or "Alas, Alas":

"Poor Colin, thou art [are] going to [into] the ground,

"The love whom Thestylis has slain,

"Hard heart, fair face, fraught [filled] with disdain,

"Disdain in love a deadly wound.

"Wound her, sweet Love, so deep again,

"[So] That she may feel the dying pain

"Of this unhappy shepherd's swain [Colin the unhappy lover and shepherd].

"And die for love as Colin died, as Colin died."

Venus ordered, "Shepherds, pause. Let Colin's corpse be witness of the pain that Thestylis endures in love, a plague for her disdain. Behold the organ — the agent — of our wrath: This rusty churl is he. Thestylis dotes on his ill-favored — ugly — face, so much accursed is she."

A wretched and deformed churl entered the scene. Thestylis, a pretty young woman, followed him and wooed him and sang to him a song titled "The Wooing of Colman," but the churl rejected her and exited. Thestylis stayed behind.

Paris said, "Ah, poor unhappy Thestylis, unpitied is thy pain!"

Venus said, "Her fortune is not unlike hers whom thou cruelly has slain."

Both Thestylis and Oenone suffered from the rejection of their love.

Thestylis sang and the shepherds sang and repeated some of the lyrics.

Thestylis sang:

"The strange affects [passions] of my tormented heart,

"Whom cruel love has woeful prisoner caught,

*“Whom cruel hate has into bondage brought,
 “Whom wit [intelligence] no way of safe escape has
 taught,*

*“Enforce [Force] me [to] say, in witness of my smart
 [pain],*

*“There is no pain [comparable] to foul disdain in hardy
 suits of love.”*

The shepherds sang:

*“There is no pain [comparable] to foul disdain in hardy
 suits of love.”*

Thestylis sang:

“Cruel, farewell.”

The shepherds sang:

“Cruel, farewell.”

Thestylis sang:

“Most cruel thou, of all that nature framed.”

The shepherds sang, *“Most cruel thou, of all that nature
 framed.”*

Thestylis sang:

“To kill thy love with thy disdain.”

The shepherds sang:

“To kill thy love with thy disdain.”

Thestylis sang:

“Cruel, Disdain, so live thou named.”

The shepherds sang:

“Cruel, Disdain, so live thou named.”

Thestylis sang:

“And let me die of Iphis’ pain.”

The shepherds sang:

“A life too good for thy disdain.”

Thestylis sang:

“Sith [Since] this my [astrological] stars to me allot,

“And thou thy love have all forgot.”

The shepherds sang:

“And thou thy love have all forgot.”

In her song, Thestylis referred to Iphis, who loved the Cyprian maiden Anaxarete, who rejected his love. Iphis hanged himself after being rejected. Because Anaxarete showed no pity even when Iphis' funeral cortège passed by her, Venus turned her into stone.

After finishing her song, Thestylis exited.

Venus ordered, "Now, shepherds, bury Colin's corpse, perfume his coffin and bier with flowers, and record what justice Venus did amid these woods of yours."

The shepherds carried away Colin's coffin and bier.

Venus then said to Paris, "How are you now? How does my lovely boy feel after this mournful song about love?"

"Such mournful songs, sweet lady, as these, are deadly songs to experience," Paris said.

Seeing Mercury coming toward them, Venus said, "Cease, shepherd. There is other news coming, after this melancholy. My mind predicts some tempest coming with the speech of Mercury."

— 3.6 —

Mercury entered the scene, accompanied by some of Vulcan's Cyclopes.

Mercury said, "Fair Lady Venus, let me, who have long been well-beloved by thee, be pardoned, if, in accordance with my orders, I myself first bring to my sweet madam these unwelcome tidings."

"What news, what tidings, gentle Mercury, do you bring to trouble me in the midst of my delights?"

"At Juno's suit, Pallas assisting her, since both did join in appeal to Jupiter, a legal action has been entered in the court of heaven. And me, the swiftest of the seven planets, with a warrant they have thence dispatched away, to apprehend and find the man, they say, who gave away from them that self-same ball of gold that I presume I in this place behold."

We moderns know that the planet Mercury is the swiftest planet in the sense that its orbit around the Sun takes 88 Earth days.

Venus was holding the golden ball in her hands. Both Juno and Pallas believed that the golden ball did not belong to Venus.

Mercury continued, “That man, unless I am wide of the mark, is he who sits so near thy gracious side. This being so, it remains to be done that he leave here and appear before the gods to answer his offence.”

“What tale is this?” Venus said. “Does Juno and her companion Pallas pursue this shepherd with such deadly hate as to say that they will not now be content with what was then our general agreement about how to award the golden ball?”

“Let Juno strut, and let Pallas play her part. I won by merit what I have here. Both heaven and earth shall be brought to destruction, before wrong in this is done to Paris or me.”

“This little fruit — this little golden apple — if Mercury can foretell the future, will send, I fear, a world of souls to hell,” Mercury replied.

The Judgment of Paris led to the Trojan War. Many warriors on both sides died, and Troy — a center of civilization — fell.

“What mean these Cyclopes, Mercury?” Venus asked. “Has Vulcan grown so refined that he sends forth his chimney-sweepers to fetter any friend of mine?”

She then said to Paris, “Don’t be downhearted by this, shepherd. I myself will be your bail.”

Paris won’t need to be arrested because Venus will guarantee his presence at the trial.

She then said to Mercury, “He shall be present at the court of Jove, I promise thee.”

“Venus, give me your pledge,” Mercury said.

The pledge would be a physical object that she would forfeit if Paris failed to show up for the trial.

Venus asked, “Do you want my cestus, or my fan, or both?”

A cestus is a marriage belt. Venus’ marriage belt could make any male fall in lust with any female who wore it. During the Trojan War, Juno will borrow it in order to seduce her husband, Jupiter.

Mercury took her fan and said, “This shall serve. Your word to me is as sure as is your oath at Diana’s bower. And, lady, if my intelligence or cunning may profit this man, for Venus’ sake let him be bold enough to ask Mercury for help.”

Mercury and the Cyclopes exited.

“Sweet Paris, what are you thinking about?”

Paris replied, “The angry heavens, because of this fatal jar — quarrel — name me as the cause of dire and deadly war.”

CHAPTER 4 (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 4.1 —

Vulcan, the husband of Venus, was chasing one of Diana's nymphs in Diana's grove. Vulcan walked and ran with a limp.

"Why, nymph, for what reason do you need to run so fast? So what if I am dark and swarthy? I have more pretty knacks to please than every eye does see, and although I go not so upright, and although I am a blacksmith, to make me gracious you may have some other thing to make up for those things."

The "some other thing" may have been hanging in front below his waist.

"Knacks" are 1) tricks, or 2) trifles such as toys.

— 4.2 —

Bacchus, the god of wine, entered the scene and said, "Vulcan, will you act so indeed?"

He then said to the nymph, "Nay, turn, and tell him, girl, that he has a mistress — a wife — of his own to take his bellyful."

Vulcan had a thing below his waist that he used to fill female bellies.

Vulcan said, "Why, sir, if Phoebe's dainty nymphs please lusty Vulcan's tooth, why mayn't Vulcan tread awry as well as Venus does?"

Venus had affairs, and therefore, Vulcan was asking, why shouldn't he?

"You shall not taint your troth — break your marriage oath — for me," the nymph said. "You know very well that all who are Diana's maidens are vowed to halter apes into hell."

Diana, aka Phoebe, was a virgin goddess, and all the nymphs who served her were virgin maidens. In this culture,

the lot of deceased old maids was to lead apes by the halter to hell.

The nymph meant that she intended to stay a virgin and serve Diana.

“Truly, truly, my gentle lass,” Bacchus said, “but I do know a cast, lead apes who wishes, that we would help to unhalter them as fast.”

A cast is a throw in wrestling. Bacchus knew a cast that would cast a nymph down on the ground where he could perform an act that would unhalter an ape and make it so that a nymph need not lead it.

As should be obvious, the male Olympian gods did not believe that the consent of the female was a necessary preliminary before having sex with her.

“For shame! For shame!” the nymph said to Bacchus.

She then said sarcastically, “Your skill is ‘wondrously great’! I would have thought that the God of Wine would have just tended his tubs and grapes, and not been half so ‘perfectly virtuous.’”

“Thank you for that quip, my girl,” Vulcan said, appreciating the nymph’s insulting Bacchus.

“That’s one of a dainty nymph’s sneers,” Bacchus said.

The nymph said, “Please, sir, take it with all amiss — take it as the insult it was intended to be. We nymphs give out insults only after we have been given lumps — that is, been insulted or mistreated.”

Vulcan said, “She has capped his answer in the Q.”

The nymph was minding her Ps and Qs — she was on her best behavior. She had vowed to remain a virgin, and she was doing quite well in defending her virginity. In this case, being on her best behavior included arguing with and even insulting any god who wished to take her virginity.

The nymph asked, “What did Vulcan say? That the nymph has capped his answer in the Q?”

She then said to Vulcan, “She has done so as well as she who capped your head to keep you warm below.”

According to the nymph, she had done as well at preventing Vulcan from sleeping with her as Venus had done. According to the nymph, Venus had put a nightcap on Vulcan's head to keep him warm below, rather than keeping warm what was below his waist by putting it in a warm, wet hole. Venus had also capped him with a cuckold's horns by being unfaithful to him, although this, of course, did not apply to the nymph.

Vulcan said, "Yes, then you will be shrewish, I see."

"It's best to leave her completely alone," Bacchus said.

"Yes, gentle gods, and find some other string to harp upon," the nymph said.

She meant this: Go find some other female to have sex with.

"Some other string!" Bacchus said. "Agreed, truly, some other pretty thing. It would be a shame for pretty maidens to be idle when they could be busy in bed.

"What do you say, nymph? Will you sing for us?"

"Yes, as long as the songs are some rounds or merry roundelays," the nymph said. "We sing no other songs: Your melancholic notes are not suitable for our country mirth."

Seeing Mercury and the Cyclopes coming, Vulcan said, "Here comes a crew who will help us sing."

— 4.3 —

Mercury and the Cyclopes entered the scene.

"Now our task is done," Mercury said.

Bacchus said, "Then, merry Mercury, it is more than time that this round were well begun."

They sang a song that began, "*Hey down, down, down.*"

When the song was finished, the nymph blew a horn loudly in Vulcan's ear and then ran away, giggling.

"She is a harlot, I promise," Vulcan said.

Bacchus said, "She is a peevish, elvish, spiteful, mischievous shrew."

Mercury said to Vulcan and Bacchus, “You could have seen as much of the nymph from far away as you have seen of her up close. Neither of you was successful at seeing her naked, for her kind of wandering was not the kind of wandering — philandering — you wanted.

“But, Bacchus, time spent with a nymph is well-spent time, I know.”

He did not say that to Vulcan, perhaps because Vulcan was married to Venus, with whom Mercury had had an affair.

Mercury added, “Our sacred father — Jove — along with Phoebus Apollo and the God of War are meeting in Diana’s grove.”

Vulcan said, “Then we are here before the other gods yet: but wait, the earth is swelling. God Neptune, fortuitously, meets the prince of hell.”

Pluto, the god of hell, sitting in his throne, ascended from below. Neptune also entered the scene.

Pluto asked, “What quarrels are these that call the gods of heaven and hell below?”

Neptune said, “It is a work of intelligence and toil to control a lusty shrew.”

Jupiter’s wife, Juno, was a shrewish wife.

— 4.4 —

Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo, Mars, Juno, Pallas, and Diana entered the scene.

In this trial, Juno and Pallas were the appellants, and nine male gods (including Jupiter) were the jury. Diana was attending because the trial was taking place in her grove — the woods around Mount Ida.

Jupiter was the chief judge, and Mercury carried out his orders.

Jupiter ordered, "Bring forth Paris, the man of Troy, so that he may hear for what reason he is to be arraigned before our court here."

Neptune said, "Look, he is coming, prepared to plead his case, escorted by lovely Venus, who shows him grace!"

Venus and Paris entered the scene.

Looking at Paris, Mercury said, "I have not seen a more alluring boy."

"So beauty is named the destruction of Priam's Troy," Apollo said.

The gods and the goddess Diana took their seats; Juno, Pallas, Venus, and Paris stood before them.

Venus said, "Sacred Jove, at Juno's arrogant, haughty complaint, as previously I gave my pledge to Mercury, I now bring the man whom he did recently summon, to answer his indictment orderly, and I crave this grace from this immortal senate: that you allow the mortal man to have an advocate to speak on his behalf."

Pallas said, "That may not be; the laws of heaven deny a man the grace to plead or answer by attorney."

"Pallas, thy judgment is all too peremptory," Venus said.

Apollo said, "Venus, that favor is flatly denied him. He is a mortal man, and therefore by our laws, he himself, without an advocate, must plead his own case."

Venus said to Paris, "Don't be dismayed, shepherd, in so good a case. Thou have friends, as well as foes, in this place."

Growing impatient, Juno asked, "Why, Mercury, why do you not indict him?"

"Speak softly, gentle Juno, please, do not bite him," Venus said.

"Gods, I trust that you are likely to have great silence, unless this parrot be commanded to leave hence," Juno said. "You gods won't be able to speak unless you order overly talkative Venus to go away from here."

Jupiter said, "Venus, forbear, be still."

He then ordered, “Speak, Mercury.”

Venus said, “If Juno should jangle, prate, or babble, Venus will reply.”

Mercury said, “Paris, King Priam’s son, thou are accused of being partial and biased. You made a judgment that was partial and biased, and therefore unjust.

“Your accusers say that because you lacked impartiality, and because you completely ignored desert and merit, thou gave the prize to Lady Venus here and not to them.

“What is thine answer?”

Paris now made his oration to the Council of the Gods, defending himself and his decision.

He began by flattering the gods:

“Sacred and just, thou great and dread-inspiring Jove, and you thrice-revered powers, whom neither love nor hate of a person may wrest your judgments into being unjust, I address you.

“If my fate and fortune are that I, a mortal man, must plead for safe excusal of my guiltless thought, the great honor of pleading my case to a Council of the Gods makes my mishap the less.”

Next, he pointed out that he was pleading for Venus — and her beauty — as well as for himself:

“I, a mortal man, must plead before the gods, who graciously tolerate the world’s misdeeds, for Venus, but this heavenly council may with me affirm how enticing is her beauty.

“But since neither that nor this — neither my fate nor my fortune — may do me any good in providing an advocate for me, and therefore for myself I myself must be the speaker, a mortal man in the midst of this heavenly presence, then let me not create a long defense to them who are the beholders of my guiltless thoughts.”

Actually, Paris would speak at length in his own defense.

Paris continued by saying that he did not deny the facts of the case — that he awarded the prize for beauty to Venus

— but he pointed out that he is a mortal and that mortals sometimes err:

“I may not deny the deed that is all of my offence, but I do say that I did it upon command; if then I erred, I did no more than to a man belongs: To err is human.

“And if, in making a verdict on the three goddesses’ divine forms, my dazzled eye did swerve or indulge more on Venus’ face than on either face of the other two goddesses, it was no fault of bias or partiality, but instead, perhaps, the fault of a man whose eyesight was not so perfect as might discern the brightness of the rest.”

In other words, his eyes could see the physical beauty of Venus but not the majesty of Juno or the wisdom of Athena.

Paris continued by saying that the male gods would also praise Venus’ physical beauty:

“And, you gods, if it were permitted to men to know your secret thoughts, there are those who sit upon that sacred court who would with Paris err in Venus’ praise.

“But let me cease to speak of error here, since what my hand, the organ of my heart, gave with the good agreement of my eye, my tongue is void with the task to maintain and defend in this court.”

Paris was saying that his tongue was incapable of pleading in his defense. This is clearly wrong, just as Paris was wrong in saying earlier that he would not make a long defense. In both cases, he was engaging in false modesty and lowering expectations about the quality of defense he would make.

Pluto said, “He is a jolly shepherd, wise and eloquent.”

Paris then pleaded innocent:

“First, then, accused of partiality, Paris replies, ‘Not guilty of the fact.’ His reason is that he knew no more fair Venus’ marriage belt than Dame Juno’s mace, and he never saw wise Pallas’ crystal shield.”

He had not seen the goddesses’ special powers. Venus’ marriage belt caused males to lust after females; since he had

not seen and been affected by the marriage belt, he had not been biased by any effect it would have had on him. Juno's mace was a symbol of her majesty and power. Wise Pallas' shield was a symbol of her prowess in battle. Because he had not seen the goddesses' special powers, he had judged the three goddesses simply on their beauty, just as they had asked him to:

“Then as I looked, I loved and liked at once, and as making the judgment was referred from them to me, to give the prize to her whose beauty my fancy did best commend, so did I praise and judge as might my dazzled eyes discern.”

Neptune said, “This is a piece of art, that cunningly, truly, refers the blame to the weakness of his eyes. Instead of Paris saying that he is to blame for any error, he is blaming the weakness of his eyes.”

Paris continued with his defense:

“Now, because I must add justification for my deed and explain why Venus pleased me the most of the three, let me say first, in the twists and turns of my mortal ears, the question standing upon beauty's blaze, the goddess who is called the Queen of Love, I thought, should not be excelled in beauty.

“Had the prize been destined to be awarded to majesty — yet I will not rob Venus of her grace and prize — then stately Juno might have carried away the golden ball.

“Had the prize been dedicated to wisdom, my human wit would have given it to Pallas then.

“But since that power who threw the golden ball for my future ill did dedicate this ball to the fairest of the three goddesses, I thought the safest course of action was to judge on the basis of form and beauty rather than on the basis of Juno's stateliness or Pallas' worthiness.

“I used my shepherd's skill that learned to judge the fairest of the flock, and praised beauty only by nature's aim, and behold, Paris gave this fruit to Venus.”

Paris then made the point that the three goddesses ought to accept his judgment, whether or not they agreed with it, because they themselves had chosen him to be their judge:

“I was a judge chosen there by the full consent of the three goddesses, and heavenly powers ought not to repent their deeds.”

Paris then pointed out that each of the goddesses had offered him bribes to award her the golden ball and that therefore the goddesses themselves were not letting the contest be judged solely on which goddess was the fairest:

“Where it is said that beyond her deserving it, I honored Venus with this golden prize, you gods, alas, how can a mortal man discern among the sacred gifts of heaven?

“Or, if I may — with respect to you — let me reason thus: Suppose I gave, and judged corruptly then, out of hope of gaining that which did please my thought best, then this apple was not awarded for beauty’s praise alone.

“I might offend in that way, since I was pardoned in advance with assurances that the three goddesses would accept my judgment, whatever it was.

“And I might offend in that way because I was tempted more than ever any creature was. I was tempted with wealth, with beauty, and with prowess in battle.

“I preferred beauty before them all; beauty is the thing that has enchanted heaven itself.

“As far as wealth is concerned, contentment is my wealth. A shell of salt will serve a shepherd swain, as will a small meal in a humble bag, and water running from the silver spring.”

Possibly, shepherds near a coast scraped salt from a salt-encrusted seashell.

Paris continued, “As for weapons, they who sit so low dread no foes. A thorn bush can keep the wind from off my back. A thatched sheepcote is a shepherd’s palace. The Muses tell epics of tragic war events; shepherds don’t know the skill of telling epic tales. It is enough for shepherds, if

Cupid has been displeased, to sing his praise by playing on a slender oaten pipe.

“And thus, thrice-revered gods and goddesses, I have told my tale, and I ask that any punishment of my guiltless soul be measured by my mind that did not intend any insult. If warlike Pallas or the Queen of Heaven sue to reverse my sentence by appeal, then let it be as pleases your divine majesties.

“The wrong and the hurt, if there will be any, will not be mine, but they will be hers whose beauty claimed the prize from me. If my decision to award the golden ball to Venus is reversed, it is Venus who will suffer the hurt.”

Paris having ended his defense, Jupiter said, “Venus, take your shepherd away until he is called back to this place.”

Venus and Paris exited.

Jupiter then said, “Juno, what can you do after hearing this defense but act justly and impartially? And if you will act justly in the case, you must recognize that the man must be acquitted by heaven’s laws.”

Juno disagreed: “Yes, gentle Jove, when Juno’s suits are moved, then heaven may see how well she is beloved.”

In other words, if the case goes against Juno and if Paris is acquitted, then all the gods and goddesses will know that Jupiter does not love her.

Apollo said to Juno, “But, madam, is it fitting for divine majesty to deviate in any way from justice?”

Pallas said, “Whether the man is guilty, yes or no, that does not hinder our appeal, I expect.”

Whether Paris will be found guilty or not guilty of bias, Pallas still wanted his awarding of the golden ball to Venus to be overturned.

Juno said, “Phoebus Apollo, I know, amid this heavenly crew, there are those who have things to say as good as you.”

She expected Apollo to support her — and then for other gods to agree with Apollo’s support.

But Apollo did not support Juno.

He said, "And, Juno, I with them, and they with me, in law and right must necessarily agree."

Pallas said, "I grant that you may agree, but think carefully about that upon which you will agree."

Pluto said, "If you listened carefully, the man in his defense said what he said with reverence. He showed respect to all of us gods and goddesses."

"He showed respect to you goddesses very well, I promise you," Vulcan said.

"No doubt, sir, you say that cunningly," Juno, still angry, said.

"Well, Juno, if you will appeal, you may," Saturn, the god of agriculture, said. "But first let's finish the shepherd's case and send him away."

Mars said, "Upon appeal, Paris' judgment is likely to be overturned. Then Vulcan's wife is likely to have the wrong."

"And that in passion does to Mars belong," Juno said, referring to Mars' affair with Venus.

Jupiter ordered, "Call Venus and the shepherd in again."

Mercury exited to carry out the order.

"And set free the man so that he may know his pain," Bacchus said.

Apollo said, "His pain, his pain, his never-dying pain, a cause to make many more mortals complain."

The gods knew the fates of mortal men. They knew that Paris was fated to die during the Trojan War.

Mercury brought in Venus and Paris.

Jupiter said, "Shepherd, thou have been heard with equity and law, and because thy stars and fate draw thee to another situation, we here dismiss thee from here, by order of our senate. Go make thy way to Troy, and there await thy fate."

Jupiter did not say what Paris' fate was; he said only that Paris had a different fate than being judged by the Council of Gods.

“Sweet shepherd, you go with such luck in love, while thou do live, as may the Queen of Love to any lover give,” Venus said.

Venus would keep her promise to give Helen to Paris.

“My luck is loss, however my love does succeed,” Paris said. “I am afraid that I, Paris, shall only rue my deed.”

Jupiter had not said that Paris’ fate was bad, but Paris could guess that the consequences of taking Helen away from her husband would be bad.

Paris exited.

“From the woods of Ida now wends the shepherd’s boy who in his bosom carries fire to Troy,” Apollo said.

As a god, Apollo knew that the Trojan War would end with Troy in flames.

Paris had been disposed of, but there was still the question of whether to allow his awarding of the golden ball to Venus to stand. Juno and Pallas were appealing Paris’ verdict.

“Venus, these ladies do appeal, you see,” Jupiter said. “And the gods agree that they may appeal. It rests, then, that you be well content to stand in this appeal until our final judgment; if King Priam’s son did well in this, then the law of heaven will not lead amiss. If Paris rightly awarded you the golden ball, then no injustice will occur in the gods’ decision.”

Venus replied, “But, sacred Jupiter, if I, thy daughter, might choose, she — that is, I — might with reason refuse this appeal: Yet, if Juno and Pallas are unmoved when they should feel shame, let it be a stain and blemish to their names. Let it be a deed, too, far unworthy of the place, unworthy Pallas’ lance, or Juno’s mace. But if to beauty the golden ball shall be bequeathed, I don’t doubt but it will return to me.”

She lay down the ball.

“Venus, there is no more ado than so: The golden ball rests where the gods do it bestow,” Pallas said.

Neptune said, "But, ladies, because of your rage, however our decision comes out, you have the advantage."

No matter which goddess is awarded the golden ball, the other two goddesses will be angry. In addition, even the winning goddess may be angry at a god who argued unsuccessfully for another goddess to win the golden ball. Because of the goddesses' anger, the gods are unlikely to speak what they feel is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in their presence.

Jupiter said, "Then, dames, so that we gods more freely may debate, and hear the fair and impartial sentence of this senate, you goddesses withdraw yourselves from this presence for a space, until we have thoroughly discussed the case. Diana shall be your guide; nor shall you yourselves need to inquire how things turn out here. We will, when we resolve the situation, let you know how everything turns out in accordance with our general judgment."

Diana said to Jupiter, "Thy will is my wish. What you want me to do is what I want to do."

She then said to the three goddesses, "Fair ladies, will you leave now?"

"Curse her whom this sentence does offend," Juno said.

She would be offended if she were not awarded the golden ball, and she would not curse herself, and so Juno was saying that she expected to be awarded the golden ball.

Venus said, "Now, Jove, be just; and, gods, you who are Venus' friends, if you have ever done her wrong, then now may you make amends."

Venus, of course, wanted to be awarded the golden apple.

Pallas, of course, also wanted to be awarded the golden apple, but as the goddess of wisdom, she did not now say something in order to influence the judges.

Diana, Juno, Pallas, and Venus exited.

"Venus is fair, and Pallas and Juno are fair, too," Jupiter said. "All of them are beautiful."

“But tell me now without some more trouble and ado,” Vulcan said, “who is the fairest woman, and do not flatter that she.”

Because Venus was his wife and because Venus was objectively the most physically beautiful of the three goddesses, Vulcan wanted Venus to be awarded the golden ball.

Pluto said, “Vulcan, all the matter hangs upon comparison. That done, the quarrel and the strife will be ended.”

Wrong. The quarrel and the strife will not be ended. No matter which goddess they choose to award the golden ball, two goddesses will be insulted and angry.

“Because it is known which goddess is physically the most beautiful, the quarrel is pretended,” Mars said. “The comparison has already been made in our minds.”

Vulcan said, “Mars, you have reason for your speech, certainly. My dame, I know, is fairest in your eye.”

No doubt; after all, Mars and Venus had had an affair.

“If I did not think that she is the fairest,” Mars replied, “I would be doing her a double wrong.”

He would be doing her wrong as her judge and as her lover.

Saturn said, “We tarry here so long about what is only a trifle. Let’s vote: Give it by voices, and let voices give the odds. This is such a trifle that troubles all the gods!”

Neptune said, “Believe me, Saturn. I agree with you.”

Bacchus said, “Let’s take a vote.”

Pluto said, “Let’s take a vote.”

Bacchus said, “Let’s take a vote, if Jove agrees.”

“Gentle gods, I am neutral,” Mercury said. “But then I know who’s likely to be criticized.”

Jupiter was the god who is likely to be criticized. Venus is objectively the most physically beautiful, but if Juno — who is a shrewish wife to Jupiter — loses, she will greatly criticize her husband, who is one of the judges.

Apollo said, “Thrice-revered gods, and thou, immortal Jove, if Phoebus Apollo may, as is very much his due according to our laws, be licensed to speak uprightly in this uncertain and fearsome case (since women’s wits work to create unceasing woes for men), then let me say this:

“To make the three goddesses friends — the goddesses who now are friendless foes because each has claimed the golden ball — and to keep peace with them, with us, and all, let us refer this sentence — this judgment — to where it does belong.

“Please don’t think, you gods, that my speech takes away from the sacred power of this immortal senate because I recommend a change in this case’s judges.

“In this case, I say, fair Phoebe — Diana — has been wronged.

“I don’t mean that her beauty should bear away the prize, but instead I mean that the holy law of heaven does not allow for one god to meddle in another’s power.

“Because the Judgment of Paris befell so near Diana’s bower, she is the fittest judge in my opinion for appeasing this unpleasant grudge. Let us allow her to award the golden ball.”

Apollo was pointing out that the gods and goddesses had their own domains, and it was forbidden for the gods and goddesses to interfere in others’ domains. Since the Judgment of Paris took place in Diana’s domain, she ought to be the judge: She had jurisdiction in this case.

Apollo gave some examples of non-inference in others’ domains:

“If Jove does not exercise power in Pluto’s hell with charms, if Mars has the sovereign power to manage arms, if Bacchus bears no rule in Neptune’s sea, if Vulcan’s fire does not obey Saturn’s scythe because Vulcan and not Saturn is fire’s master, then let us not suppress, against law and equity, Diana’s power in her own territory. Diana’s rule, amid her

sacred bowers on Mount Ida, is as properly recognized as any rule of yours.

“By turning over the judgment to Diana, we may wipe all the court’s speech away so well that Pallas, Juno, and Venus have to say and recognize that by the justice of our laws we were not allowed to judge and conclude the case. And this appears to me the most egalitarian judgment: A woman will be the judge among her peers.”

Mercury said, “Apollo has discovered the only way to completely rid us of the blame and trouble of making the judgment.”

“We are beholden to his sacred wit,” Vulcan said.

“I can praise and well allow Apollo’s recommendation,” Jupiter said. “By letting Diana have the giving of the ball, we will divert the matter from us all.”

Vulcan said, “If we do this, Jove may clearly excuse himself from the case, where Juno otherwise would chide him and brawl with him quickly apace.”

The gods stood up.

Mercury said, “And now it would take some cunning to divine to whom Diana will this prize resign. It will take a wise god to guess to whom Diana will award the golden ball.”

“It is enough for me that I won’t have to participate in making that decision,” Vulcan said.

Bacchus joked, “Vulcan, although thou are black with soot from blacksmithing and are ugly, thou are not at all refined.”

Vulcan joked back, “Go bathe thyself, Bacchus, in a tub of wine. The ball’s as likely to be mine as thine. Neither of us is good-looking.”

CHAPTER 5 (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 5.1 —

Diana, Juno, Pallas, and Venus talked together.

Diana said, “Ladies, far beyond what I hoped for and wanted, you see, this thankless task is imposed on me; if you will rest as well content as Diana will be an impartial judge, my fair decision shall none of you offend, and we will of this quarrel make a final end.

“Therefore, whether you are eager or reluctant, confirm your promise with some sacred oath.”

Pallas said, “Phoebe, chief mistress of this game-filled woods, you whom the gods have chosen to conclude the case that in balance yet lies undecided, concerning the bestowing of this golden prize, I give my promise and my oath:

“By the Styx, by heaven’s imperial power, by all that belongs to Pallas’ deity — her shield, her lance, her battle ensigns, her sacred wreath of olive and of laurel, her crested helmet, and whatever else Pallas may possess — I swear that wherever this ball of purest gold, that chaste Diana here in her hand does hold, impartially her wisdom shall bestow, Pallas shall rest content and satisfied without any more dislike or quarrel and say that the one who best deserves the golden ball is the one who wins it.”

An oath that is sworn by the Styx, a river in the Land of the Dead, is an inviolable oath.

Juno said, “And here I promise and profess this:

“That by the Styx, by heaven’s imperial power, by all that belongs to Juno’s deity — her crown, her mace, her ensigns of majesty, her spotless and chaste marriage-rites, her divine league, and by that holy name of Proserpine — I swear that wherever this ball of purest gold, that chaste Diana here in her hand does hold, impartially her wisdom shall bestow, Juno shall rest content and satisfied without any more dislike or quarrel and say that the one who best deserves the golden ball is the one who wins it.”

Venus said, “And, lovely Phoebe, because I know your judgment will be no other than shall become thee, behold, I take thy dainty hand to kiss, and with my solemn oath confirm my promise:

“That by the Styx, by Jove’s immortal power and domain, by Cupid’s bow, by Venus’ myrtle-tree, by Vulcan’s gifts of my marriage belt and my fan, by this red rose, whose red color first began when formerly my wanton boy Cupid (the more his blame) did draw his bow awry and hurt his dame — me — and made her bleed on a white rose, by all the honor and the sacrifice that from the island of Cithaeron and from the coastal city of Paphos rise, I swear that wherever this ball of purest gold, that chaste Diana here in her hand does hold, impartially her wisdom shall bestow, Venus shall rest content and satisfied without any more dislike or quarrel and say that the one who best deserves the golden ball is the one who wins it.”

Diana now described a nymph named Eliza. Remarkably, much that she and others would say about Eliza could be said about Queen Elizabeth I of England, who would rule many hundreds of years later.

Diana said, “Your vows are what were needed, and so, goddesses, listen carefully.

“Within these pleasant shady woods, where neither storm nor sun’s distemperature have the power to hurt by cruel heat or cold, under the climate of the mild heaven ...

“Where seldom Jove’s angry thunderbolt lights and lands, because he favors that sovereign earthly peer who lives there ...

“Where whistling winds make music among the trees — far from disturbance of our country gods, amid the cypress-springs ...

“There lives a gracious nymph who honors Diana for her chastity, and likes well the labors of Phoebe’s groves.

“The place is called Elysium, and the name of the woman who governs there is Eliza.”

Elysium is the name of the pleasant place in the Land of the Dead where virtuous souls go.

Diana continued, "It is a kingdom that may well compare with mine. It is an ancient seat of kings, a second Troy, encompassed round with a beneficial, commodious sea."

A sea surrounds and protects England just as high walls for a long time protected Troy. In addition, a man named Brute of Troy who was a descendant of the Trojan Aeneas was believed to have settled in Britain.

Diana continued, "Her people are called Angeli. Or, if I am mistaken, I am at most mistaken by only a letter."

Angeli is Latin for "angels," but Diana had meant — unless she had made the flattering mistake on purpose — to refer to the Angles who settled in England with the Saxons and Jutes. Many English citizens are Anglo-Saxons.

Diana continued, "Eliza gives laws of justice and of peace, and on her head, as befits her fortune best, she wears a wreath of laurel, gold, and palm. Her robes are dyed purple and scarlet. Her veil is white, as best befits a maiden."

Queen Elizabeth I was known as the Virgin Queen; she never married. Both Diana and Pallas Athena were virgin goddesses.

Diana continued, "Her ancestors live in the House of Fame."

Some of Queen Elizabeth I's ancestors were buried in Westminster Abbey.

Diana continued, "She gives arms of happy victory, and flowers to deck her lions crowned with gold."

The lion is a symbol of England.

Diana continued, "This peerless nymph, whom both heaven and earth love, this sole paragon, is she in whom so many gifts in one do meet and on whom our country gods so often gaze, and in honor of whose name the Muses sing.

"In state she is Queen Juno's peer, for power in arms and virtues of the mind she is Minerva's — Pallas Athena's —

mate, she is as fair and lovely as the Queen of Love, and she is as chaste as Diana in her chaste desires.

“The same is she, if Phoebe — I, Diana — does no wrong, to whom this ball by merit does belong.”

Pallas said, “If this be she whom some Zabeta call, to whom thy wisdom well bequeaths the ball, I can remember how Flora with her flowers strewed the earth at Zabeta’s day of birth and how every power with heavenly majesty in person honored that occasion of celebration.”

“Zabeta” is a variation of the end of “Elizabeth.” “Eliza Zabeta” is much like “Elizabeth.”

Juno said, “The lovely Graces were not far away. They threw their balm for joy on that day.”

Venus said, “The Fates against their nature began a cheerful song, and with favor vowed to prolong her life.”

The three Fates are Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. Clotho spins the thread of life. Lachesis measures the thread of life, determining how long a person lived. Atropos cuts the thread of life; when the thread is cut, the person dies.

The three Fates are more concerned with ending life than prolonging it, but the three Fates decided to gift Eliza with a long life.

Venus continued, “Then Cupid’s eyesight first began to grow dim. Probably Eliza’s beauty blinded him. To this fair nymph, who is not earthly but divine, I am happy to give the golden ball.”

Pallas said, “To this fair queen, so beautiful and wise, Pallas bequeaths her title in the prize.”

Juno said, “To her whom Juno’s looks so well become, the Queen of Heaven yields to Phoebe’s — Diana’s — decision. And I am glad Diana found the skill to please desert and merit so well without offence.”

Diana said, “Then listen carefully to my tale. The usual time is nigh when the Dames of Life and Destiny — the three Fates — dressed in robes of cheerful colors, are accustomed

to come to this renowned queen who is so wise and fair and to greet with pleasant songs this peerless nymph.

“Clotho lays down her distaff — the rod on which thread is spun — at her feet.

“And Lachesis pulls the thread and makes it long.

“The third — Atropos — with favor gives the thread size and strength, and contrary to her cutting the thread gives Eliza permission to weave her web of life as she likes best.

“This time of greeting we will attend, and in the meanwhile charm away the tediousness of waiting with some sweet song.”

Music sounded, and the Nymphs sang and played musical instruments.

The goddesses did not have to wait long, for the three Fates — Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos — soon appeared and drew a curtain and began singing near a chair of state on which Eliza was sitting. The three Fates regarded Eliza as a Queen.

Clotho sang:

“Humanae vitae filum sic volvere Parcae.”

[“So the Fates spin the thread of human life.”]

Lachesis sang:

“Humanae vitae filum sic tendere Parcae.”

[“So the Fates draw the thread of human life.”]

Atropos sang:

“Humanae vitae filum sic scindere Parcae.”

[“So the Fates cut the thread of human life.”]

Clotho sang:

“Clotho colum bajulat.”

[“Clotho bears the distaff.”]

Lachesis sang:

“Lachesis trahit.”

[“Lachesis measures.”]

Atropos sang:

“Atropos occat.”

[“Atropos cuts.”]

The three Fates sang together:

*“Vive diu foelix votis hominúmque deúmque,
“Corpore, mente, libro, doctissima, candida, casta.”*

[“Live long blest with the gifts of men and gods,
[“In body and mind free, wisest, pure and chaste.”]

As they sang the next few lines, the three Fates then lay down at the Queen’s feet the items that they were holding.

Clotho sang:

“Clotho colum pedibus.”

[“Clotho her distaff (lays) at your feet.”]

Lachesis sang:

“Lachesis tibi pendula fila.”

[“Lachesis (gives) to you her hanging thread.”]

She was referring to a spindle and reel.

Atropos sang:

“Et fatale tuis manibus ferrum Atropos offert.”

[“Atropos offers to your hands her far fate-enclosing steel.”]

Her far fate-enclosing steel is a knife for cutting the thread of life.

The three Fates sang together:

*“Vive diu foelix votis hominúmque deúmque,
“Corpore, mente, libro, doctissima, candida, casta.”*

[“Live long blest with the gifts of men and gods,
[“In body and mind free, wisest, pure and chaste.”]

Once the three Fates finished singing the song, Clotho said to the Queen, “Gracious and wise, fair Queen of rare renown and fame, whom heaven and earth love, amid thy retinue, noble and lovely peers, to honor thee, and do thee favor more than may belong by nature’s law to any earthly mortal, witness the continuance of our yearly tribute to you. We impartial Dames of Destiny meet, as the gods and we have agreed in one, in reverence of Eliza’s noble name.

“And, look, Clotho humbly yields her distaff!”

Lachesis said, “Her spindle and her fate-dealing reel, Lachesis lays down in reverence at Eliza’s feet.

“Te tamen in terris unam tria numina

“Divam Invita statuunt natura lege sorores,

“Et tibi non aliis didicerunt parcere Parcoe.”

[“The three sisters, despite the law of nature,

[“Appoint thee a goddess unique, though on earth;

[“And thee and no other have the Fates learned to spare.”]

Atropos said, “Dame Atropos, just as her partners have done, to thee, fair Queen, resigns her fate-dealing knife.

“Live long the noble phoenix of our age, our fair Eliza, our fair Zabeta!”

Diana said, “And, look, in addition to this rare and splendid celebration and this sacrifice these dames are accustomed to do, which is a favor much indeed against the three Fates’ natures, this prize from heaven and heavenly goddesses is bequeathed unto thy worthiness!”

She put the golden ball into Eliza’s — or Queen Elizabeth I’s — own hands.

(George Peele’s play was performed before Queen Elizabeth I.)

Diana continued, “Accept it, then. It is thy due by Diana’s judgment, which is praise of the wisdom, the beauty, and the majestic stateliness that best become thy peerless excellency.”

Venus said, “So, fair Eliza, Venus does resign the honor of this honor because this honor is thine.”

Juno said, “So also is the Queen of Heaven content likewise to yield to thee her title in the prize.”

Pallas said, “So Pallas yields the praise hereof to thee because of thy wisdom, princely state, and peerless beauty.”

EPILOGUE (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

Everybody sang this song:

“Vive diu felix votis hominumque deumque,

“Corpore, mente, libro, doctissima, candida, casta.”

[“Live long and happy with the gifts of men and gods,

[“In body and mind free, wisest and most learned, pure, and chaste.”]

NOTES (THE ARRAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

— 2.1 —

Juno says this:

My face is fair; but yet the majesty,

That all the gods in heaven have seen in me,

Have made them choose me, of the planets seven.

The seven planets known to the Elizabethans include five that were named after gods: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; the Elizabethans also considered the Moon and Sun to be planets. They believed that the Sun orbited the Earth.

Juno, in fact, was associated with the Moon.

The below is from the Wikipedia article on “Hera” in the section titled “Youth”:

Hera was also worshipped as a virgin: there was a tradition in Stymphalia in Arcadia that there had been a triple shrine to Hera the Girl (Παις [Pais]), the Adult Woman (Τελεια [Teleia]), and the Separated (Χήρη [Chérē] ‘Widowed’ or ‘Divorced’). In the region around Argos, the temple of Hera in Hermione near Argos was to Hera the Virgin. At the spring of Kanathos, close to Nauplia, Hera renewed her virginity annually, in rites that were not to be spoken of (arrheton). The Female figure, showing her “Moon” over the lake is also appropriate, as Hebe, Hera, and Hecate; new moon, full moon, and old moon in that order and otherwise personified as the Virgin of Spring, The Mother of Summer, and the destroying Crone of Autumn.

Source: “Hera.” Wikipedia. Accessed on 18 May 2019
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hera>>.

The below information comes from the entry on “Juno” in *Encyclopedia of Goddesses and Heroines: Europe and the Americas*:

A temple devoted to Juno on the Mons Cispius, whose sacred trees were planted before Rome was built, suggests that Juno was older than the city. Similarly, the cult of Juno on the Capitoline Hill appears to antedate Rome. What Juno represented to her original worshipers is difficult to determine. Attempts to translate her name’s meaning have been inconclusive, but it appears related to “light,” an interpretation supported by the titles Lucina (“light”) and Caelistis (“sky”). For this reason, and because she was honored on new moons, Juno has been interpreted as a moon goddess. But Juno has also been connected with the gate god Janus, both representing passage from one state to another; she may have originally been called Jana.

Source: Patricia Monaghan, “Juno.” *Encyclopedia of Goddesses and Heroines: Europe and the Americas*. P. 456.

The below information comes from C.M.C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia*:

[Birt] was quite correct that other deities (not just goddesses) were in fact associated with the moon: Juno, for instance, has been identified as a moon goddess.

Source: C.M.C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 73.

The below information comes from the Wikipedia article on “Luna (goddess)”:

Luna is not always a distinct goddess, but sometimes rather an epithet that specializes a goddess, since both Diana and Juno are identified as moon goddesses.[1]

1) C.M.C. Green, Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 73.

Source: “Luna (goddess).” Wikipedia. Accessed on 18 May 2019 <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_\(goddess\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_(goddess))>.

The below information comes from the GreekGods.org article on “Phoebe (Phoibe),” which also provides information on why Diana is also called Phoebe:

Phoebe was a Titan goddess of prophetic radiance, often associated with Selene (goddess of the moon). She, however, had never been referred as the goddess of the moon. The misinterpretation probably comes because her granddaughter Artemis was also called Phoebe, after her, just like her grandson Apollo was called Phoebus. And latin authors were all referring Phoebe as the moon goddess or moon itself, but they clearly had Artemis in mind doing so. That is why the Titaness is often misidentified as the moon goddess. To the Greeks it was pretty simple and obvious that Selene was the correct goddess. Romans on the other hand associated Artemis, Hera and Selene to the moon amongst others, but there was no mentioning of Titaness Phoebe. However, some researchers believe that Artemis (Diana, Phoebe) became known as the goddess of the moon because of her grandmother whom she got the name after. Anyhow, Phoebe was rather associated with being prophetic, like her sister Themis and her mother Gaea. She was also one of the twelve titans who were the descendants of Uranus and Gaea. She was, like all of her sisters, never involved in the war between Titans and Olympian gods, and

was spared from being imprisoned in Tartarus. Instead, she took her place at the oracle of Delphi.

Source: “Phoebe (Phoibe).” GreekGods.org. Accessed on 31 May 2019. <<https://tinyurl.com/y5t6xuhz>>.

— 2.2 —

The English translation of Helen’s Italian song comes from the following source:

Morley, Henry. *English Plays*. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co. (no date).

— 3.2 —

Thenot says this:

*Lo, yonder comes the lovely nymph, that in these Ida vales
Plays with Amyntas’ lusty boy, and coys him in the dales!*

Who is Amyntas? The best answer that I can come up with is that *Amyntas* is an error for *Agelaus*.

The below information comes from the Wikipedia article titled “Paris (mythology)”:

Paris was a child of Priam and Hecuba (see the list of King Priam's children). Just before his birth, his mother dreamed that she gave birth to a flaming torch. This dream was interpreted by the seer Aesacus as a foretelling of the downfall of Troy, and he declared that the child would be the ruin of his homeland. On the day of Paris’s birth, it was further announced by Aesacus that the child born of a royal Trojan that day would have to be killed to spare the kingdom, being the child that would bring about the prophecy. Though

*Paris was indeed born before nightfall, he was spared by Priam. Hecuba was also unable to kill the child, despite the urging of the priestess of Apollo, one Herophile. Instead, Paris's father prevailed upon his chief herdsman, Agelaus, to remove the child and kill him. The herdsman, unable to use a weapon against the infant, left him exposed on Mount Ida, hoping he would perish there (cf. Oedipus). He was, however, suckled by a she-bear. Returning after nine days, Agelaus was astonished to find the child still alive and brought him home in a backpack (Greek *pétra*, hence by folk etymology Paris's name) to rear as his own. He returned to Priam bearing a dog's tongue as evidence of the deed's completion.*

Source: "Paris (mythology)." Wikipedia. Accessed on 19 May 2019

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_(mythology))>.

— 5.1 —

The English translation of the three Fates' Latin song comes from the following source:

Morley, Henry. *English Plays*. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co. (no date).

Note: Two lines of the song also appear in the Epilogue.

The English translation of Lachesis' Latin words (after the three Fates' song) comes from the following source: Baskerville, Charles Read, et al. editors. *Elizabethan and Stuart Plays*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1934.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (THE ARAIGNMENT OF PARIS)

• What is the basic story of the Trojan War?

Paris, prince of Troy, visits Menelaus, king of Sparta, and then Paris runs off with Menelaus' wife, Helen, who of course becomes known as Helen of Troy. This is a major insult to Menelaus and his family, so he and his older brother, Agamemnon, lead an army against Troy to get Helen (and Menelaus' treasure that Paris also stole) back. The war drags on for ten years, and the greatest Greek warrior is Achilles, while the greatest Trojan warrior is Hector, Paris' oldest brother. Eventually, Hector is killed by Achilles, who is then killed by (Apollo and) Paris, who is then killed by Philoctetes. Finally, Odysseus comes up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, which ends the Trojan War.

• Who is Achilles, and what is unusual about his mother, Thetis?

Achilles, of course, is the foremost warrior of the Greeks during the Trojan War. His mother, Thetis, is unusual in that she is a goddess. The Greeks' religion was different from many modern religions in that the Greeks were polytheistic (believing in many gods) rather than monotheistic (believing in one god). In addition, the gods and human beings could mate and have children. Achilles is unusual in that he had an immortal goddess as his mother and a mortal man, Peleus, as his father.

• What prophecy was made about Thetis' male offspring?

The prophecy about Thetis' male offspring was that he would be a greater man than his father. This is something that would make most human fathers happy. (One exception would be Pap, a character in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Pap does not want Huck, his son, to learn

to read or write or to get an education or to live better than Pap does.)

• **Who is Jupiter, and what does he decide to do as a result of this prophecy?**

Jupiter is a horny god who sleeps with many goddesses and many human beings. Normally, he would lust after Thetis, but once he hears the prophecy about her, he does not want to sleep with Thetis. For one thing, the gods are potent, and when they mate they have children. Jupiter overthrew his own father, and Jupiter does not want Thetis to give birth to a greater man than he is because his son will overthrow him. Therefore, Jupiter wants to get Thetis married off to someone else. In this case, a marriage to a human being for Thetis would suit Jupiter just fine. A human son may be greater than his father, but he is still not going to be as great as a god, and so Jupiter will be safe if Thetis gives birth to a human son.

• **Who is Peleus?**

Peleus is the human man who marries Thetis and who fathers Achilles. At the time of Homer's *Iliad*, Peleus is an old man and Thetis has not lived with him for a long time.

• **Why is Eris, goddess of discord, not invited to the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis?**

Obviously, you do not want discord at a wedding, and therefore, Eris, goddess of discord, is not invited to the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis. Even though Eris is not invited to the wedding feast, she shows up anyway.

Note: In George Peele's play *The Arraignment of Paris*, it is the goddess Até who shows up with the golden apple.

• **Eris, goddess of discord, throws a golden apple on a table at the wedding feast. What is inscribed on the golden apple?**

Inscribed on the golden apple is the phrase “For the fairest,” written in Greek. Because Greek is a language that indicates masculine and feminine in certain words, and since “fairest” has a feminine ending, the golden apple is really inscribed “for the fairest female.”

Note: In George Peele’s play *The Arraignment of Paris*, it is the goddess Até who shows up with the golden apple.

• **Juno, Pallas, and Venus each claim the apple. Who are they?**

Three goddesses claim the apple, meaning that each of the three goddesses thinks that she is the fairest, or most beautiful.

Juno

Juno is the wife of Jupiter, and she is a jealous wife. Jupiter has many affairs with both immortal goddesses and mortal women, and Juno is jealous because of these affairs. Jupiter would like to keep on her good side.

Pallas

Pallas is the goddess of wisdom. She becomes the patron goddess of Athens. Pallas especially likes Odysseus, as we especially see in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Pallas is a favorite of Jupiter, her father. Jupiter would like to keep on her good side.

Venus

Venus is the goddess of sexual passion. She can make Jupiter fall in love against his will. Jupiter would like to keep on her good side.

Roman Gods and Goddesses

The Greek gods and goddesses have Roman equivalents.
The Roman name is followed by the Greek name:

Apollo: Apollo (same name)

Diana: Artemis

Juno: Hera

Jupiter: Zeus

Mars: Ares

Mercury: Hermes

Minerva: Pallas Athena

Neptune: Poseidon

Pluto: Hades

Venus: Aphrodite

Vulcan: Hephaestus

• Why doesn't Jupiter want to judge the goddesses' beauty contest?

Jupiter is not a fool. He knows that if he judges the goddesses' beauty contest, he will make two enemies. The two goddesses whom Jupiter does not choose as the fairest will hate him and likely make trouble for him.

Please note that the Greek gods and goddesses are not omnibenevolent. Frequently, they are quarrelsome and petty.

By the way, Athens, Ohio, lawyer Thomas Hodson once judged a beauty contest featuring 25 cute child contestants. He was running in an election to choose the municipal court judge, and he thought that judging the contest would be a good way to win votes. Very quickly, he decided never to

judge a children's beauty contest again. He figured out that he had won two votes — the votes of the parents of the child who won the contest. Unfortunately, he also figured out that he had lost 48 votes — the votes of the parents of the children who lost.

• **Who is Paris, and what is the Judgment of Paris?**

Paris is a prince of Troy, and Jupiter allows him to judge the three goddesses' beauty contest. Paris is not as intelligent as Jupiter, or he would try to find a way out of judging the beauty contest.

• **Each of the goddesses offers Paris a bribe if he will choose her. What are the bribes?**

Juno

Juno offers Paris political power: several cities he can rule.

Pallas

Pallas offers Paris prowess in battle. Paris can become a mighty and feared warrior.

Venus

Venus offers Paris the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

• **Which goddess does Paris choose?**

Paris chooses Venus, who offered him the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

How much of the Trojan War is covered in George Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris*?

The Judgment of Paris appears in George Peele's play; in addition, the play has a trial in which the male Olympian gods judge whether Paris is guilty of bias in awarding the

golden apple to Venus. However, at the end of the play, Paris has not yet run away with Helen, and the Trojan War has not yet started.

Nevertheless, it is important to know this background information to fully understand the play.

Note

I have used information presented in Elizabeth Vandiver's course on the *Iliad*, which is available from the Teaching Company, in this section titled "Background Information."

THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR

**CAST OF CHARACTERS (THE BATTLE OF
ALCAZAR)**

THE USURPER AND HIS SUPPORTERS:

The Moor Muly Mahamet.

Muly Mahamet, his son. Called Muly, Junior in this book.

Calipolis, wife of the Moor.

Pisano, a Captain of the Moor.

THE RIGHTFUL RULER AND HIS SUPPORTERS:

Abdelmelec, uncle of the Moor Muly Mahamet, and rightful ruler of Morocco.

Mahamet Seth, younger brother of Abdelmelec.

Rubin Archis, widow of Abdelmunen, older brother of Abdelmelec.

Son of Rubin Archis.

Celybin, a follower of Abdelmelec.

Zareo, a follower of Abdelmelec.

Calsepius Bassa, a Turkish Captain.

Abdil Rayes, a Queen.

THE PORTUGUESE:

Sebastian, King of Portugal.

Duke of Avero, a follower of Sebastian.

Duke of Barceles, a follower of Sebastian.

Lord Lodowick, a follower of Sebastian.

Lewes de Silva, a follower of Sebastian.

Christophero de Tavera, a follower of Sebastian.

Don Diego Lopez, Governor of Lisbon.

Don de Menysis, Governor of Tangier.

Other Christians:

Tom Stukeley, Captain of the Papal fleet.

Irish Bishop.

Hercules, an Italian in Stukeley's service.

Jonas, an Italian in Stukeley's service.

APPEARING IN THE DUMB SHOWS:

The Presenter.

Abdelmunen, oldest brother of Abdelmelec.

Two young Brothers of the Moor Muly Mahamet.

Two Murderers.

Fame.

OTHER CHARACTERS:

Moorish Ambassadors, Spanish Ambassadors and Legate,
Boy, Soldiers, Messengers, etc.

A *Queen*.

Ladies.

NOTES (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)

- Sebastian was King of Portugal from 11 June 1557 to 4 August 1578. He was born on 20 January 1554.
- King Philip II of Spain reigned from 16 January 1556 to 13 September 1598.
- King Sebastian of Portugal and King Philip II of France were related. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, was the father of King Philip II and the grandfather of King Sebastian.
- In 1578 Portugal's King Sebastian invaded Morocco. The invasion ended in a disastrous defeat for Portugal.
- The Battle of Alcazar took place on 4 August 1578.
- George Peele makes the elder Muly Mahamet, who is ruling Morocco at the beginning of the play, a villain.
- George Peele regards Abdelmelec, an uncle to the Moor Muly Mahamet, as the rightful ruler of Morocco.
- The events of the play begin in 1576. Abdelmelec has re-entered Morocco in an attempt to take the crown away from the Moor Muly Mahamet. Abdelmelec has brought a large Turkish contingent with him.
- The rulers of Morocco had the title of "Muly." The title also was given to other male members of the royal family.
- "Bassa" is an early form of "Pasha," a title that Turkish military commanders often held.
- Barbary is North Africa west of Egypt, but often George Peele's characters use it to mean Morocco.

- Genealogy and History:

Muly Xarif, an immigrant from Arabia, became the ruler of Morocco.

Muly Xequé, the son of Muly Xarif, succeeded him.

Muly Xequé had four sons. The eldest — the Moor Muly Abdallas — succeeded him.

When Muly Abdallas died, his three brothers were supposed to succeed him, in order of age: Abdelmunen was the next oldest, followed by Abdelmelec and then Mahamet Seth (the youngest).

Muly Abdallas, however, reneged on his promise and put his own eldest son (the Moor Muly Mahamet) on the throne beside him.

In 1574 Abdallas died and Muly Mahamet became sole ruler of Morocco, although Abdallas' brothers had a better claim to the throne.

As the play opens, Abdelmunen is dead, and Abdelmelec is attempting to become the ruler of Morocco. In fact, he is the rightful ruler.

- Dumb shows are brief pantomimed scenes. They are the scenes the author of this book asks you to imagine in the prologue of each chapter.

- In the rhetorical device known as apostrophe, the speaker directly addresses a person who is not present.

- In Elizabethan culture, a man of higher rank would use words such as “thee,” “thy,” “thine,” and “thou” to refer to a servant. However, two close friends or a husband and wife could properly use “thee,” “thy,” “thine,” and “thou” to refer to each other.

- An excellent annotated edition of George Peele's play can be read and/or downloaded free at elizabethandrama.org:

<<https://tinyurl.com/rpczdc3>>

It is copyrighted by Peter Lukacs. If he had not written his annotated edition, I would not have written this retelling of the play.

CHAPTER 1 (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)

— Prologue —

The Presenter says this to you, the audience:

“Honor, which is the spur that pricks the princely mind to follow rule and climb the stately chair that is the throne, with great desire inflames Sebastian, the young King of Portugal, an honorable and courageous king, to undertake a dangerous, dreadful war, and aid with Christian arms the barbarous Moor, the dark-skinned Muly Mahamet, who withholds the kingdom from his uncle Abdelmelec, whom proud Abdallas wronged, and in his throne installs his cruel son, who now usurps the position of this prince, this brave lord from Barbary: Muly Abdelmelec of Morocco.”

In other words, this play will be about King Sebastian of Portugal fighting on the side of the Moor Muly Mahamet, a usurper of the throne of Morocco, against the rightful King of Morocco: Muly Abdelmelec.

The Presenter continued:

“The passage to the crown was made by murder.

“Abdallas died, and granted power to this tyrant king — Muly Mahamet — whose story we will relate — sprung from the Arabian Moor, black in his look, and bloody in his deeds. And in his shirt, stained with a cloud of gore, he presented himself, with naked sword in hand, accompanied, as now you may behold, with devils coated in the shapes of men.”

Imagine this:

The Moor Muly Mahamet, his son, the Moor’s attendant, and some pages who attend Muly Mahamet stand together. The Moor Muly Mahamet’s two younger brothers arrive. Muly Mahamet shows them the bed, and then he and the others leave them, and they begin to sleep.

The Presenter continued:

“Some people are silenced by being murdered by kindred. Read onward and see what heinous stratagems these damned people contrive.

“Look, alas, this traitor-king sends these young lords, both of whom are his younger brothers, to their longest home — the grave — much like poor lambs prepared for sacrifice!”

Imagine this scene:

The Moor Muly Mahamet and two murderers bring into the bedroom his uncle Abdelmunen.

The two murderers then draw aside the curtains surrounding the bed and smother the two young princes in the bed.

After doing this in sight of Muly Mahamet’s shocked uncle — Abdelmunen — the two murderers strangle him in his chair, and then go forth.

In other words, the Moor Muly Mahamet murders some of his relatives to keep his throne safe. He murders his younger brothers in case they later become ambitious, and he murders his uncle Abdelmunen, who in fact should have become the ruler of Morocco after Muly Mahamet’s father died. Abdelmunen was naïve when he went with the Moor Muly Mahamet and two murderers into the bedroom.

Two other uncles are still alive who have a better claim to the throne than Muly Mahamet. This is the reason why:

Muly Xarif, an immigrant from Arabia, became the ruler of Morocco.

Muly Xequé, the son of Muly Xarif, succeeded him.

Muly Xequé had four sons. The eldest — the Moor Muly Abdallas — succeeded him.

When Muly Abdallas died, his three brothers — by a previous agreement — were supposed to succeed him, in order of age: Abdelmunen was the next oldest, followed by Abdelmelec and then Mahamet Seth (the youngest).

Muly Abdallas, however, reneged on his promise and put his own eldest son (the Moor Muly Mahamet) on the throne beside him.

In 1574 Abdallas died and Muly Mahamet became sole ruler of Morocco, although Abdallas' brothers had a better claim to the throne. Muly Mahamet then murdered his two younger brothers and his uncle Abdelmunen.

The Presenter continued:

“Once his younger brothers were in the fatal bed behearsed, the dark-skinned Muly Mahamet put to death by proud command his father’s brother, who innocently felt that he was safe with him.

“Don’t say that these things are feigned, for they are true.

“Do understand how, eager to enjoy his father’s crown, this unbelieving — non-Christian — Moor, murdering his uncle and his younger brothers, triumphs in his ambitious tyranny, until the goddess Nemesis, high mistress of revenge, who with her whip keeps all the world in awe, with thundering drums awakens the god of war, and calls the monstrous Furies — goddesses who punish those who murder relatives — from the steep rocks of Lake Avernus, located at one of the entrances of Hell, to wander and rage, and to inflict vengeance on this accursed Moor because of his sin.

“And now behold how Abdelmelec, the rightful ruler of Morocco and living uncle to this unhappy traitor-king, comes armed with the great aid that Amurath — Great Amurath, Turkish Emperor of the East — had sent for

service done to Sultan Suleiman, under whose colors he had served in the battlefield.

“Abdelmelec had rendered this service after fleeing the fury of the dark-skinned Muly Mahamet’s father, who had wronged his brothers and broken his agreement with them in order to install his son.”

Muly Mahamet’s father was Muly Abdallas, who had made Muly Mahamet his heir to the throne instead of the oldest of Muly Abdallas’ brothers — Abdelmunen — as had been previously agreed.

The second oldest of Muly Abdallas’ brothers — Abdelmelec — had fled and served the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He had served in the army of Selim II, the son of Sultan Suleiman.

Amurath, known now in history as Murad III, the son of Selim II, then aided Abdelmelec in his attempt to become the Muly of Morocco by giving him troops of soldiers.

The Presenter continued:

“Read on, and see this true and tragic war, a modern matter full of blood and sorrow, where three bold kings, confounded in their height, fell to the earth, contending for a crown.

“Call this war *the Battle of Alcazar*.”

— 1.1 —

On the frontier between Morocco and Algeria, military drums and trumpets sounded, and then Abdelmelec, the Turkish captain Calsepius Bassa and his guards, and a Moor named Argerd Zareo stood together, along with some soldiers.

Abdelmelec was the rightful ruler of Morocco and was invading the country to take his rightful crown. Calsepius Bassa was the leader of the Turkish troops sent to support Abdelmelec. Argerd Zareo was a follower of Abdelmelec.

They had just arrived at the border of Morocco.

Abdelmelec said, “All hail, Argerd Zareo, and, you Moors, salute the frontiers of your native home.”

Referring to himself in the third person, he continued:

“Cease, rattling drums; and, Abdelmelec, here throw up thy trembling hands to heaven’s throne. Pay to thy God due thanks, and pay thanks to him who strengthens thee with mighty gracious arms against the haughty, arrogant usurper of thy right, the royal seat and crown of Barbary, Great Amurath, the great Emperor of the East.

“Let the world bear witness how I adore the sacred name of Amurath the Great.

“Calsepius Bassa, Bassa Calsepius, to thee, and to thy trusty band of men who carefully attend us in our camp, picked soldiers, comparable to the guard of Myrmidons who guarded Achilles’ tent, such thanks we give to thee and to them all, as may concern a poor distressed king, in honor and in princely courtesy.”

Achilles, the leader of the Myrmidons, was the greatest warrior in the Trojan War; he fought on the side of the Greeks against the Trojans.

Calsepius Bassa replied, “Courteous and honorable Abdelmelec, we have not come at the Ottoman Emperor Amurath’s command as mercenary men to serve for pay, but as sure friends, by our great master sent to gratify and to remunerate thy love, thy loyalty, and thy eagerness, as well

as thy service in his father's dangerous war, and to perform, in view of all the world, the true office of right and royalty.

“To see thee in thy kingly chair enthroned, to settle and to seat thee in the same, and to make thee Emperor of this Barbary are the reason the viceroys and sturdy janizaries of Amurath, grandson to Sultan Suleiman, have come here with thee.”

Viceroy governed lands conquered by the Turkish Emperors. Janizaries are elite Turkish soldiers.

Mahamet Seth, Rubin Archis, Abdil Rayes, and others arrived.

Mahamet Seth was Abdelmelec's younger brother. Rubin Archis was the widow of Abdelmelec's older brother, Abdelmunen, who was murdered by Muly Mahamet, the usurping King of Morocco. Abdil Rayes was a Queen.

Abdil Rayes said, “Long live my lord, the sovereign of my heart, Lord Abdelmelec, whom the God of kings has made fortunate! And may Amurath live long for this good deed!”

Seth said, “Our Moors have seen the silver moons wave in banners bravely spreading over the plain, and in these semicircles have descried, all in a golden field, a star to rise, a glorious comet that begins to blaze, promising a happy and fortunate outcome to us all.”

The silver moons were on the many banners of the Turkish soldiers.

In this society, astronomical events were thought to be omens, which could be either good or bad.

Rubin Archis, Abdelmunen's widow, said to Calsepius Bassa, “Brave man-at-arms, whom Amurath has sent to sow the lawful true-succeeding seed in Barbary, which bows and

groans under a proud usurping tyrant's mace, right thou the wrongs this rightful king — Abdelmelec — has endured.”

Abdelmelec said, “Distressed ladies, and you dames of Fez, capital city of Morocco, you who are descended from the true Arabian Muly Xarif, my grandfather and the loadstar and the honor of our line, now clear your watery eyes, wipe your tears away, and cheerfully give welcome to these soldiers, my army of Moroccan and Turkish troops.

“Amurath has sent scourges by his men to whip that tyrant traitor-king away from here — Muly Mahamet, who has usurped the throne from us, and maimed you all.”

Abdelmelec then addressed his troops:

“Soldiers, since troops who fight on the rightful side of quarrels are successful, and since the men who manage them don't fight in fear as traitors and their feres — that is, their companions — so that you may understand what arms we bear, what lawful arms against our brother's son, the usurper, in the sight of heaven, even of my honor's worth, truly I will deliver and discourse the sum of my family history.”

Using the royal plural, he said:

“Descended from the line of Mahomet, Muly Xarif — our grandfather — with much gold and treasure left Arabia and strongly planted himself in Barbary.

“Of the Moors who now metaphorically travel with us, our grandfather Muly Xarif was the first.

“From him, as well you know, was descended Muly Mahamet Xequé, our father, who in his lifetime made a perfect law, confirmed with the general voice of all his peers, that in his kingdom his sons should successively succeed.

“Abdallas was the first, the oldest of four.

“Abdelmunen was the second oldest.

“I was next oldest, and my brother Seth was youngest of all.

“Abdallas reigned for the rest of his life, but see the deviation he made from the agreement! He labored to invest his son — the Moor Muly Mahamet — in all, usurping the crown to disannul the law our father made and to disinherit us his brethren.

“And in his lifetime Abdallas wrongfully proclaimed his son to be king — his son Muly Mahamet who now contends with us.

“Therefore I crave to re-obtain my right that Muly Mahamet the traitor holds. He is traitor and bloody tyrant both at once, and he is the man who murdered both of his younger brothers.

“But on this damned wretch, this traitor-king, the gods shall pour down showers of sharp revenge.

“And thus to you a genealogy and history not to you unknown I have delivered, yet I did this for no distrust of loyalty, my well-beloved friends. Instead, I did it because keeping the reasons of these troubles fresh in your memory may so move your minds that you don’t think your lives or honors too dear to be spent in just and honorable battle to establish the lawful true-succeeding prince on his rightful throne.”

Calsepius Bassa said, “Just and honorable and no other than just and honorable we repute the cause that we eagerly undertake for thee, thrice-puissant and renowned Abdelmelec, and for thine honor, safety, and crown, we will unconditionally expose our lives and honors to all the dangers that attend our war. We all will do this as freely and as resolutely as any Moor whom thou most command.”

Seth said, “And why is my brother Abdelmelec, then, so slow to chastise Muly Mahamet with the fury of the sword? Muly Mahamet’s pride swells as he attempts to exert power and influence beyond his reach. Follow his pride with thy fury of revenge.”

Rubin Archis, a poet as well as a widow, said, “Of death, of blood, of vengeance, and deep revenge, shall Rubin Archis frame her tragic songs. In blood, in death, in murder, and in misdeed and wickedness, this heaven’s malice did begin and end.”

Abdelmelec said to her, “Rubin, these rites to Abdelmunen’s ghost have by this time pierced their way into Pluto’s grave below. Pluto, the god of the underworld, has learned of your husband’s death.

“The bells of Pluto roundly ring revenge. The Furies and the fiends conspire with thee. War bids me draw my weapons for revenge of my deep wrongs and my dear brother’s death.”

The Furies are three immortal goddesses of vengeance who punish especially those who murder relatives.

Seth said, “Don’t sheath your swords, you soldiers of Amurath, and don’t sheath your swords, you Moors of Barbary, who fight in right of your anointed king, but follow to the gates of death and hell, pale death and hell, to entertain his soul.

“Follow, I say, to the burning hellish river of Phlegethon, this traitor-tyrant and his companies.”

Calsepius Bassa said, “Heave up your swords against these stony strongholds, wherein these barbarous rebels are enclosed. The gods call for Abdelmelec to sit upon the throne of Barbary.”

Abdil Rayes said, “Bassa, great thanks. You are the honor of the Turks.”

She then said, “Go forward, brave lords, and go to this rightful war! How can this battle be anything but successful, when in us courage meets with a rightful cause?”

Rubin Archis said, “Go in good time, my best-beloved lord, and be successful in thy work thou undertake!”

— 1.2 —

The Moor Muly Mahamet, Calipolis (his wife), and their son rode their chariot into a valley north of Fez. Moorish attendants walked on each side of the chariot. Pisano, who was Muly Mahamet’s captain, was present with the Moor Muly Mahamet’s guards and his treasure.

Muly Mahamet ordered, “Pisano, take a company of our cavalry with an equal number of light-armed cavalry and soldiers armed with pikes, and with our treasure-laden wagon march away before us by the valley of Scyras and those plots of ground that lead the lower way to the city of Morocco. Our enemies keep upon the mountain-tops, and they have encamped themselves not far from Fez.”

He and his troops were trying to escape from the nearby troops of Abdelmelec.

Muly Mahamet then said to his wife, Calipolis, “Madam, gold is the glue, tendons, and strength of war, and we must see that our treasure may be transported safely.”

He then ordered the people who would guard the wagon, “Leave!”

Pisano exited with the treasure-laden wagon of treasure and some of the guards.

Muly Mahamet then asked his son, “Now, boy, what’s the news?”

Muly, Junior replied, “The news, my lord, is war, war and revenge, and, if I shall declare the details, things stay like this:

“Rubin, my great-uncle’s wife, who wrings her hands because of Abdelmunen’s death, accompanied with many high-ranking women of Fez in mourning clothes, near to Algiers encountered Abdelmelec, who directs his army, puffed up with Amurath’s aid, against your strongholds and castles of defense.

“The younger brother, Mahamet Seth, greets the great Calsepius Bassa, whom the King of Turks sends to invade your right and royal realm, and he basely begs all these arch-rebels to inflict revenge upon our family.”

Muly Mahamet said, “Why, boy, is Amurath’s Bassa such a bug-bear that he is marked to do this doughty deed?”

He then pretended to address Calsepius Bassa:

“Then, Bassa, lock the winds in prisons made of brass, send thunder from heaven, damn wretched men to death, and take on thyself all the offices of Saturn’s sons — the Olympian gods.”

The gods meant were Pluto, god of the underworld; Neptune, god of the sea; and Jupiter (Jove), who dispensed justice on the earth.

“Be Pluto, then, in hell, and bar the fiends, take Neptune’s force to thee and calm the seas, and execute Jove’s justice on the world.

“Convey Tamburlaine into our Africa here to chastise and to menace lawful kings.”

Tamburlaine was a bloodthirsty conqueror.

The Moor Muly Mahamet then pretended to address Tamburlaine, by whom he mockingly meant Calsepius Bassa:

“Tamburlaine, don’t triumph, for thou must die, as Philip, Caesar, and Caesar’s peers did.”

Philip was the father of Alexander the Great, another conqueror. Julius Caesar and many of his peers also fought wars, including civil wars.

Muly, Junior then mentioned some things that had occurred in Abdelmelec’s camp:

“The Bassa was grossly flattered to his face.

“Amurath’s praise was advanced above the sound upon the plains.

“The soldiers were spread out on the land, as were that brave guard of sturdy janizaries that Amurath had given to Abdelmelec.

“With this gift of soldiers, Amurath bade Abdelmelec to boldly be with them as safe as if he slept within a walled town whose citizens had taken themselves to their weapons, threatening revenge, bloody revenge, bloody revengeful war against you.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet said, “Leave, and let me hear no more of this.

“Why, boy, are we successor to the great Abdallas who descended from the Arabian Muly Xarif, and shall we be afraid of Bassas and of bug-bears that are raw-headed and bloody-boned?

“Boy, do thou see here this scimitar by my side?

“Since they begin to bathe in blood, let blood be the theme whereon our time shall tread. I shall make such slaughter with my weapon as our Moors shall sail in ships and pinnaces through the stream and deep bloody channels from the shore of Tangier to the gates of Fez.”

Pinnaces are small ships that often serve as messenger-ships between larger ships.

Muly, Junior replied, “And of those slaughtered bodies I thy son shall erect a huge tower like Nimrod’s frame to threaten those unjust and partial gods that to Abdallas’ lawful seed deny a long, happy, and triumphant reign.”

According to the Bible, Nimrod had attempted but failed to build a tower — the tower of Babel — that would reach heaven.

An alarm sounded, and a messenger entered.

The messenger said, “Flee, King of Fez, King of Morococcus, flee. Flee with thy friends, Emperor of Barbary. Oh, flee the sword and fury of the foes who rage as the lioness rages who rears up on her hind legs to rescue her younglings from the bear!

“Thy towns and holds by numbers basely yield and basely resign thy land to Abdelmelec’s rule.

“Amurath’s soldiers have captured thy wagon and thy treasure, and they have sworn thy death.

“Flee Amurath’s army and Abdelmelec’s threats, or thou and those with thee look to breathe your and their last here.”

Muly Mahamet said, “Villain, what dreadful sound of death and flight is this with which thou afflict our ears?

“But if there is no safety to abide the favor, fortune, and success of war, let’s leave in haste!

“Roll on, my chariot-wheels, restless until I am safely set in the shade of some unhaunted place, some blasted, blighted grove of deadly, poisonous yew or dismal cypress-tree, far from the light or comfort of the sun, there to curse heaven and he — and He — who heaves me away from here, and to sicken as if Envy were at Cecrops’ gate, and to pine with thoughts and terror of mishaps.”

The goddess Envy paid a visit to Cecrops’ gate and made Aglauros, one of Cecrops’ daughters, envious of her sister, whom the god Mercury loved. Aglauros attempted to keep Mercury from seeing her sister, and Mercury turned Aglauros into a stone statue.

The Moor Muly Mahamet thought that he would sicken with envy at the good fortune of Abdelmelec, and he would waste away with terrifying thoughts about the misfortunes that had and could happen to himself.

The Moor Muly Mahamet then said, “Let’s leave!”

CHAPTER 2 (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)

— Prologue —

A call to arms sounded in the distance, and the Presenter appeared and said, “Now war begins its raging and ruthless reign, and Nemesis, with bloody whip in hand, thunders for vengeance on this dark-skinned Moor Muly Mahamet.”

Imagine this:

Nemesis, the goddess of vengeance, appears. Then three ghosts appear.

The three ghosts were those of the three relatives Muly Mahamet had murdered: his two younger brothers and his uncle Abdelmunen.

The Presenter continued:

“Nor may the silence of the speechless, quiet night — night that is the dire architect of murders and misdeeds, of tragedies and tragic tyrannies — hide or contain this barbarous cruelty of this usurper to his progeny.”

Imagine this:

The three ghosts cry, “Vindicta! Revenge!”

The Presenter continued:

“Listen closely, lords, to the dreadful shrieks and clamors that resound, as in a hollow place afar, and sound revenge upon this traitor’s soul — the soul of this traitor to family and nature, to gods and men!

“Now Nemesis upon her echoing drum, moved with this ghastly moan, this sad complaint, sounds an alarm loudly into Alecto’s ears, and with her thundering awakens her, where she and the other Furies, just imps of dire revenge, lie on beds of steel in a cave as dark as hell.”

Imagine this:

The three Furies, one with a whip, another with a bloody torch, and the third with a chopping knife, arise. They are wearing steel armor.

The Presenter continued:

“‘Revenge,’ cries Abdelmunen’s aggrieved ghost, and with the terror of this noise his ghost arouses these nymphs of Erebus.”

Erebus is hell, and these nymphs of Erebus are the three Furies.

The Presenter continued:

“The souls of his unhappy brethren — the two murdered brothers of Muly Mahamet — ring out the words ‘Avenge and revenge.’

“And now these torments of the world start up, awakened with the thunder of Rhamnusia’s drum and fearful echoes of these aggrieved ghosts.”

Rhamnusia is another name for the goddess Nemesis.

The Presenter mentioned the names of the three Furies:

“Alecto with her brand and bloody torch,

“Megaera with her whip and snaky hair,

“Tisiphone with her fatal murdering iron chopping knife.

“These three conspire, these three complain and moan.”

In an apostrophe the Presenter addressed the absent Moor Muly Mahamet:

“Thus, Muly Mahamet, a council is held to avenge the wrongs and murders thou have done.”

The Presenter then addressed you, the audience, and mentioned some events that followed the capture of the Moor Muly Mahamet's treasure-loaded wagon by Abdelmelec's forces.

"Imagine that by this time this barbarous Moor had lost his dignity and his diadem, and lives forlorn among the mountain-shrubs, and for his food he eats the flesh of savage beasts.

"Amurath's soldiers have by this time installed good Abdelmelec in his royal seat: the throne.

"The upper-class women of Fez and the ladies of the land, in honor of Amurath, the son of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, erect a statue made of beaten gold, and sing to Amurath songs of lasting praise.

"Muly Mahamet's fury has been overthrown, his cruelty controlled, and his pride rebuked."

The Presenter then explained what the Moor Muly Mahamet would do after he got over his depression following the loss of his kingdom:

"When sober thoughts will at last have renewed his concern for how to retake his kingdom and desired crown, he furiously will implore by messengers the aid from brave King Sebastian of Portugal that he once was offered and refused.

"King Sebastian, eager to engage in all arms and chivalry, will listen to the Moor Muly Mahamet's ambassadors, and will grant what they in letters and by words entreat.

"Now listen, lordings; now begins the game of Sebastian's tragedy in this tragic war."

— 2.1 —

Abdelmelec, Mahamet Seth, and Calsepius Bassa talked together on a battlefield near Fez. Some Moors and janizaries were present. Abdelmelec had just won a victory and become the ruler of Morocco.

Abdelmelec said, “Now the sun has displayed its golden beams, and now that the dusky clouds have dispersed, the sky clears and shows the twenty-colored rainbow.

“After this happy and fortunate fight, wherein our enemies have lost the day, and Victory, adorned with Fortune’s plumes, alights on Abdelmelec’s glorious crest, we find here time to catch our breath, and now begin to pay thy due and duties thou owe to heaven and earth, to gods and Amurath.”

Abdelmelec used the royal plural in the first part of the last paragraph, but then he switched to “thy” and “thou” when referring to himself as a way of showing his respect to heaven and earth, to gods and Amurath.

Trumpets sounded.

Abdelmelec continued, “And now draw near, and let heaven and earth give ear, give ear and record, heaven and earth, with me.

“You lords of Barbary, listen and pay attention, pay close attention to the words I speak and the vow I make to plant the true succession of the crown.

“Lo, lords, we install our only brother here in our royal seat to succeed me, and by the name of Mahamet Seth entitle him true heir to the crown. Seth will become King of Morocco after I die.

“May you gods of heaven congratulate this deed, so that men on earth may therewith stand content!

“Lo, thus I pay my due and duties to heaven and earth, to gods and Amurath!”

Trumpets sounded.

Seth said to Calsepius Bassa, “Renowned Bassa, to remunerate thy worthiness and magnanimity, behold, the noblest ladies of the land bring to you tokens of their gratitude.”

Rubin Archis, her son, the queen Abdil Rayes, and some ladies walked over to him.

Rubin Archis, the widow of Abdelmunen, said, “Rubin, who lives only for revenge, by this gift commends herself to thee, Bassa. Receive the token of her thankfulness. To Amurath the god of earthly kings, Rubin gives and sacrifices her son. Not with sweet smoke of fire or sweet perfume, but with his father’s sword and his mother’s thanks, Rubin gives her son to Amurath.”

Her son will serve Amurath.

Abdil Rayes, who was a queen and used the royal plural, said, “As Rubin gives her son, so we give ourselves to Amurath and fall before his face.”

She prostrated herself and then stood.

She gave some gold jewelry to Calsepius Bassa as she said, “Bassa, wear thou the gold of Barbary, and glisten like the palace of the Sun, in honor of the deed that thou have done.”

Calsepius Bassa said, “Well worthy of the aid of Amurath are Abdelmelec and these noble dames.”

He said to Rubin Archis, “Rubin, thy son I shall before long bestow, where thou bequeath him in honor’s fee, on Amurath the mighty Emperor of the East, who shall receive

the scion of your royal family with cheerful looks and gleams of princely grace.”

He then said to Abdelmelec, “This chosen guard of Amurath’s janizaries I leave to honor and attend on thee, King of Morocco, conqueror of thy foes, true King of Fez, Emperor of Barbary.

“Muly Abdelmelec, live and keep thy seat, in spite of fortune’s spite or enemies’ threats.”

Referring to himself, Calsepius Bassa said, “Ride, Bassa, now, bold Bassa, homeward ride, as glorious as great Pompey in his pride.”

Calsepius Bassa now left to return home to serve Amurath.

Pompey was a Roman general who died in one of Rome’s civil wars.

— 2.2 —

Don Diego Lopez, the Irish Bishop, the Englishman Stukeley, Hercules, Jonas, and others stood together in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal.

Don Diego Lopez was the governor of Lisbon, and he was greeting these men who had sailed their ship into Lisbon’s port.

Stukeley was the English commander of the forces on the ship. Hercules and Jonas were Italian soldiers serving Stukeley. Hercules was Stukeley’s second-in-command.

Don Diego Lopez said, “Welcome to Lisbon, valiant Catholics. Welcome, brave Englishmen, to Portugal.

“Most reverend primate of the Irish church, and, noble Stukeley, famous by thy name, welcome, thrice welcome to King Sebastian’s town.”

A primate in Catholicism is a high-ranking priest: a chief bishop or archbishop.

Don Diego Lopez continued, “And welcome, English captains, to you all.”

Don Diego Lopez knew that Stukeley was English, and so he assumed that Hercules and Jonas were English, but they were Italian.

He continued, “It makes us joyous to see his Holiness’ fleet cast anchor happily upon our coast.”

The Irish bishop replied, “These welcomes, worthy governor of Lisbon, are evidence of an honorable mind in thee, but be aware of our misfortune also.”

Don Diego Lopez had assumed that their ships had intentionally arrived in Lisbon, but actually bad weather had forced their ships to land there.

The Irish bishop continued, “We were all bound to Ireland by Pope Gregory’s command, and therefore we embarked to land our forces there with the Irish unaware, conquering the island for his Holiness, and so restore it to the Roman faith.

“This was the reason of our expedition, and Ireland long before this would have been subdued, had not foul weather brought us to this bay.”

Don Diego Lopez said, “Correct me if I’m wrong, but aren’t you all Englishmen, and doesn’t Ireland belong to that kingdom, lords?”

“If so, then may I speak my conscience in the cause without scandal to the Holy See of Rome that this expedition is dishonorable and it is unfitting for you to meddle in.”

Stukeley said, “Lord governor of Lisbon, understand, as we Englishmen are Englishmen, so are we men.

“I am Stukeley, and I am so determined in all I do to strive for rule, honor, and power that I am not to be bent so strictly to the place wherein at first I blew the fire of life, but that instead I may at liberty make choice of all the continents that bound the world because I make it not so great desert to be begotten or born in any place, since that’s a thing of pleasure and of ease that might have been performed elsewhere as well.”

Although he was English, Stukeley was not patriotic; instead, he was out to gain power for himself.

Don Diego Lopez said, “Follow what your good pleasure will, good Captain Stukeley. Far be it from me to make objections beyond my privilege and what is proper.”

The Irish bishop said, “Yet, Captain Stukeley, give me permission to speak. We must love our country as our parents, and if at any time we alienate our love or efforts from doing it honor, it must concern motives and touch the soul as a matter of conscience and religion, and not as a matter of desire of rule or benefit.”

He was saying that he believed in patriotism, and he believed that if one were to go against one’s country, it must be out of considerations of conscience and religion, and not out of concern for one’s personal gain.

He himself wanted Ireland to be under the control of the Holy See because of his religion.

Stukeley said, “Well said, bishop! Spoken like yourself — the reverent, lordly Bishop of Saint Asses.”

Hercules said, “The bishop talks according to his coat, and does not take the measure of it by his mind. You see he has thus made his coat large and wide because he may convert it, as he wishes, to any form that may fit the fashion best.”

Like Stukeley, Hercules was suspicious of the Irish bishop. He was saying that the Irish bishop would always take the Pope's side and would say whatever would serve the Pope's interests.

The Irish bishop replied to Hercules, "Captain, you do me wrong to speak like this about my coat or double conscience, and cannot answer it in another place."

His double conscience was as a man and as a bishop. Hercules had accused him of giving up the autonomy that belonged to him as a man of free will in order to serve the Catholic Church.

To some extent, this is true. A religious vow such as that taken by a priest involves giving up some free will. A Catholic priest can no longer stay true to his vow of chastity and get married and have children. He has given up the free will needed to choose to get married and have children.

The Irish bishop was also saying that his religion forbade the fighting of duels. Hercules' words could very well make a non-priest challenge him.

In addition, Hercules' words could be used against him on the Day of Judgment.

Wanting to make peace, Don Diego Lopez said, "His talk is only in jest, lord bishop; set aside the argument and all as friends deign to be entertained as my ability here can make provision.

"Shortly I shall conduct you to King Sebastian of Portugal, whose welcomes to foreigners are always princely and honorable, as is fitting for his state."

Stukeley said, "Thanks, worthy governor."

He then said to the Irish bishop, "Come, bishop, come. Will you display the fruits of quarrel and of wrath? Come, let's

go in with my Lord of Lisbon here and put all conscience into one carouse, letting it out again as we may live and choose.”

Everyone except Stukeley exited.

Alone, Stukeley spoke about what was most valuable to him:

“No action shall pass my hand or sword that cannot make a step to gain a crown.

“No word shall pass the office of my tongue that sounds not of affection to a crown.

“No thought shall have existence in my lordly breast that works not every way to win a crown.

“All my deeds, words, and thoughts shall be as a king’s.

“My chiefest company shall be with kings, and my rewards shall be equivalent to a king’s.

“Why shouldn’t I, then, look to be a king?

“I am now already called the Marquis of Ireland, and I will be shortly King of Ireland.

“I had rather be the king of a molehill than the richest subject of a monarchy.

“Swell with pride, my worthy mind, and never cease to aspire until thou reign sole king of thy desire.”

— 2.3 —

The Moor Muly Mahamet, Calipolis (his wife), their son, and two other Moors who served them stood near each other in the mountains of northern Morocco.

Muly Mahamet asked rhetorically, “Where are thou, boy? Where is Calipolis?”

They were in a wild area, not in a luxurious palace.

He looked around at the wild area and said, “Oh, deadly wound that passes by my eye! Oh, fatal poison of my swelling heart!”

He paused and then mourned, “Oh, fortune constant in unconstancy!

“Fight earthquakes in the entrails of the earth, and eastern whirlwinds in the hellish shades! May some foul contagion of the infected heaven blast all the trees, and may the unpropitious night-raven and tragic owl in their cursed high places breed and become foretellers of my fall, the fatal ruin of my fame and me!”

The screeches of night-ravens and owls were bad omens.

Muly Mahamet continued, “May adders and serpents hiss at my disgrace, and wound the earth with anguish of their stings!”

He then addressed the absent Abdelmelec, who had replaced him as King of Morocco, “Now, Abdelmelec, now triumph in Fez; fortune has made thee King of Barbary.”

Calipolis, his wife, said, “Alas, my lord, what use are these huge exclamations of pain to help us in this distressed estate?

“Oh, pity our distressed condition, my lord, and turn all curses to humble lamentations, and those lamentations to actions of relief!

“I faint from hunger, my lord; and cursing complaints cannot refresh the fading substance of my life.”

Muly Mahamet said, “Let all the world faint, rot, and be accursed, since my power faints and is accursed.”

Calipolis said, “Yet have patience, lord, so you can conquer sorrows.”

In this society, wives called their husbands “lord.”

Muly Mahamet said, “What patience is for him who lacks his crown? There is no patience where the loss is such. The shame of my disgrace has put on wings, and swiftly flies around this earthly ball.

“Do thou care to live, then, foolish Calipolis, when he who should give essence to thy soul, he on whose glory all thy joy should rest, is soul-less, glory-less, and desperate, crying for battle, famine, sword, and fire, rather than calling for relief or life?

“But be content, thy hunger shall have an end. Famine herself shall waste away to death, and thou shall live. I will go hunt in these cursed solitary lands, and make my sword and shield here my hounds to pull down lions and untamed beasts.”

He exited to hunt food.

Muly, Junior said, “Tush, mother, cherish your disheartened soul and feed with hope of happiness and ease. For if by valor or by strategy my kingly father can be fortunate, we shall be Jove’s commanders once again and flourish in a three-fold happiness.”

One of the Moors with them said, “His majesty Muly Mahamet has sent Sebastian, the good and innocent King of Portugal, a promise to resign the royalty and kingdom of Morocco to his hands.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet had promised to give much power in Morocco to King Sebastian of Portugal if he would help him defeat Abdelmelec.

Muly, Junior continued, “And when this lofty offer takes effect, and instills boldness in Sebastian, my gracious lord Muly Mahamet — warned wisely to think this over — I

don't doubt but will watch for opportunity, and take her forelock by the slenderest hair, to rid us of this miserable life."

The Moor Muly Mahamet would likely take the opportunity to give King Sebastian much less power in Morocco than he had been promised.

Muly, Junior said, "Good madam, cheer yourself up. My father's wise. He can submit himself and live below his station, make a show of friendship, promise, vow, and swear, until, by the virtue of his fair pretense, Sebastian trusts his integrity, and my father makes himself possessor of such fruits as grow upon such great advantages."

Calipolis said, "But more dishonor hangs on such misdeeds than all the profit their return can bear. Such secret judgments have the heavens imposed upon the drooping state of Barbary, as public merits in such lewd attempts have drawn with violence upon our heads."

In order for the Moor Muly Mahamet to convince King Sebastian to help him overthrow Abdelmelec, he would make promises that he did not intend to keep. Such false promises, according to Calipolis, are punished by heaven.

The Moor Muly Mahamet returned with a piece of meat on the end of his sword.

He said, "Hold on, Calipolis. Eat, and faint no more. I forced a lioness to leave this meat. It is the meat of a princess, and it is for a princess meet."

The lioness is the female royalty of beasts.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, "Learn by her noble stomach to regard penury as plenty in the most extreme dearth."

As his next sentences would make clear, he meant this: Even when you are very impoverished, regard yourself as having plenty because you have the ability to go out and get what you need.

He continued, “The lioness, when she saw that she was bereft of her meat, did not waste away in melancholy or childish fear, but as brave minds are strongest in extremes, so she, redoubling her former force, ranged through the woods, and rent the breeding vaults — the dwellings — of proudest savages to save herself.”

The lioness, once her meat was taken away by Muly Mahamet, did not sit and mourn, but instead went out and killed something proud and savage so she could eat.

He continued, “Eat, then, and don’t faint, fair Calipolis. For rather than fierce famine prevailing to gnaw thy entrails with her thorny teeth, the conquering lioness shall be thy servant, and lay huge heaps of slaughtered carcasses as bulwarks in the way of famine, to keep famine away.

“I will provide thee with a princely osprey, which as she flies over fish in pools, shall charm the fish so that they shall turn their glistening bellies up to be captured, and thou shall take thy liberal choice of all the fish.

“Jove’s stately bird — the eagle — with wide-commanding wings shall hover always about thy princely head and beat down fowl by shoals into thy lap so that thou can eat.

“Eat, then, and don’t faint, fair Calipolis.”

Calipolis said, “Thanks, my good lord, and although my stomach is too queasy to digest such bloody meat, yet I will strengthen my stomach by using the virtue of my mind. I doubt not a whit that I shall live, my lord.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet said, “Go into the shade, then, fair Calipolis, and give thy son and the Moors here some food.”

He then said to all present, “Eat and be fat, so that we may meet the foe with strength and terror, to revenge the wrong done to us.”

— 2.4 —

King Sebastian, the Duke of Avero, the Duke of Barceles, Lewes de Silva, and Christophero de Tavera met together in a room in the Royal Palace in Lisbon, Portugal. Some attendants were present.

King Sebastian ordered, “Call forth those Moors, those ambassadors of Barbary, who came with letters from the King of Fez.”

One of the attendants exited and then returned, bringing in the Moorish ambassadors with two Moorish attendants.

King Sebastian said, “You warlike lords, and men of chivalry, honorable ambassadors of this high regent, the Moor Muly Mahamet, listen to King Sebastian of Portugal.

“These letters sent from your distressed lord, who was torn from his throne by Abdelmelec’s hand, which was strengthened and raised by furious Amurath, ask for a kingly favor from me: aid to re-obtain his royal seat and place his fortunes in their former height.

“For repayment of which honorable arms, by these letters of his he firmly vows wholly to yield and to surrender the kingdom of Morocco into our hands, and to become to us contributory and to content himself with the realm of Fez.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet was promising to let King Sebastian be the overlord of Morocco, and he was promising to pay tribute to him. Muly Mahamet would govern the city of Fez.

King Sebastian continued, “These lines, my lords, written in extreme circumstances, extend therefore only during fortune’s date. They apply only as long as he has bad fortune. How shall Sebastian, then, believe these lines?”

He believed it possible that Muly Mahamet would forget his promises once Abdelmelec had been defeated.

The first ambassador said, “Viceroys, and most Christian King of Portugal, to satisfy thy doubtful mind herein, command forthwith that a blazing brand of fire be brought into the presence of thy majesty. Then thou shall see, by our most inviolate religious vows and ceremonies, how firm our sovereign’s promises are.”

An attendant brought in a blazing firebrand.

The first ambassador continued, “Behold, my lord. This binds our faith to thee. In token that great Muly Mahamet’s hand has written no more than his brave heart intends to fulfill, and that his hand has written no more than he will perform to thee and to thine heirs, we offer here our hands into this flame, and as this flame fastens on this flesh, so from our souls we wish it may consume the heart of our great lord and sovereign, Muly Mahamet, King of Barbary, if his intent does not agree with his words!”

Each of the Moorish ambassadors put a hand into the fire and let the fire burn it.

Using the royal plural, King Sebastian said, “These ceremonies and protestations persuade us, you lords of Barbary; therefore, return this answer to your king. Assure him by the honor of my crown, and by Sebastian’s true unfeigned faith, he shall have aid and succor to recover, and seat him in, his former dominion.

“Let him rely upon our princely word. Tell him that by August we will come to him with such an army of brave

impatient minds that Abdelmelec and great Amurath shall tremble at the strength of Portugal.”

The first ambassador said, “Thanks to the renowned King of Portugal, on whose bold promises our state depend.”

King Sebastian said, “Men of Barbary, go and gladden your distressed king and say that Sebastian lives to right his wrong.”

The ambassadors and their attendants exited.

King Sebastian ordered, “Duke of Avero, call in those Englishmen, Don Stukeley, and those captains of the fleet that recently landed in our bay of Lisbon.”

He thought to himself, *Now breathe, Sebastian, and in breathing blow some gentle gale of thy new-formed joys.*

He was looking forward to leading a crusade in north Africa.

As the Duke of Avero was leaving, King Sebastian said, “Duke of Avero, it shall be your charge to take the muster of the Portuguese and the bravest bloods of all our country.”

The Duke of Avero would have the responsibility of raising an army in Portugal.

The Duke of Avero exited.

King Sebastian then made more orders:

“Lewes de Silva, you shall be dispatched with letters to King Philip the Second of Spain. Tell him we crave his aid in this behalf. I know that our fellow-king Philip will not deny his futherance in this holy Christian war.

“Duke of Barceles, as thy ancestors have always been loyal to Portugal, so now, in honor of thy promising youth, thy charge shall be to go to Antwerp speedily, to hire us

mercenary men-at-arms. Promise them princely pay; and be thou assured thy word is ours — Sebastian speaks the word.”

King Sebastian would pay whatever the Duke of Barceles offered the mercenaries.

Christophero de Tavera requested, “I beseech your majesty to employ me in this war.”

King Sebastian said, “Christopher de Tavera, you are next to myself, you are my good Hephaestion, and you are my bedfellow, and so thy cares and mine shall be alike in this, and thou and I will live and die together.”

Hephaestion was Alexander the Great’s closest friend.

In this society, unmarried people of the same sex often slept in the same bed without causing scandal.

The Duke of Avero returned, leading the Irish bishop, Stukeley, Jonas, Hercules, and others.

Like Don Diego Lopez before him, King Sebastian assumed that the newcomers were Englishmen.

He said, “And now, brave Englishmen, to you whom angry storms have forced you to put into our bay, don’t regard your fortune as being any the worse in this. We hold our foreigners’ honors in our hand, and we give the distressed frank and free relief.

“Tell me, then, Stukeley, for that’s thy name, I believe, will thou, in honor of thy country’s fame, risk thy person in this brave exploit, and follow us to fruitful Barbary, with these six thousand soldiers thou have brought, who were choicely picked from throughout wanton Italy?

“Thou are a man of gallant appearance, proud in thy looks, and famous in every way. Frankly tell me, will thou go with me?”

Stukeley replied, “Courageous king, you are the wonder of my thoughts, and yet, my lord, with pardon understand that I myself and these whom weather has forced to lie at anchor here by thy gracious coast have directed our course and are making full force straight for Ireland.”

King Sebastian said, “For Ireland, Stukeley — thou make me wonder much — with seven ships, two pinnaces, and six thousand men?”

“I tell thee, Stukeley, they are far too weak to violate the Queen of Ireland’s right, for Ireland’s Queen commands England’s force.”

The Queen of Ireland (and England) was Elizabeth I; in 1542, her father, Henry VIII, had been named King of Ireland.

King Sebastian continued, “Even if every ship were ten thousand on the seas, manned with the strength of all the eastern kings, conveying all the monarchs of the world, to invade the island where her highness reigns, it would all be in vain, for heavens and destinies attend and wait upon her majesty. Sacred, imperial, and holy is her seat, shining with wisdom, love, and mightiness.

“Nature that made everything imperfect, fortune that never yet was found to be constant, and time that defaces every golden show dare not decay, remove, or impair her. Nature, time, and fortune have all agreed to bless and serve her royal majesty.

“Surrounding her is the surging ocean, whose raging floods swallow up her foes and split their ships in pieces on the rocks, and even in Spain, where all the traitors dance and play upon a sunny day, the surging ocean waters securely guard the western part of her isle.

“The south of her isle is enclosed by the narrow Britain-sea, where Neptune sits in triumph to direct to hell all who aim at her disgrace.

“The German seas that run along her isle’s east are where Venus feasts all her water-nymphs — Venus, who with her beauty glancing on the waves sullies by contrast the cheek of the fair goddess Proserpina.

“Think carefully, then, proud Stukeley, before thou go on to wrong Elizabeth — the wonder of the highest God — since danger, death, and hell will follow thee and all those who seek to endanger her.

“If honor is the target at which thou aim, then follow me in holy Christian wars, and cease to seek thy country’s overthrow.”

Stukeley said, “My lord, let me admire these words of yours rather than answer your firm objections.

“His Holiness Pope Gregory the Seventh [actually, the Thirteenth] has made us four the leaders of the rest. Among these leaders, my lord, I am only one.

“If they agree, Stukeley will be the first to die with honor for Sebastian.”

King Sebastian said, “Tell me, lord bishop, captains, tell me, all of you, are you content to leave this enterprise against your country and your countrymen, and to instead aid King Mahamet of Barbary?”

The Irish bishop said, “To aid King Mahamet of Barbary is against our vows, great King Sebastian of Portugal.”

“Then, captains, what do you say?” King Sebastian asked.

Jonas said, “I say, my lord, as the Irish bishop said, we may not turn from conquering Ireland.”

Hercules said, "Our country and our countrymen will condemn us worthy of death, if we neglect our vows."

King Sebastian said, "Consider, lords, that you are now in Portugal, and I may now dispose of you and yours. Haven't the wind and weather given you up and made you captives subject to our royal will?"

"It has, my lord, and willingly we yield to be commanded by your majesty," Jonas said. "But if you make us men who act out of free will, our course is then set directly for Ireland."

Using the royal plural, King Sebastian replied, "That course we will direct for Barbary."

He then said, "Follow me, lords. Sebastian leads the way to plant the Christian faith in Africa."

Stukeley said to himself:

"Saint George for England! And Ireland now adieu,

"For here Tom Stukeley shapes his course anew."

CHAPTER 3 (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)

— Prologue —

The Presenter said:

“Lo, thus the brave courageous King of Portugal has drenched himself in a lake of blood and gore, and now he prepares in full haste with sails and oars to cross the swelling seas, with men and ships, and with courage and cannon-shot, to set this cursed Moor in his fatal hour.

“And in this Catholic cause King Philip the Second of Spain is called upon by sweet Sebastian, who overindulging in the prime time of his youth on ambitious poison, dies thereon.

“By this time the Moor has come to Tangier, a city belonging to the Portuguese.

“And now the King of Spain promises with holy face, as favoring the honor of the cause, his aid of arms, and he swiftly levies men to serve as soldiers.

“But nothing less than King Sebastian’s good, he intends; at Guadalupe he met, some say, in person with the King of Portugal, and he attempted to arrange a marriage of his daughter with King Sebastian.

“But beware ambitious wiles and poisoned eyes! There was neither aid of arms nor of marriage, for King Sebastian went on his way without those Spaniards.”

Imagine this:

Nemesis, the goddess of vengeance, appears. The three Furies bring to Nemesis scales in which to weigh the guilt or innocence of some of the principal players in this historical event. The three Furies then bring in some of the principal players, including Stuckeley and the Moor Muly Mahamet.

— 3.1 —

King Sebastian, some lords, Lewes de Silva, and the ambassadors and the legate of Spain met together in the Royal Palace in Lisbon, Portugal. Lewes de Silva had just returned from Spain, where he had carried letters from King Sebastian asking for King Philip II's assistance in fighting a war in Morocco to make the Moor Muly Mahamet the King of Morocco again.

King Sebastian said, "Honorable lords, ambassadors of Spain, the many favors by our meetings done from our beloved and renowned fellow-king, Philip the Catholic King of Spain, tell us therefore, my good lord ambassador. Tell us how your mighty master is minded to propagate the fame of Portugal."

The first Spanish ambassador said, "To propagate the fame of Portugal and to plant the religious truth of Christianity in Africa, Philip the Second, the great and powerful King of Spain, for the love and honor of Sebastian's name, promises the aid of arms, and he swears by us to do your majesty all the good he can, with men, munitions, and supply of war, of proud Spanish soldiers, in King Sebastian's aid, to spill their blood in honor of their Christ."

The Spanish legate said, "And farther, to manifest to your majesty how much the Catholic King of Spain favors this war with Moors and Muslim men of little faith, the honor of your everlasting praise, behold, to honor and enlarge thy name, he offers his daughter Isabel to link in marriage with the brave Sebastian; and to enrich Isabel, Sebastian's noble wife, his majesty promises as her dowry to resign the titles of the Moluccas Islands, which are also known as the Spice Islands, that by his sovereignty in the west Indies he commands. King Philip vows to give to King Sebastian these favors with unfeigned love and zeal."

King Sebastian said, “And may God so deal with King Sebastian’s soul as justly as King Sebastian intends to fight for Christ!

“Nobles of Spain, the strongholds our renowned fellow-king, Philip the king of honor and of zeal, offers to me by you the chosen orators and envoys of Spain are not so precious in our account as is the peerless dame whom we adore, his daughter, in whose loyalty consists the life and honor of Sebastian.

“As for the aid of arms he promises, we will expect and thankfully receive those arms at Cadiz, where we will stop as we sail along the coast.”

King Sebastian said to himself, “Sebastian, clap thy hands for joy, honored by this meeting and this match.”

He then said out loud, “Go, lords, and follow to the famous war your king; and may his fortune be in all such as he intends to command arms in right.”

In other words, let King Philip II of Spain’s luck and fortune be as good as his intentions.

Everyone except Stukeley and the Duke of Avero exited.

Stukeley said, “Sit fast, Sebastian, for by your so doing that, God and good men will labor for Portugal!”

Stukeley felt that the best thing for King Sebastian to do would be to stay at home in Portugal, for as he would next say, he didn’t think that King Philip II of Spain would keep his promise to render aid to Sebastian’s military expedition.

He continued, “For the King of Spain, lying with a double face, flatters thy youth and eagerness, good King Sebastian of Portugal.”

He then addressed King Philip II in an apostrophe, “Philip, whom some call the Catholic king, I much fear that thy faith will not be firm, but will disagree with what thou have promised.”

The Duke of Avero said, “What, then, shall become of those men of war, those numbers of Spanish soldiers who multiply in Spain?”

Both men were aware that King Philip II of Spain was raising an army.

Stukeley said, “The King of Spain has a use for them and their supplies.

“The Spaniard, who is himself ready to embark, here gathers to a head like a pus-filled boil ready to burst, but I fear all too surely that Flanders shall feel the force of Spain.”

The Spanish soldiers would be used to fight a war in northern Europe rather than assisting King Sebastian in northern Africa.

Stukeley continued, “Let the King of Portugal fare as he may or can, for the King of Spain intends to expend no powder on the Moors.”

The Duke of Avero said, “If kings do dally so with holy oaths, the heavens will right the wrongs that they sustain. The kings will be punished for so lightly disregarding the holy oaths that they have made.”

He then addressed King Philip II in an apostrophe, “Philip, if these forgeries be in thee, assure thyself, king, it will light on thee at last.

“And when proud Spain hopes soundly to prevail,

“The time may come that thou and thine shall fail.”

— 3.2 —

Abdelmelec, Mahamet Seth, and Zareo talked together in Fez, the capital city of Morocco. A train of attendants was present.

Using the royal plural, Abdelmelec said, “The King of Portugal, led with deceiving hope, has raised his army, and received our foe — the deposed Moor Muly Mahamet — with honorable welcomes and regard, and has left his country-bounds, and comes here to Morocco in the hope of helping Mahamet to a crown. The King of Portugal hopes to chase us away from here, and plant in our place this dark-skinned Moor, who clads himself in a coat of hammered steel armor to heave us from the honor we possess.

“But, because I myself have been a soldier, I have, in pity for the King of Portugal, sent secret messengers to counsel him.”

King Sebastian of Portugal would disregard those messengers.

Abdelmelec continued, “As for the aid of the King of Spain, which the Portuguese hoped to obtain, we have dispatched our letters to their king, Philip the Second, to request that in a quarrel so unjust, he who is called the Catholic king would not assist a reckless Christian prince: Sebastian.

“And, as by letters we are let to know, our offer of the seven strongholds we made he thankfully receives with all conditions, differing in his mind as far from all his words and promises to King Sebastian as we would wish, or you, my lords, desire.”

Just as Stukeley and the Duke of Avero had thought, King Philip II of Portugal would not keep his word to assist King Sebastian. Instead, he had accepted Abdelmelec’s bribe.

Zareo said, "What remains to be done, then, but for Abdelmelec to beat back this proud invading King of Portugal, and chastise this ambitious dark-skinned Moor with a thousand deaths for a thousand damned deeds!"

Abdelmelec said, "Forward, Zareo, and all you manly Moors!"

In an apostrophe, he addressed the King of Portugal, "Sebastian, see in time about thyself: If thou and thine who are misled thrive amiss, guiltless is Abdelmelec of thy blood."

— 3.3 —

Don de Menysis, who was the Governor of Tangier, met with his captains in the Portuguese-held fortress at Tangier. Others were present.

Don de Menysis said, "Captains, we have received letters from King Sebastian ordering that with signs and evidence of respect and friendship we entertain the King of Barbary, the Moor Muly Mahamet, who marches toward Tangier with his men, the poor remainders of those who fled from Fez when Abdelmelec won the glorious day of battle and installed himself in his imperial throne."

The first captain said, "Lord governor, we are ready to welcome and receive this unfortunate king who has been chased from his land by angry Amurath, and if the right rests in this vigorous Moor, bearing an unvanquishable princely heart, a noble resolution then it is in brave Sebastian our Christian king to aid this Moor with his victorious arms, thereby to propagate religious truth and plant his springing praise of God in Africa."

The second captain said, "But when will this brave Sebastian arrive to unite his forces with this manly Moor, so that both

in one, and one in both, may join in this attempt of noble consequence?

“Our men of Tangier long to see their king, whose princely face, like the summer’s sun, gladdens all these closest parts of Barbary.”

Don de Menysis said, “Captains, he comes toward here at full speed, using both top sail and top-gallant sail, all in brave array.

“On the twenty-sixth day of June, he left the bay of Lisbon, and with all his fleet he happily arrived at Cadiz in Spain on the eighth of July, waiting for the aid that King Philip the Second of Spain had promised.

“And for fifteen days he there remained aboard, waiting for when this Spanish force would come, nor did he step ashore, as if he were continually sailing on the sea.

“But the King of Spain, who meant and intended nothing less, pretended to experience a sudden fear and anxiety that necessitated him to keep his own country safe from Amurath’s fierce invasion, and to excuse his promise to our king, for which he stormed as great Achilles did long ago while lying for lack of wind in Aulis’ gulf.”

Ancient Greek ships met at the gulf of Aulis before sailing to Troy. Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Trojan War, was impatient at the delay caused by lack of the wind needed to sail to Troy.

Don de Menysis continued, “And King Sebastian hoisted up his sails and weighed his anchors, and hitherward he came, and looked to meet this manly Moor whose cause he undertakes.

“Therefore we go to welcome and receive, with cannon-shot and shouts of young and old, this fleet of Portuguese and troop of Moors.”

— 3.4 —

At the Portuguese-held city of Tangier, trumpets sounded, and small cannon discharged their cannon-shot as King Sebastian, the Duke of Avero, Lord Lodowick, Stukeley, and others met the Moor Muly Mahamet, Calipolis, their son, and others.

King Sebastian said, “Muly Mahamet, King of Barbary, we are well met, and welcome to our town of Tangier after this sudden shock and unlucky war.

“Welcome, brave Queen of Moors. Repose thee here, thou and thy noble son.

“And, soldiers all, repose you here in King Sebastian’s town.

“Thus far in honor of thy name and aid, Lord Mahamet, we have adventured, to win for thee a kingdom, to win for ourselves fame, and to win performance of those promises that in thy faith and royalty thou have sworn to King Sebastian of Portugal.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet had promised to make King Sebastian the overlord of Morocco if he would help him defeat Abdelmelec.

King Sebastian continued, “And thrive it so with thee as thou do mean, and mean thou so as thou do wish to thrive!”

In other words, may you thrive if you intend to keep your promises, and may you not thrive if you do not intend to keep your promises.

King Sebastian continued, “And if our Christ, for whom in chief we fight, hereby to enlarge the bounds of Christendom,

will favor this war, and, as I do not doubt, send victory to land upon my helmet, then, brave Moor, I will promote thy kingly son, and with a crown of pearl and gold adorn thy temples and enrich thy head.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet said, “Oh, brave Sebastian, noble King of Portugal, renowned and honored always may thou be, the conqueror over those who menace thee!

“May the hellish prince, grim Pluto, god of the Underworld, with his mace violently drive my soul down to hell, and with this soul let him drag down to hell this son of mine — the honor of my house — unless I perform religiously the holy vows that I have made to give to thee that which I have promised thee!

“And so that thy lords and captains may perceive that my mind is in this matter free from duplicity and is in this matter pure — as pure as is the water of the brook — my dearest son to thee I pledge: I hand him over to you.

“Receive him, lord, as a hostage to ensure I will keep my vow, for even my mind presages to myself that I shall behold Abdelmelec captured and then dragged like a slave along this running river shore: a spectacle to daunt the pride of those who climb aloft by force, and not by right.”

Muly Mahamet’s son said, “Nor can it otherwise befall the man — Abdelmelec — who keeps his seat and scepter all in fear, who wears his crown in the eye of all the world, a crown known to have been gotten by theft and not by inheritance.

“What title, then, has Abdelmelec here to bar our father or his progeny from the throne?

“Right royal King Sebastian, have no doubt or fear about helping us, an action agreeing with your wholesome Christian laws.

“Help, then, courageous lord, with hand and sword, to clear my father’s way, whose obstacles are lawless men; and for this deed all of you shall be renowned, renowned and chronicled in books of fame, in books of fame and characters of brass, of brass — nay, of beaten gold.

“Fight, then, for fame, and you will find the Arabian Muly Mahamet here adventurous, bold, and full of rich reward.”

Stukeley said, “Brave boy, how plain this princely mind in thee gives evidence of the height and honor of thy birth! I have well observed thy eagerness — which being offered by your majesty, no doubt the quarrel, opened by the mouth of this young prince impartially to us, may animate and hearten all the army to fight against the devil for Lord Mahamet.”

King Sebastian said, “True, Stukeley; and so freshly to my mind has this young prince recalled the wrong done to his father that in good time I hope this honor’s fire, kindled already with regard of right, bursts into open flames, and calls for wars, wars, wars to plant the true-succeeding prince.

“Lord Mahamet, I take thy noble son as a pledge of honor, and I shall treat him so.

“Lord Lodowick, and my good Lord of Averro, see that this young prince is conveyed safely to Mazagan and is there accompanied as befits him best.

“And to this war prepare you more and less,

“This rightful war, that Christians’ God will bless.”

CHAPTER 4 (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)

— Prologue —

The Presenter said, “Now hardened is this unfortunate heathen — non-Christian — prince, and strengthened by the arms of Portugal, this Moor Muly Mahamet, this murderer of his progeny, and war and weapons now, and blood and death, attend the counsels of this cursed king, and to a bloody banquet he invites the brave Sebastian and his noble peers.”

Imagine this:

King Sebastian, Muly Mahamet, the Duke of Avero, and Stukeley attend a bloody feast featuring lots of blood, dead men’s heads in dishes, and human bones. The Furies and Death also attend the bloody banquet.

The Presenter continued, “This peerless prince arrived in a fatal hour to lose his life and the lives of many vigorous men, courageous Portuguese, drawn by ambitious golden looks.”

The golden looks were opportunities to achieve one’s ambitions.

The Presenter continued, “Let fame of him no wrongful censure sound.

“Honor was the object of his thoughts, ambition was his ground.”

— 4.1 —

Abdelmelec, Celybin, Zareo, and others met in the city of Alcazar. Celybin was Abdelmelec’s chief scout. Zareo was one of Abdelmelec’s military commanders. Abdelmelec’s army was here at Alcazar.

Abdelmelec said, “Now tell me, Celybin: What is the enemy doing?”

Celybin said, "The enemy, dread lord, has left the town of Arzil with a thousand armed soldiers to guard his fleet of thirteen hundred sail.

"Mustering his men before the walls of Arzil, he found he had two thousand armed cavalry, fourteen thousand foot soldiers, three thousand laborers known as pioneers, and a thousand wagon drivers, besides an almost numberless number of drudges, negroes, slaves, and muleteers, stable-boys, laundresses, and courtesans, and fifteen hundred wagons full of stuff for noblemen brought up in delicate surroundings."

The Portuguese army was ill trained and ill managed. The noblemen had brought along with them way too many servants and way too many luxurious personal belongings. They were not used to military campaigns and battlefields.

Abdelmelec said, "Alas, good King Sebastian, thy foresight has been small, to come with women into Barbary, with laundresses, with baggage, and with trash, numbers unfit to multiply the soldiers of thy army."

Celybin said, "Their payment to the soldiers in the camp is surpassingly slow, and food is scarce, with the result that many faint and die."

Abdelmelec asked, "Where is he marching in all this haste?"

Celybin answered, "Some think he marches here with the intention of capturing this city of Alcazar."

"To Alcazar?" Abdelmelec said. "Unconstant chance!"

Lady Fortune is fickle, but for whom was King Sebastian's march unfortunate? For himself and his army because they were not prepared to fight a war, especially when heavily outnumbered? True. But it was also unfortunate for

Abdelmelec because he was a good man whom history records as preferring not to fight.

Celybin said, “The brave and valiant King of Portugal quarters his power in four battalions, in the front of which, to welcome us, are placed thirty-six cannon.

“The first battalion, consisting of light-armed cavalry and the garrisons brought from Tangier, is led by Alvaro Peres de Taverro.

“Stukeley commands the left or middle battalion, which is composed of Italians and German horsemen. Stukeley is a warlike Englishman sent by the Pope, and he vainly calls himself the Marquis of Ireland.

“Alonso Aquilaz conducts the third battalion, which mostly consists of German soldiers.

“The fourth legion consists of none except Portuguese soldiers, of whom Lodevico Caesar has the chief command.

“In addition, there stand six thousand splendidly attired cavalry who are ready to fight where need requires.

“Thus I have told your royal majesty how King Sebastian is placed to brave us in the fight.”

Abdelmelec asked, “But where’s our nephew, the Moor Muly Mahamet?”

Celybin said, “He marches in the middle and is guarded on all sides by fully five hundred foot soldiers armed with arquebuses — firearms — and by six thousand useless soldiers armed with pikes.”

Pikes are useful weapons against cavalry, but poorly trained soldiers would not be able to effectively use their pikes.

Zareo said, “Great sovereign, please hear me speak, and let Zareo’s advice now prevail.

“While the time is still appropriate, and while these Christians dare to approach the battlefield with their warlike banners spread, let us quickly with all our forces meet them, and hem them in, so that not a man escape.

“That way, they will be careful another time how they touch the shore of Barbary.”

Abdelmelec’s army was much bigger than King Sebastian’s army, and so his army could surround King Sebastian’s army.

Using the royal plural, Abdelmelec said, “Zareo, hear our resolution.

“Thus our forces we will first dispose.

“Mahamet Seth, my brother, will have a thousand soldiers carrying firearms on horseback — all of them choice harguebuziers, and he will have ten thousand foot soldiers with spear and shield. These shall make up the right wing of the army.

“Zareo, you shall have in charge the left wing. You shall have two thousand light-armed horsemen and ten thousand cavalry.

“The main — center — battalion of foot soldiers carrying firearms, and twenty thousand horsemen in their troops, I myself will have in charge, surrounded by my trusty guard of janizaries, who guard me and are fortunate in war.

“And toward Arzil we will make our way.

“If, then, our enemy will balk our force and not fight, then in God’s name let him — it will be the best thing for him.

“But if he aims at the walls of Alcazar, then beat him back with bullets as thick as hail and make him know and regret

his recklessness — the recklessness of him who rashly seeks the ruin of this land.”

— 4.2 —

King Sebastian, the Duke of Avero, and Stukeley talked together in the Portuguese camp north of the city of Alcazar. Others were present.

King Sebastian said, “Why, tell me, lords, why did you leave Portugal and cross the seas with us to Barbary? Was it to see the country and no more, or else to flee before you were attacked?”

“I am ashamed to think that such as you, whose deeds have been renowned heretofore, should slack in such an act of consequence. We come to fight, and vow to die fighting, or else to win the thing for which we came.

“Because Abdelmelec, as if he were pitying us, sends us messages to counsel quietness, you stand stunned, and think it sound advice. As if our enemy would wish us any good.

“No, let him know we scorn his ‘courtesy’ and we will resist his forces whatsoever. Cast fear aside. I myself will lead the way and make a passage with my conquering sword, knee-deep in the blood of these accursed Moors; all they who love my honor, follow me.

“If you were as resolute as is your king, the walls of Alcazar would fall before your face, and all the force of this lord of Barbary — Abdelmelec — would be destroyed, even if it were ten times more than it is.”

The Duke of Avero said, “So well do these words suit a kingly mouth that they are persuasive enough to make a coward fight. But when advice and prudent foresight are joined with such magnanimity, trophies of victory and

kingly spoils inevitably adorn his crown, his kingdom, and his fame.”

Bearing news, Christopher de Tavora, Don de Menysis, and Hercules entered the scene.

Hercules said, “We have seen upon the mountaintops a huge company of invading Moors, and they, my lord, will fall upon our heads as thick as winter’s hail in a surprise attack.

“It is best, then, at once to take steps to avoid this gloomy storm. It is in vain to strive with such a stream.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet entered the scene.

He said to King Sebastian, “Behold, thrice-noble lord, uncalled I come to counsel where necessity commands, and the honor of undoubted victory makes me exclaim upon this dastard flight.

“Why, King Sebastian, will thou now delay, and let so great a glory slip from thy hands?”

“Let’s say that you march to Larissa now. The forces of the foe have come so near that the foe will block the passage across the river, and so unexpectedly you will be forced to fight.”

Larissa was a port town about a dozen miles away.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “But know, king, and know, thrice-valiant lords, that a few blows will serve to achieve victory. I ask but only this, that with your army you march into the battlefield.

“For now all the opposing army is resolute to leave the traitor Abdelmelec helpless in the fight and fly to me as to their rightful prince.

“Some cavalry have led the way by already deserting the traitor, and they vow that their companions will do the same.

“The enemy army is full of tumult and of fear.

“So then as you have come to plant me in my throne, and to enlarge your fame in Africa, now — now or never — bravely execute your sound and honorable resolution, and end this war together with the life of Abdelmelec, who usurps the crown with tyranny.”

King Sebastian said, “Captains, you hear the reasons of the King of Morocco, the Moor Muly Mahamet, which so effectually have pierced my ears that I am fully resolute to fight, and whoever refuses now to follow me, let him be forever accounted cowardly.”

The Duke of Avero said, “May shame be the share of that man who flees when kings fight! I, the Duke of Avero, lay my life before your feet.”

Stukeley said, “As for my part, lords, I cannot sell my blood dearer than in the company of kings.”

Everyone exited except the Moor Muly Mahamet.

He said, “Now I have set these Portuguese to work cutting a path for me to the crown of Morocco. If they don’t do that, then they will dig their graves with their weapons here.

“You bastards of the Night and Erebus, you fiends — you Furies — you hags that fight in beds of steel, range through this army with your iron whips, drive forward to this deed this Christian crew, and let me triumph in the tragedy, even if it is sealed and honored with the blood both of the King of Portugal and of the barbarous Moor Abdelmelec.”

The Furies fight in beds of steel. In this poetic image, the steel is their armor, which they sleep in.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “Ride, Nemesis, goddess of vengeance, ride in thy fiery cart, and sprinkle

gore among these men of war, so that either party, eager for revenge, may honor thee with the sacrifice of death.

“And Nemesis, having bathed thy chariot-wheels in blood, descend and take to thy tormenting hell the mangled body of that traitor-king Abdelmelec, who scorns the power and force of the King of Portugal.

“Then let the earth discover to his ghost such tortures as usurpers feel below.

“Let him be racked in proud Ixion’s wheel.”

In the Land of the Dead, Ixion is bound on a flaming wheel that constantly spins.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “Let him be tormented with Tantalus’ endless thirst.”

In the Land of the Dead, Tantalus stands in a stream of water with fruit-bearing branches above his head. Whenever he stoops to drink, the water level lowers and the stream dries up. Whenever he reaches for fruit to eat, the wind blows the branches just out of his reach. He is forever thirsty and hungry, and water and fruit are always just out of his possession.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “Let him be prey to Tityus’ greedy bird.”

In the Land of the Dead, Tityus has been sentenced to lie chained on the ground as two vultures eternally dig into his body and eat his liver.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “Let him be wearied with Sisyphus’ immortal toil.”

In the Land of the Dead, Sisyphus is punished to forever roll a boulder up a hill. Just as he reaches the top of the hill, he

loses control of the boulder and it rolls back to the bottom of the hill again. Sisyphus can never accomplish his goal.

The Moor Muly Mahamet continued, “And lastly for revenge, for deep revenge, of which thou are goddess and deviser, damned let him be, damned, and condemned to bear all the torments, tortures, plagues, and pains of hell.”

CHAPTER 5 (THE BATTLE OF ALCAZAR)**— Prologue —**

The Presenter said:

“May evil fall to him that so much evil thinks, and may evil befall this foul ambitious Moor Muly Mahamet, whose wily schemes with the smoothest flattery of speech have tied and tangled in a dangerous war the fierce and manly King of Portugal.”

Lightning flashed and thunder sounded.

The Presenter continued:

“Now the heavens throw forth their lightning-flames and thunder over Africa’s deadly battlefields. Blood will have blood; foul murder will not escape the whip of retribution.”

Imagine this:

Fame, looking like an angel, hangs three crowns upon a tree.

The Presenter continued:

“At last Fame descends, as Iris did to finish fainting Dido’s dying life.”

Dido, the Queen of Carthage, fell in love with the Trojan Aeneas after Troy fell and the surviving Trojans led by Aeneas made an emergency landing in Carthage. The two had a love affair, and Dido was despondent after Aeneas left Carthage to fulfill his destiny of going to Italy and becoming an important ancestor of the Romans. She committed suicide by falling on her sword, and the goddess Juno sent another goddess, Iris, to cut her thread of life so she could enter the Land of the Dead.

The Presenter continued:

“The goddess Fame descends from her stately bower, and on the tree, like fruit newly ripe and ready to fall, she places the crowns of these unhappy kings, whom formerly she kept in the eye of all the world.”

Imagine this:

A blazing star appears.

The Presenter continued:

“Now fiery stars and streaming comets blaze, which threaten the earth and princes of the same.”

In this society, comets were regarded as ill omens.

Imagine this:

Fireworks appear in the sky.

The Presenter continued:

“Fire, fire whirls round about the axle of heaven, and from the foot of the northern constellation Cassiopeia, in a fatal hour, consumes these fatal crowns.

Imagine this:

One crown falls.

The Presenter continued:

“Down falls the diadem of the King of Portugal.”

Imagine this:

The other crowns fall.

The Presenter continued:

“The crowns of Barbary and kingdoms fall.”

The crowns of Barbary were those of the Moor Muly Mahamet and of Abdelmelec. The kingdoms were Barbary

under the rule of the Moor Muly Mahamet and Barbary under the rule of Abdelmelec.

The Presenter continued:

“Alas, that kingdoms may not stand stable! And now approaching near the dismal day, the bloody day wherein the armies join in battle, Monday the fourth of August, in the year fifteen seventy-eight, the sun — the brightest planet in the highest heaven — shines wholly on the parched earth.”

People in this society called the sun a planet.

The Presenter continued:

“The heathens, eagerly directed against their foe, begin the battle with much cannon-fire. The Christians with great noise of cannon-shot send angry military attacks against the enemy.

“Listen, and hear how war begins its song with dreadful clamors, noise, and the sound of trumpets.”

— 5.1 —

The battle of Alcazar began. King Sebastian’s Christian army formed a square formation because they were outnumbered. The Christian army fought well at the beginning and forced many soldiers of Abdelmelec’s army, which had surrounded the Christians, to flee. Abdelmelec, who was ill, talked with Zareo, one of his military leaders. A train of attendants was present.

Sitting in his chair of state, Abdelmelec said, “Speak, Zareo, tell me all the news. Tell me what Fury wanders in our camp and has forced our Moors to turn their backs. Zareo, tell me what event predicted this ill, what ill compelled this despicable cowardice?”

Zareo said, "My lord, this is such chance as war provides; war is unpredictable. Such chances and misfortunes as these attend on Mars, the god of battle and of arms.

"My lord, after our fierce cannon-fire we sent our Moors into action with the smaller shot of their firearms, as thick and as quickly as hail follows hail, to charge the Portuguese army. But then the valiant duke, the devil of Averro, the death-dealing bane of Barbary, filled full of blood-lust, broke through the ranks, and with five hundred cavalry, all men-at-arms, eager and full of might, assaulted the middle wing, and put to flight eight thousand of our firearm-bearing foot-soldiers, and twenty thousand Moors with spear and shield, and by so doing the Duke of Averro won the honor of the day."

Abdelmelec said to himself, "Ah, Abdelmelec, do thou live to hear this bitter process of this first attempt in this battle?"

He then gave orders, "Labor, my lords, to renew our force of fainting Moors, and fight it out to the last.

"Bring me my horse, Zareo!"

He intended to mount his horse and go into battle to rally his troops.

His illness seized him, and he mourned, "Oh, the goal is lost! The goal is lost!

"Thou King of Portugal, thrice-happy chance it is for thee and thine that heaven abates my strength and calls me away.

"My sight fails; my soul, my feeble soul shall be released from prison on this earth. Farewell, vain world! For I have played my part."

Abdelmelec fell back into his chair of state and died.

As the fighting continued, Muly Mahamet Seth entered the scene. Because his older brother, Abdelmelec, had died, and he was next in line of succession, Seth was now the Sultan of Morocco and so had the title of Muly.

Seth looked at Abdelmelec, realized that he was dead, and said, "Brave Abdelmelec, thou thrice-noble lord! Not such a wound would be given to Barbary even if twenty armies of our men had been put to the sword, as Death, pale Death, with his fatal death-giving arrow has given to Barbary by taking you.

"Abdelmelec, my brother and my king, is dead, whom I might have revived with the good news that I bring."

Zareo said, "His honors and his insignias Abdelmelec has resigned to the world, and from a manly man, look, in the twinkling of an eye, he has become the senseless stock we see!"

Seth said, "You trusty soldiers of this warlike king, be counseled now by us and take this advice. Don't let Abdelmelec's death be reported in the camp, lest with the sudden sorrow of the news the entire army will be wholly discouraged and defeated.

"My Lord Zareo, thus I comfort you. Our Moors have bravely borne themselves in the fight and are likely to get the honor of the day, if anything may be gotten where such loss is present.

"Therefore, we will bring forward my noble brother, wearing this apparel he wore as he died, to the battlefield, and set him in his chair with cunning props to keep him upright, so that our soldiers of Morocco may behold their king, and think he is resting in his tent."

Zareo said, "Your advice is very shrewd and good."

Seth said, “Go, then, and see that it is speedily performed.”

Zareo propped the body of Abdelmelec up in his chair.

Seth said to the corpse, “Brave lord, if Barbary recovers from this, thy soul with joy will sit and see the fight.”

The fighting continued, and the Christians fled. On the battlefield, the Duke of Avero was slain.

On the battlefield, King Sebastian and Stukeley met and talked together.

King Sebastian said, “Don’t thou, Stukeley, oh, Stukeley, see the great dishonor done to Christendom?”

“Our cheerful attack thwarted in its springing — growing — hope.

“The brave and mighty prince, the Duke of Avero, slain in my sight. May joy now befall his ghost, for like a lion he bore himself in battle!

“Our lines of battle are now all disordered, and because of our cavalry’s strange retreat our middle wing of foot-soldiers have been overwhelmed.

“Stukeley, alas, I see my error!

“False-hearted Moor Muly Mahamet, now, to my cost, I see thy treachery! I had been warned to beware a face so full of fraud and villainy.”

King Sebastian exited, the battle continued, and two enemy soldiers attacked Stukeley.

In another part of the battlefield, the Moor Muly Mahamet and his young male servant — his page — were fleeing.

The Moor Muly Mahamet ordered, “Villain, get me a horse!”

Thinking that the Moor Muly Mahamet wanted a horse so he could return to the battle, the page said, “Oh, my lord, if you return, you die!”

Muly Mahamet said, “Villain, I say, give me a horse so I can flee — so I can cross the river, villain, and flee!”

His page exited.

The Moor Muly Mahamet said to himself, “Where shall I find some unfrequented place, some uncivilized land, where I may curse my fill, and I may curse my stars, my mother, my unlucky astrological planets, and my wet-nurse, and I may curse the fire, the air, the water, and the earth, and I may curse all the causes that have thus conspired in one, to nourish and preserve me so I can suffer this shame?”

He addressed the astrological star or planet — this society used the terms interchangeably — that had doomed him to suffer ill fortune:

“Thou that were predominate at my birth, thou fatal star, whatever planet thou be, spit out thy bad poison, and all the ill that fortune, fate, or heaven may foredoom a man.”

He addressed others whom or that he blamed for his ill fortune:

“Thou malevolent wet-nurse, guilty of all, and thou mother of my life, who gave birth to me, cursed may thou be for bearing such a cursed son! Cursed be thy son with every curse thou have!

“You elements of which this clay consists — this mass of flesh, this cursed, crazed corpse — destroy, dissolve, disturb, and dissipate what water, fire, earth, and air congealed.”

Amid the noise of battle, the page returned with a horse.

The page said, "Oh, my lord, these ruthless Moors pursue you at the heels, and come with full speed to put you to the sword!"

The Moor Muly Mahamet said, "A horse, a horse, villain, a horse! So that I may immediately cross the river and flee."

The page said, "Here is a horse, my lord, as swiftly paced as the flying horse Pegasus. Mount the horse, and save thyself by flight."

The Moor Muly Mahamet said, "I will mount the horse, but may I never pass the river until I am revenged upon thy soul, accursed Abdelmelec! If not on earth, then when we meet in hell. Before the grim judges Minos, Rhadamanth, and Aeacus, I will crave combat upon thy ghost and drag thee through the loathsome hellish pools of Lethe, Styx, and fiery Phlegethon."

He mounted the horse and exited.

Elsewhere on the battlefield, the enemy had wounded Stukeley. With him were Hercules and Jonas, who were angry at him for leading them to Morocco, where they had suffered this loss.

Hercules said, "Stand, traitor, stand, ambitious English-man, proud Stukeley, stand, and don't move before thou die. Thy eagerness to follow wrongful arms and leave our famous expedition that was intended by his Holiness for Ireland has here been foully betrayed and has tied us all to the ruthless fury of our heathen foe, for which, as we are sure to die, thou shall pay satisfaction with thy blood."

Stukeley said, "Go away, base villains! Do you reproach me with shame for the infamy of this injurious war when He Who is the Judge of right and wrong determines the outcomes of battle as pleases Him best?"

“But since my stars foredoom me to this tragic end that I must perish by these barbarous Moors, whose weapons have made a passage for my soul to break out from the prison of my breast, then you proud malicious dogs of Italy, strike on — to the earth strike down this body, whose mounting, aspiring mind stoops to no feeble stroke.”

Jonas asked, “Why do we allow this Englishman to live?”

Hercules and Jonas stabbed Stukeley.

Jonas continued, “Villain, bleed on; may thy blood run in channels and meet with the blood of those whom thou to death have done.”

Hercules and Jonas exited.

Alone, Stukeley said, “Thus Stukeley, slain with many a deadly stab, dies in these desert fields of Africa.”

He then addressed you, the readers of this book:

“Listen, friends; and with the story of my life let me deceive and not feel the torment of my death.

“In England’s London, lordings, I was born on that brave bridge, the bar that thwarts the Thames River.”

London Bridge had supports that partially dammed the river during the changing of the tides.

Stukeley continued, “My golden days, my younger careless years, were when I touched the height of Fortune’s wheel, and lived in the affluence of wealth and ease and comfort.

“Thus I was in my country carried long aloft, but a discontented humor drove me from there to cross the seas to Ireland and then to Spain.

“In Spain I had welcome and right royal pay from Philip the Second, whom some call the Catholic King. There in Spain

Tom Stukeley glittered all in gold, mounted upon his jennet — a Spanish horse — that was as white as snow, shining like the sun-god Phoebus Apollo in King Philip the Second's court.

“There, like a lord, famous Don Stukeley lived, for so they called me in the court of Spain, until, because of a blow I gave a bishop's manservant, a strife began to rise between his lord the bishop and me, for which we both were banished by the king.

“From thence to Rome rode Stukeley all ostentatiously, received with royal welcomes by the Pope. There Pope Gregory the Great graced me and made me Marquis of Ireland.

“My tale will be short because my remaining life is short.

“The coast of Italy and Rome I left. I was at the time made lieutenant general of those small forces that sailed for Ireland, and with my companies of soldiers I embarked at Ostia, which is located at the mouth of the Tiber River.

“I spread my sails, and with these men of war in a deadly hour we arrived at Lisbon.

“From thence to this — to this hard exigent — I, Stukeley, was driven to fight or else to die. I was dared to go to the battlefield — I who never could endure to hear Mars the god of war's drum but he must march.

“Ah, sweet Sebastian, had thou been well advised, thou might have managed arms successfully! But from our cradles we were all marked and destined to die in Africa here.

“Stukeley, the story of thy life has been told. Here breathe thy last, and bid thy friends farewell. And if thy country's

kindness be so much, then let thy country kindly ring thy knell by ringing the bell.

“Now go and in that bed of honor die, where brave Sebastian’s breathless corpse lies.”

King Sebastian of Portugal had died before him.

Stukeley continued:

“Here ends Fortune’s rule and bitter rage.

“Here ends Tom Stukeley’s pilgrimage.”

He died.

In another part of the battlefield, Muly Mahamet Seth and Zareo talked together. A train of attendants and some drummers and trumpeters were present. The Moroccans had won the battle with a general slaughter of the Christian soldiers.

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “Retreat has sounded throughout our military camp, and now our conquering Moors cease from battle’s fury.

“Pay thanks to heaven with sacrificing fire, Alcazar, and you towns of Barbary.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said to Abdelmelec’s corpse, “Now have thou sat as if in a trance, and seen, to thy soul’s joy and the honor of thy house, the trophies and the triumphs of thy men, great Abdelmelec; and the God of kings has made thy war successful because of the rightness of thy cause, as have the efforts of thy and His friends, whom death and fates have taken from thee.”

He then said about Abdelmelec, “This was he who was the people’s pride, and he who was cheerful sunshine to all his subjects! Now we will have him taken away from here, so that royally he may be buried and embalmed as is fitting.”

He then asked, “Zareo, have you throughout the camp proclaimed what we previously ordered you to have proclaimed?”

Zareo said, “We have, my lord, and we have proposed rich rewards for them who find the body of the King of Portugal. For by those guards who had him in their charge we have learned and understand that he was done to death, and two prisoners, both of them Portuguese, have been set at large to search for and find the body of their royal king.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “But you hear no news of the traitorous Moor who fled the field and sought to swim the ford?”

Zareo replied, “Not yet, my lord; but doubtless God will tell and with his finger will point out the place he haunts.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “So let it rest, and on this earth we will bestow this kingly corpse of Abdelmelec until we provide further for his funeral rites.”

Zareo took the crown from Abdelmelec’s corpse and put it on Muly Mahamet Seth’s head while saying, “From him to thee as true-succeeding prince, with all allegiance and with honor’s signs, in the name of all thy people and thy land, we give this kingly crown and diadem.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “We thank you all, and as my lawful right, with God’s defense and yours, I will keep it.”

Two Portuguese men carried in the body of King Sebastian.

The first Portuguese man said, “As your grace instructed us, right royal prince, we have surveyed the fields and sandy plains, and in the place where the corpses of Portuguese lords was the thickest, we found the corpse of the noble King of Portugal, wrapped in his colors — his royal banner —

coldly on the earth, and done to death with many mortal wounds.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “Look, here, my lords, this is the earth and clay of him who was a short time ago the mighty King of Portugal!”

He then said to the two Portuguese men, “There let him lie, and in return for finding his corpse, you are free to return from here to Christendom.”

Two other men carried in the corpse of the Moor Muly Mahamet.

The first person said, “Long live the mighty King of Barbary!”

“Welcome, my friend,” Muly Mahamet Seth said. “What body have thou there?”

The first person said, “This is the body of the ambitious enemy who squandered all this blood in Africa, whose malice sent so many souls to hell. I bring the body of the traitor Muly Mahamet, and as if he were thy slave I throw him at thy feet.”

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “Zareo, give this man a rich reward.

“And thanked be the God of just revenge because He has given our foe into our hands — our foe who is beastly, unarmed, slavish, full of shame.

“But tell me, how did this traitor come to his end?”

The first person said, “Seeking to save his life by shameful flight, he mounted on a hotly spirited horse of Barbary, and as he attempted to cross the stream, his headstrong steed threw him from his seat into the stream, where, as he sank

often because he lacked the skill of swimming, it was my chance alone to see him drowned.

“By the heels I dragged him out of the pool of water, and hither I have brought him thus defiled with mud.”

The Moor Muly Mahamet was the third of three kings to die on this day of battle, and so the Battle of Alcazar is also known as the Battle of the Three Kings.

Muly Mahamet Seth said, “It was a death too good for such a damned wretch. But since our rage and rigor of revenge is forestalled by the violence of his end, we will do this: So that all the world may learn by him to avoid dragging kings into injurious war, we command that his skin be parted from his flesh and be stiffened and stuffed with straw in order to deter with fright those who see it from any such foul fact or bad attack. Take his corpse away!”

Some attendants carried away the corpse of the Moor Muly Mahamet.

Muly Mahamet Seth then said, “And now, my lords, here are my orders for this Christian king.

“My Lord Zareo, let it be your responsibility to see that the soldiers solemnly march, trailing their pikes and ensigns on the ground as a sign of respect, and with respect to perform the king’s funeral rites.”

**DAVID AND BATHSHEBA, AND THE TRAGEDY
OF ABSALOM**

CAST OF CHARACTERS (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

David and his Family:

David, King of Israel and Judah.

Cusay, a lord, and follower of David.

Amnon, son of David by David's first wife: Ahinoam. He is David's oldest son.

Jethray, Servant to Amnon.

Chileab, son of David by Abigail.

Absalom, son of David by Maacah. George Peele called him Absalon.

Tamar, daughter of David by Maacah.

Adonia, son of David by Haggith.

Solomon, son of David by Bathsheba. George Peele called him Salomon.

Joab, captain of the army to David, and nephew of David and son of his sister Zerua.

Abisai, nephew of David and son of his sister Zerua.

Amasa, nephew of David and son of his sister Abigail; also captain of the army to Absalom.

Jonadab, nephew of David and son of his brother Shimeah; also friend to Amnon.

Other Characters:

Uriah the Hittite, a warrior in David's army. George Peele called him Urias the Hethite.

Bathsheba, wife of Uriah. George Peele called her Bethsabe.

Maid to Bathsheba.

Nathan, a prophet.

Sadoc, high priest.

Ahimaas, his son.

Abiathar, a priest.

Jonathan, his son.

Achitophel, chief counselor to Absalom.

Ithay, a captain from Gath.

Semei, who hates David.

Hanon, King of Ammon.

Machaas, King of Gath.

Woman of Thecoa.

Messenger, Soldiers, Shepherds, and Attendants.

Concubines to David.

Chorus.

NOTES:

I have used the names we know the characters by instead of George Peele's names.

- His Bethsabe is our Bathsheba.
- His Absalon is our Absalom.
- His Urias the Hethite is our Uriah the Hittite.
- His Salomon is our Solomon.

Zion is the city of David: the Jerusalem of ancient times.

Often, George Peele will use Jerusalem when he means Israel; thus, in one sentence he will refer first to Jerusalem (Israel) and then to Zion (Jerusalem).

George Peele's play often uses the name "Jove" for God. Jove is, of course, Jupiter, a pagan god. This use of "Jove" for God is common among Elizabethan playwrights.

In Elizabethan culture, a man of higher rank would use words such as "thee," "thy," "thine," and "thou" to refer to a servant. However, two close friends or a husband and wife could properly use "thee," "thy," "thine," and "thou" to refer to each other.

The Elizabethans believed that the mixture of four humors in the body determined one's temperament. One humor could be predominant. The four humors are blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. If blood is predominant, then the person is sanguine (optimistic). If yellow bile is predominant, then the person is choleric (bad-tempered). If black bile is predominant, then the person is melancholic (sad). If phlegm is predominant, then the person is phlegmatic (calm).

RECOMMENDED EDITION

Here is an excellent annotated edition of the play, which can be downloaded free:

Peele, George. *David and Bethsabe*. Annotated Edition. ElizabethanDrama.org, 2019. Web.

<<https://tinyurl.com/yetjbpro>>

The man behind ElizabethanDrama.org is Peter Lukacs.

The ElizabethanDrama.org edition of the play quotes from the 1568 Bishop's Bible, which was the main Bible that George Peele used in writing this play. The ElizabethanDrama.org edition modernizes the spelling of

that Bible, and my retelling of George Peele's play uses some of those modernized-spelling quotations.

Many Elizabethan plays are based on mythology, but this is the only extant play based solely on the Bible (and the playwright's imagination). The ElizabethanDrama.org edition identifies the Biblical source, when relevant, of each scene:

Bible Verses Described by the Prologue: None.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene I: 2 Samuel 11:1-6.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene II: 2 Samuel 12:26-28.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene III: 2 Samuel 13:1-7.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene IV: 2 Samuel 13:15-20.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene V: lines 1-64: 2 Samuel 13:21, 23-27; after that, 2 Samuel 11:7-15.

Bible Verses Described by the Chorus I: 2 Samuel 11:16-17, 26-27; and 2 Samuel 12:14.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene VI: 2 Samuel 12:15.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene VII: 2 Samuel 12:1-24.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene VIII: 2 Samuel 13:27-29.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene IX: all the indicated verses are from 2 Samuel: (1) lines 1-86, 12:29-31; (2) lines 87-140, 13:30-33; (3) lines 142-218, 14:1-23; (4) lines 220-225, 14:25-26; (5) lines 227-247, 14:33; and (6) lines 249-266, 15:1-6.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene X: 2 Samuel 15:17-37.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XI: 2 Samuel 16:15-17:21.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XII: all the indicated verses are from 2 Samuel: (1) lines 1-99, 16:5-13; (2) lines 101-132, 17:21-22; and (3) 134-174, 18:1-5.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XIII: 2 Samuel 17:23.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XIV: None.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XV: 2 Samuel 18:6-17.

Bible Verses Described by the Chorus II: None.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XVI: None.

Bible Verses Depicted in Scene XVII: there are no verses in the Bible corresponding to lines 1-151; lines 153 to the end of the scene match up with 2 Samuel 18:24-19:8.

PROLOGUE (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

An actor sings the Prologue. In addition to praising King David of Israel, who both composed many songs of praise to God and achieved many military victories for his country, the actor asks a Muse for help in telling King David's story.

“Of Israel's sweetest singer now I sing,

“His holy style and happy victories;

“Whose Muse was dipped in that inspiring dew

“Archangels distilled from the breath of Jove,

“Adorning her temples with the glorious flowers

“Heavens rained on the tops of Zion and Mount Sinai.

“Upon the bosom of his ivory lute

“The cherubim and angels laid their breasts;

“And, when his consecrated — sacred — fingers struck

“The golden wires of his ravishing harp,

“He gave alarum to [alerted] the Host [Army] of Heaven,

“The angels who, winged with lightning, broke through the clouds, and cast

“Their crystal armor at his conquering feet.

“Of this sweet poet, Jove's musician,

“And of his beauteous son Absalom, I strive to sing.

“Help, divine Adonai [God], to conduct

“Upon the wings of my well-tempered and pleasant verse

“The hearers' minds above the towers of Heaven,

“And guide them so in this thrice-lofty flight

“That their mounting feathers are not scorched by the fire

“That none can temper but Thy holy hand.

“To Thee for succor flies my feeble Muse,

“And at Thy feet her iron pen does use.”

In this case, the Muse is too weak to tell David’s story and so the playwright must ask Adonai — another name for God — for help.

The Muse’s iron pen is a chisel. Words written in rock with a chisel have permanence.

CHAPTER 1 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 1 —

On the roof of the Royal Palace in Jerusalem, King David sat and watched Bathsheba below bathing over a spring. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a soldier in King David's army, was unaware that King David was watching her bathe. She sang as she bathed herself:

*“Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air,
 “Black shade, fair nurse, shadow [screen] my white hair:
 “Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
 “Black shade, fair nurse; shroud me, and please me:
 “Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
 “Make not my glad cause a cause of mourning.”*

Bathsheba was beautiful, and she was blonde. She wanted her skin — a reason for her happiness — to remain fair and not burn in the strong sunlight.

*“Let not my beauty's fire
 “Inflame unstead [immoderate] desire,
 “Nor pierce [penetrate] any bright eye
 “That wanders lightly.”*

The word “lightly” can mean 1) unthinkingly, or 2) wantonly.

Bathsheba then said, “Come, gentle Zephyr, you west wind, adorned with those perfumes that formerly in Eden sweetened Adam's love — Eve — and stroke my bosom with thy silken-soft fan.

“This shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof against thee. Thy body, smoother than this waveless spring, and purer than the substance of the same, can creep through that which his lances cannot pierce. Thou, Zephyr, and thy sister, soft and sacred Air, goddess of life, and governess of health, keep every fountain fresh and arbor sweet. No brazen gate can repulse her passage, nor can bushy thicket bar thy subtle, fine, delicate breath.

“So then deck thyself with thy loose delightsome — delightful — robes, and on thy wings bring delicate perfumes to play the wantons with us through the leaves.”

King David said to himself, “What tunes, what words, what looks, what wonders pierce my soul, incensed and inflamed with a sudden fire? What tree, what shade, what spring, what paradise, enjoys the beauty of so fair a dame?”

“Fair Eve, placed in a garden of perfect happiness, lending her praise-notes to the liberal heavens and praising in song the generous heavens, singing with the accents of archangels’ tunes, did not bring more pleasure to her husband Adam’s thoughts than this fair woman’s words and notes bring to my thoughts.

“May that sweet plain that bears her pleasant weight be always enameled with flowers of many colors.

“May that precious spring bear sand of purest gold, and, for the pebbles, let the silver streams that pierce the earth’s bowels to maintain the source, play upon rubies, sapphires, and green-colored gems.

“Let the waters be embraced with and surrounded by golden curls of moss that sleep with the sound the waters make out of joy at feeding the spring with their flow.

“Let all the grass that beautifies her shady bower bear the Biblical food called manna every morning instead of dew, and let the dew be sweeter far than the dew that hangs, like chains of pearl, on high Hermon Hill, and sweeter far than the balm that trickled from old Aaron’s beard.”

Psalms 133:3 states, “*It is also like unto the dew of Hermon, which falleth down the hill of Zion*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

Psalms 133:2 states, “*It is like unto a precious ointment poured upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, even upon Aaron’s beard, which also runneth down the skirts of his garments*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

Aaron was the brother of Moses, and he was a high priest.

King David then called for a servant: “Cusay, come up, and serve thy lord the king.”

Cusay arrived and asked, “What service does my lord the king command?”

King David replied, “Look, Cusay, see the flower of Israel, the fairest daughter who obeys the king in all the land the Lord subdued to me.”

He was referring to Bathsheba, his subject.

He continued, “She is fairer than Isaac’s lover at the well, brighter than the inside-bark of new-hewn cedar, sweeter than flames of fine-perfumed myrrh, and comelier — more beautiful — than the silver clouds that dance on Zephyr’s wings before the King of Heaven.”

Genesis 24 tells the story of how Isaac, the son of Abraham, married. Abraham wanted Isaac to marry a woman from Mesopotamia, so Abraham sent his oldest servant to find a wife for Isaac. The servant arrived at a Mesopotamian well and prayed. Rebecca came to the well, drew water, and gave the servant water to drink. Rebecca became Isaac’s wife.

Cusay asked, “Isn’t she Bathsheba, the wife of the Hittite Uriah, who is now at the siege of Rabbah under the command of Joab?”

Rabbah was about 40 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was the capital city of Ammon.

King David ordered, “Go and find out, and bring her quickly to the king: me. Tell her that her graces have found grace with him.”

“I will, my lord,” Cusay said.

He exited.

King David said to himself, “Bright Bathsheba shall wash, in David’s bower, in water mixed with purest almond-flower, and bathe her beauty in the milk of young goats.

“Bright Bathsheba gives earth to my desires. She gives verdure — lush green vegetation — to earth, and to that verdure she gives flowers. To flowers she gives sweet odors,

and to odors she gives wings that carry pleasures to the hearts of kings.”

Cusay appeared at the spring below the palace, startling and frightening Bathsheba.

Cusay said, “Fair Bathsheba, the King of Israel from forth his princely tower has seen thee bathe, and thy sweet graces have found grace with him. Come, then, and kneel to him where he stands; the king is gracious and has liberal and generous hands.”

She replied, “Ah, who and what is Bathsheba to please the king? And who and what is David, that he should desire, for fickle beauty’s sake, the wife of his servant?”

Beauty is fickle: It doesn’t last. It moves on to someone else.

Uriah, a soldier in King David’s army, was the servant whose wife she was.

Bathsheba knew immediately that King David wanted to sleep with her.

Cusay replied, “Thou, fair dame, know that David is wise and just, elected to the heart of Israel’s God. So then don’t expostulate with him about any action that contents his soul.”

Bathsheba replied, “My lord the king, elect to God’s own heart, should not inflame his gracious jealousy — his thoughts are chaste. I hate incontinence.”

The word “his” could refer to Bathsheba’s husband, to God, or to King David — or to all three.

“Jealousy” is a strong emotion. Bathsheba’s husband would be jealous if King David were to sleep with her. God is a jealous god because he feels strong emotion when people follow false idols and commit sin. King David ought to have the same kind of gracious jealousy that a husband or the one true God ought to have. Instead, the strong emotion that King David was feeling was sexual desire. He was jealous of Bathsheba’s husband.

Cusay said, "Woman, thou wrong the king, and doubt the honor of him whose truth maintains the crown of Israel. You are making him wait who ordered me to bring thee to him immediately."

"The king's poor handmaid will obey my lord," Bathsheba said.

"Then come, and do thy duty to his grace," Cusay said. "Do what seems favorable in his sight."

Bathsheba and Cusay went into the palace.

King David said, "Now comes my lover trippingly like the roe deer, and she brings my longings tangled in her hair. As a place to enjoy her love, I'll build a kingly bower, seated within the sound of a hundred streams, which, for their homage to her greatest joys, shall, just like the serpents fold into the serpents' nests in oblique turnings, wind their nimble waves about the circles of her elaborate walks; and with their murmur summon easeful Sleep to lay his golden scepter on her brows."

Hearing Cusay and Bathsheba coming, King David ordered his attendants, "Open the doors, and welcome my love. Open, I say, and, as you open, sing, 'Welcome, fair Bathsheba, King David's darling.'"

Cusay and Bathsheba entered.

King David and the attendants sang to Bathsheba, "Welcome, fair Bathsheba, King David's darling."

He then said, "Thy bones' fair covering was previously revealed to be fair and beautiful, and all my eyes were pierced with all thy beauties.

"Heaven's bright eye — the sun — burns most when highest it climbs the curved zodiac with its fiery sphere, and shines furthest from this earthly globe. Therefore, since thy beauty scorched my conquered soul, I called thee nearer for my nearer cure."

A temporary cure for sexual passion is an orgasm.

Bathsheba replied, "Too near, my lord, was your unprotected heart when furthest off it pierced my luckless

beauty, and I wish that this dreary day had turned to night, or that some pitch-dark cloud had cloaked the sun, before their lights — the light of the day and the light of the sun — had caused my lord to see his name and my chastity disgraced!”

So far, Bathsheba had been a chaste wife: She was loyal to her husband and had not slept with anyone else. King David, however, was a powerful man who intended to make her unchaste.

King David replied, “My love, if want of love has left thy soul a sharper sense of honor than that possessed by thy king — for love leads kings sometimes from their thrones, making them behave inappropriately — as formerly my heart was hurt, displeasing thee, so come and taste thy ease with easing me.”

King David knew what he wanted: sex with Bathsheba. Her husband was a soldier who was away on a military campaign, and so she lacked sex, which according to King David’s view, meant that she wanted sex. He had displeased her, which he said hurt his heart, and now he wanted her to ease his hurt by sleeping with him. If she did, she would “taste her ease” — that is, she would enjoy herself.

To King David, this may have made some kind of sense — he was thinking with his penis — but it did not make sense to Bathsheba.

She replied, “One medicine cannot heal our different harms, for the one medicine would rather make us both fester at the bone. So then let the king be cunning in his cure, lest by his flattering and misleading both of us, both of us perish in his hand.”

King David’s harm was that he wanted to have sex with Bathsheba; Bathsheba’s harm was that she was being pressured to have sex with King David, a man with whom she did not want to have sex.

The medicine that King David was advocating was sex, but that would “cure” only one of their harms.

The harms were also sins: King David wanted to commit adultery, and he wanted Bathsheba to commit adultery. These actions would make them metaphorically fester at the bone.

In a Christian world-view, sin can cause one to perish. If King David were to commit adultery with Bathsheba, both of them could perish.

King David said, “Leave it to me, my dearest Bathsheba, whose skill is conversant in deeper cures.”

The best cure is prevention: Don’t commit adultery and bring that harm on yourself. This is not what King David had in mind.

King David ordered, “Cusay, hasten to my servant Joab and command him to send Uriah home with all the speed that can possibly be used.”

“Cusay will fly about the king’s desire,” Cusay replied, exiting.

CHAPTER 2 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 2 —

Joab, Abisai, and Uriah stood before the walls of the city of Rabbah, the capital city of Ammon. Others, including a drummer and an ensign who carried the army's banner, were present. Joab, the commanding officer, was King David's nephew. Abisai was Joab's brother, and so he was another of King David's nephews. Uriah was Bathsheba's husband. Both Abisai and Uriah were elite soldiers.

Nahas, the King of Ammon, had helped David before David became King of Israel. When King Nahas died, King David sent some ambassadors to the late king's son, Hanon, in Rabbah. King Hanon, however, was convinced that the ambassadors were spies, so he cut off half of each man's clothing and half of each man's beard and sent them thus disgraced back to King David.

King David sent Joab to lead the Israelite army against Ammon. The Israelites defeated the Ammonite army and their Syrian mercenaries. The following spring, the Israelite army, again led by Joab, returned and again defeated the Ammonite army. They then besieged Rabbah, the capital city of Ammon.

The above events are recounted in 2 Samuel 10.

Joab said, "Have courage, you mighty men of Israel, and discharge your fatal instruments of war upon the bosoms of proud Ammon's sons, who have insulted your king's ambassadors by cutting half of each man's beard and half of each man's garments off, to spite Israel and Israel's daughters' sons!

"You fight the holy battles of Jehovah, King David's God, and ours, and Jacob's God, Who guides your weapons to their conquering strokes, orders your footsteps, and directs your thoughts to stratagems that harbor victory.

"He casts his sacred eyesight from on high, and sees your foes run seeking their deaths."

The enemy think that by running away they are seeking to save their lives, but God, Who is omniscient, knows that they will die. Or the enemy run to fight David's soldiers, but God, Who is omniscient, knows that they will die.

Joab continued, "God laughs their labors and their hopes to save their lives to scorn, while between your bodies and their blunted, edgeless swords, he puts armor of his honor's proven and tested value, and he makes their weapons wound the sense-less winds."

The winds are without senses: They are unable to see, hear, smell, taste, or feel.

Abisai, an elite soldier, said, "Before this city of Rabbah we will lie, and shoot forth shafts as thick and dangerous as was the hail that Moses mixed with fire, and threw with fury round about the fields, devouring Pharaoh's friends and Egypt's fruits."

The seventh plague of Egypt was a thunderstorm of hail and fire (lightning).

Uriah, another elite soldier, said, "First, mighty captains, Joab and Abisai, let us assault and scale this kingly tower, where all their conduits and their fountains are. Then we may easily take the city, too."

The city of Rabbah had two parts: an upper part and a lower part. The lower part had a tower and contained the city's water supply. Once the upper part ran out of water, it would fall.

Joab said, "Well has Uriah counseled our military efforts; and as he recommended us, we will assault the tower. Let Hanon now, the king of Ammon's sons, repulse our conquering passage if he dare."

King Hanon of Ammon appeared upon the walls of Rabbah with Machaas, who was the King of Gath. Some soldiers and attendants also appeared with them.

King Hanon said, "What would the shepherd's dogs of Israel snatch from the mighty issue of King Ammon: the valiant Ammonites and the proud Syrians?"

His issue was his citizens, who were metaphorically his children.

The Syrians were allies of Ammon.

He continued, “Your recent successive victories cannot make us yield, and they cannot make our courage quail. If you dare attempt to scale this tower, our angry swords shall smite you to the ground, and avenge our losses on your hateful lives.”

Joab said, “Hanon, thy father Nahas gave relief to holy David in his luckless exile, lived his fixed period of life, and died in peace. But thou, instead of reaping his reward, have trodden it under foot, and scorned our king; therefore, thy days shall end with violence, and thy vital blood shall cleave to our swords.”

King Hanon’s ally, King Machaas of Gath, a Philistine city located approximately 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem, said, “Go away from here, thou who bear poor Israel’s shepherd’s hook, the proud lieutenant of that base-born king, and keep within the compass of his sheepfold.”

David had been a shepherd before becoming King of Israel.

King Machaas of Gath continued, “For, if you seek to feed on Ammon’s fruits, and stray into the Syrians’ fruitful meadows, the mastiffs of our land shall torment you, and pull the windpipes from your greedy throats.”

“Who can endure these pagans’ blasphemies?” Abisai said.

“My soul feels discontent at this disparagement,” Uriah said.

Joab said, “You valiant men of David’s army, attack and beat these insulting cowards from their doors.”

The Israelites attacked and seized the tower and the lower part of the city.

Joab said, “Thus have we won the tower, which we will keep, in spite of the sons of Ammon and of Syria.”

Cusay arrived outside the city and asked, "Where is Lord Joab, leader of the army?"

Joab said, "Here is Lord Joab, leader of the army. Cusay, come up, for we have won the stronghold."

"In a happy hour, then, has Cusay come," Cusay replied.

Cusay went up to Joab and the others in the conquered part of the city.

"What news, then, does Lord Cusay bring from the king?" Joab asked.

"His majesty commands thee immediately to send home Uriah from the wars, because of some service Uriah should do," Cusay said.

Uriah said, "I hope that no anger has seized the king and made him suspect that I am disloyal."

"No, it has not," Cusay said. "Rather, he wants to show you favor on account of your loyalty to him."

"Here, take him with thee, then, and go in peace," Joab said. "And tell my lord the king that I have fought against the city of Rabbah with success, and scaled where the royal palace is, as well as the conduit-heads and all their sweetest springs. King David can come in person to these walls, with all the soldiers he can bring with him, and capture the city as his own exploit, lest I surprise it, and the people give the glory of the conquest to my name."

Joab was generously telling Cusay that King David could come and capture the top part of Rabbah, thereby taking the credit for capturing the city.

"We will give him your message, Lord Joab," Cusay said, "and may great Israel's God bless in thy hands the battles of our king!"

"Farewell, Uriah," Joab said. "Hurry to see the king."

Uriah replied, "As surely as Joab breathes as a victor here, Uriah will hasten to see King David and then return."

Cusay and Uriah exited.

“Let us descend from the walls we are on, and open the palace’s gate, taking our soldiers in to keep the stronghold,” Abisai said.

“Let us, Abisai,” Joab said.

He added, “And, you sons of Judah, be valiant, and maintain your victory.”

CHAPTER 3 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 3 —**

Amnon, Jonadab, and Jethray stood together outside Amnon's house in Jerusalem. Amnon's page — a young servant — was also present.

Amnon was David's oldest son: the son of David by Ahinoam. Jonadab was the nephew of David and son of his brother Shimeah; he was a friend as well as a first cousin to Amnon. Jethray was one of Amnon's servants.

Jonadab said to Amnon, "You wear upon your truly triumphant arm the power of Israel as a royal favor, and you hold upon the tables of your hands banquets of honor and all thought's contentment."

Amnon was privileged. As a son of King David, he had much power and wealth. All his power and wealth was like a feast. He seemed to have everything needed to make him happy, yet he looked ill.

Jonadab then asked Amnon, "What means my lord, the king's beloved son, to allow pale and grim abstinence to sit and feed upon his fainting cheeks, and suck away the blood that cheers his looks?"

Despite having a feast of power and wealth, Amnon looked as if he were wasting away.

Amnon replied, "Ah, Jonadab, it is my half-sister Thamar's looks, on whose sweet beauty I bestow my blood, that make me look so amorously lean. Her beauty having seized upon my heart, so entirely consecrated — dedicated — to her contentment, sets now such a guard about his vital blood, and views the passage with such piercing eyes that no blood can escape to cheer my pining, wasting-away cheeks, but all is thought too little for her love."

According to Amnon, he appeared bloodless because his lovesickness for his half-sister kept his blood from flowing freely.

Jonadab said, “Then from her heart thy looks shall be relieved, and thou shall enjoy her as thy soul desires.”

To “enjoy” a woman meant to have sex with her.

Amnon asked, “How can that be, my sweet friend Jonadab, since Thamar is a virgin and my half-sister?”

Thamar and Amnon shared the same father: King David.

Quickly coming up with a plan, Jonadab answered, “Do as I advise thee. Lie down upon thy bed and pretend that thou are fever-sick and ill at ease. When the king shall come to visit thee, request that thy half-sister Thamar may be sent to prepare some delicacies for thy malady. Then when thou have her solely with thyself, *enforce some favor to thy manly love.*”

Jonadab used a euphemism to say, “Rape her.”

He looked up and said, “See where she is coming here. Ask her to go inside with thee.”

Thamar entered the scene and asked, “What is ailing Amnon, causing such sickly looks to lessen the attractiveness of his lovely face?”

Amnon replied, “Sweet Thamar, I am sick, and I wish for some wholesome delicacies prepared with the skill of thy dainty hands.”

“The king has already commanded me to do that,” Thamar said. “So then come and rest thyself, while I prepare for you some delicacies that will ease thy impaired soul.”

“I go with thee, sweet half-sister,” Amnon said. “Looking at thee eases my pain.”

Thamar, Amnon, Jethray, and the page exited.

Staying behind, Jonadab said to himself, “Why should a prince, whose power may command others to serve him, obey the rebel passions of his love when they contend just against his conscience and may be governed or suppressed by will?”

According to Jonadab, Amnon ought to be able to control his passion for his half-sister. Amnon had the power to

control other people, so why shouldn't he be able to control himself?

Jonadab continued, "Now, Amnon, loose those loving knots of blood that sucked the courage from thy kingly heart and give it passage to thy withered cheeks."

By raping his half-sister, Amnon would be able to satisfy his lustful passion and regain the bloom in his cheeks.

Jonadab continued, "Now, Tamar, ripened are the holy fruits that grew on the plants of thy virginity, and rotten is thy name in Israel."

By losing her virginity without first being married, Tamar would lose her good reputation.

Jonadab continued, "Poor Tamar, little did thy lovely hands predict an action of such violence as to contend with Amnon's lusty arms muscled with the vigor of his kind-less love."

This sort of "love" was without kindness, and it was not the sort of love that a man ought to feel toward kin such as a half-sister.

Jonadab continued, "Fair Tamar, now dishonor hunts thy foot, and follows thee through every concealing shade, revealing thy shame and nakedness, even from the valleys of the land called Jehosaphat up to the lofty mountains of Lebanon, where cedars, stirred with the anger of the winds, sounding in storms the tale of thy disgrace, tremble with fury, and with murmur shake the earth with their feet and shake the heavens with their heads, beating the clouds into their swiftest movement, to bear this wonder round about the world."

Now that Tamar had lost her virginity without first being married, dishonor would follow at her footsteps wherever she went, and even the wind would spread the news of her dishonor throughout the world.

CHAPTER 4 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 4 —

Amnon thrust Tamar outside his house. Jethray, his servant, was present.

Ammon said, “Go away from my bed, you whose sight offends my soul as does the vomit of bears!”

His half-sister, Tamar, said, “Unkind, unprincely, and unmanly Amnon, to rape, and then refuse thy half-sister’s love, adding to the fright of thy offence the baneful torment of my well-publicized shame! Oh, don’t do this dishonor to thy love, nor clog thy soul with such increasing sin! This second evil far exceeds the first.”

By thrusting Tamar out of his house, Amnon was exposing her to the contempt and hatred of other people, thereby shaming her. To Tamar, this was far worse than being raped.

Amnon ordered his servant, “Jethray, come thrust this woman away from my sight, and bolt the door against her if she resists and tries to get back inside.”

He exited.

Jethray said to Tamar, “Go, madam, go. Go away, you must leave. My lord has done and finished with you. I beg you to depart.”

He shut her out of doors and exited.

Tamar said to herself, “Whither, alas, ah, whither shall I flee, with my arms wrapped around myself and with my completely dumbfounded soul?

“Cast away as Eve was from that glorious soil — that glorious garden where all delights sat fluttering, winged with thoughts, ready to nestle in her naked breasts — to bare and barren valleys made waste with floods, to deserted woods, and lightning-scorched hills, sites with death, with shame, with Hell, with horror.

“There will I wander from my father’s face. There Absalom, my brother Absalom, sweet Absalom, shall hear

his sister mourn. There will I lure with my windy sighs night-ravens and owls to rend and tear my bloody side, which with a rusty weapon I will wound, and make for them a passage to my panting heart.

“Why do thou talk, wretch, and leave the deed undone?”

“Rend and tear thy hair and garments, as thy heart is rent and torn with the inward fury of a thousand griefs, and scatter them by these unhallowed and unholy doors, to represent Amnon’s wresting, tearing cruelty and the tragic spoil of Thamar’s chastity.”

Her full brother, Absalom, appeared on the scene. He had heard his sister crying out.

Absalom asked, “What causes Thamar to exclaim so much?”

She replied, “The cause that Thamar is ashamed to disclose.”

“Tell me,” Absalom said. “I thy brother will revenge that cause.”

“Amnon, our father’s son, has raped me, and he thrusts me away from him as the scorn of Israel,” Thamar said.

“Has Amnon raped thee?” Absalom said. “By David’s hand, and by the covenant God has made with him, I swear that Amnon shall bear his violence to Hell. Amnon is a traitor to Heaven, a traitor to David’s throne, and a traitor to Absalom and Israel!

“This evil deed has Jacob’s ruler — God — seen from Heaven, and through a cloud of smoke and a tower of fire, as Amnon rides boasting upon the green fields, God shall tear his chariot-wheels with violent winds, and throw his body in the bloody sea. At him the thunder shall discharge its lightning bolt, and the thunder’s fair spouse, the lightning bolt with bright and fiery wings, shall sit forever burning on Amnon’s hateful bones. I myself, as swift as thunder or his spouse, will hunt an opportunity with a secret hate, to make sure that false Amnon has an ungracious end.

“Go to my house, my sister. Rest thyself in my house; and God in time shall take this shame from thee.”

Thamar replied, “Neither God nor time will do that good for me.”

CHAPTER 5 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 5 —

In Jerusalem, King David and his train of attendants met David's son Absalom.

King David asked, "My Absalom, what are thou doing here alone, and why do thou bear such displeasure in thy brows?"

"Absalom has great cause to be displeased, and in his heart to shroud and conceal the wounds of wrath," Absalom replied.

"Against whom should Absalom be thus displeased?" King David asked.

Absalom replied, "Against wicked Amnon, thy ungracious son, my half-brother and fair Thamar's half-brother by the king, my step-brother by mother and by that part of his family: Amnon has dishonored David's holiness and affixed a blot of wanton evil on his throne, raping my sister Thamar when he feigned a sickness — a sickness sprung from the root of heinous lust."

King David asked, "Has Amnon brought this evil on my house, and has he allowed sin to smite his father's bones?"

"Smite, David, deadlier than the voice of Heaven, and let hate's fire be kindled in thy heart. Flame in the arches of thy angry brows, making thy forehead, like a comet, glare, to cause false Amnon to tremble at thy looks."

The appearance of a comet in the sky was a malicious omen.

King David continued, "Sin, with his sevenfold crown and purple robe, begins his triumphs in my guilty throne."

Sin's sevenfold crown consists of the seven deadly sins: Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth (Laziness), Wrath, Envy, and Pride.

King David was guilty of the sin of lust.

King David continued, "There he sits watching with his hundred eyes our idle minutes and our wanton thoughts, and

with his tempting baits, made of our frail desires, gives us the hook that hauls our souls to Hell.”

In Greek mythology, the giant Argus had one hundred eyes.

“But with the spirit of my kingdom’s God, I’ll thrust the flattering tyrant from his throne, and scourge his bond-slaves from my hallowed court with rods of iron and thorns of sharpened steel.

“So then, Absalom, don’t thou revenge this sin. Leave it to me, and I will chasten Amnon.”

“I am content,” Absalom said.

Referring to King David in the third person, Absalom said to him, “Grant, my lord the king, that he himself with all his other lords would come up to my sheep-feast on the plain of Hazor.”

The sheep-feast was part of a sheep-shearing festival.

King David said, “No, my fair son. I myself with all my lords will cause thee too much expense; yet some of my lords shall go.”

Kings travel with large retinues. Feeding, sheltering, and entertaining all these people is expensive.

Absalom said, “But let my lord the king himself take pains to attend. The time of year is pleasant for your grace, and gladsome Summer in her shady robes, crowned with roses and with planted flowers, with all her nymphs, shall entertain my lord, and, from the thicket of my verdant groves, will sprinkle honey-dews about his breast, and cast sweet balm upon his kingly head.

“So grant thy servant’s request, and go, my lord.”

“Let it content my sweet son Absalom that I may stay in Jerusalem, and thou accept my other lords as your guests.”

Absalom asked, “But shall thy best-beloved Amnon go?”

“Why do you want Amnon to go with thee?” King David asked.

“Yet do thy son and servant so much grace,” Absalom requested, not answering the question.

“Amnon shall go, and all my other lords, because I will give grace to Absalom,” King David replied.

Cusay and Uriah, with others, entered the scene.

Cusay said, “If it pleases my lord the king, his servant Joab has sent Uriah from the Syrian wars.”

King David said, “Welcome, Uriah, from the Syrian wars. Welcome to David as his dearest lord.”

Uriah replied, “Thanks be to Israel’s God and God’s grace that Uriah finds such greeting with the king.”

Uriah was relieved that King David did not seem angry at him.

“No other greeting shall Uriah find as long as David governs in the chosen seat and consecrated throne of Israel,” King David said.

King David had been elected — chosen — by God to succeed Saul as King of Israel.

He continued, “Tell me, Uriah, about my servant Joab. Does he with truth fight the battles of our God and for the honor of the Lord’s anointed?”

King David was the Lord’s anointed.

Uriah answered, “Thy servant Joab fights the chosen wars with truth, with honor, and with high success, and, against the wicked King of Ammon’s sons, he has, by the finger — the power — of our sovereign’s God, besieged the city of Rabbah, and taken control of the court of waters, where the conduits run, and of all the Ammonites’ delightful springs.

“Therefore he wishes that David’s mightiness would raise soldiers in Israel, and come in person to the city of Rabbah, so that her conquest may be made the king’s, and Joab fight as his subordinate.”

King David said, “God and Joab’s prowess has not done this without Uriah’s valor, I am sure. Uriah, since his true conversion from a Hittite to an adopted son of Israel, has

fought like one whose arms were lifted by Heaven, and whose bright sword was sharpened with Israel's wrath.

"Go, therefore, home, Uriah, and take thy rest. Visit thy wife and household with the joys that a victor and a favorite of the king's should exercise with honor after battle."

Uriah replied, "Thy servant's bones are not yet half so broken down, nor constituted on such a sickly and weak mold, that for so little service he should faint, and seek, as cowards do, the refuge of his home.

"Nor are his thoughts so sensually stirred by the thought of having sex with his wife that he would hold back the arms with which the Lord would use to smite Israel's enemies and fill their circle with his conquered foes, and instead enjoy the wanton bosom of a flattering wife."

King David had had sex with Bathsheba, and he was worried that she would become pregnant. Because Uriah had been away from his wife in order to fight for Israel, he would know that he was not the cause of the pregnancy. Therefore, King David wanted Uriah to have sex with Bathsheba so that if she became pregnant he would think that he had caused the pregnancy.

King David said, "Uriah has a beautiful and sober wife, yet young, and framed of tempting flesh and blood.

"So then, when the king has summoned thee from military service, if thou unkindly would refrain from joining with her in her bed, sin might be laid upon Uriah's soul, if Bathsheba by frailty hurt her reputation."

In other words, Bathsheba might commit adultery and lose her reputation if Uriah did not go home and satisfy her in bed.

King David continued, "So then go, Uriah, and take solace in her love. She whom God has knit to thee, tremble to loosen."

Uriah and Bathsheba were united by the knot of marriage; that marriage could fail if Uriah were to loosen the knot that united them.

Uriah replied, "The king is much too solicitous about my comfort. The Ark and Israel and Judah dwell in palaces and rich pavilions."

The Ark of the Covenant held the two stone tablets on which God had written with his finger the Ten Commandments.

Uriah continued, "But Joab and his brother dwell in the fields, suffering the wrath of winter and the sun: And shall Uriah (of more shame than they) banquet, and loiter in doing the work of Heaven?"

One of the seven deadly sins is sloth. One should be zealous in doing the work of God.

Uriah continued, "As surely as thy soul does live, my lord, my ears shall never lean to such delight, when holy labor calls me forth to fight."

King David said, "Then be it with Uriah's manly heart as best his reputation may shine in Israel."

Uriah replied, "Thus shall Uriah's heart be best content, until thou dismiss me back to Joab's bands.

"This ground before the king my master's doors shall be my couch, and this unwearied arm shall be the proper pillow of a soldier's head, for never will I lodge within my house, until Joab triumph in my secret vows."

He lay on the ground.

The secret vows were the ones that Uriah had just made. They were secret from Joab because he was not present to hear them. Uriah had vowed to return to Joab and help him triumph over the Ammonites.

King David ordered an attendant, "Fetch some flagons of our purest wine, so that we may welcome home our hardy friend with full carouses to his past fortunes and to the honors of his future arms."

Wine was usually mixed with water. Undiluted wine was a treat.

He continued, "Then I will send him back to the siege of Rabbah, and I will follow with the strength of Israel."

King David intended to raise soldiers and go to Rabbah and finish conquering it.

An attendant returned with flagons of wine.

King David said, "Arise, Uriah. Come and pledge the king."

Uriah said, "If David thinks that I am worthy of such a grace, I will be bold and pledge my lord the king."

He stood up.

King David said, "Both Absalom and Cusay shall drink to good Uriah and his happiness."

"We will, my lord, to please Uriah's soul," Absalom said.

King David said, "I will begin and make the first toast, Uriah. I drink to thyself and all the treasure of the Ammonites, which here I promise to impart to thee, and I bind that promise with a full draught."

King David drank.

Uriah said, "What seems pleasant in my sovereign's eyes, that Uriah shall do until he is dead."

King David ordered, "Fill his cup."

An attendant filled Uriah's cup with wine, and he drank.

King David then said, "Follow Uriah, you who love your sovereign's health, and do as he has done."

Absalom said, "May anyone who does not love David, or anyone who denies his authority, thrive badly and live poorly in Israel."

He then said, "Uriah, here is to the health of Abisai, Lord Joab's brother and thy loving friend."

Absalom drank.

Uriah said, "I pledge Lord Absalom and Abisai's health."

Uriah drank.

Cusay said, "Here now, Uriah, to the health of Joab, and to the pleasant journey we shall have when we return to the siege of mighty Rabbah."

Cusay drank.

Uriah said, "Cusay, I pledge thee all with all my heart."

Because his cup was empty, he said, "Give me some drink, you servants of the king. Give me my drink."

An attendant filled Uriah's cup with wine, and he drank.

King David said, "Well done, my good Uriah! Drink thy fill, so that David may rejoice in thy fullness."

By "thy fullness" King David meant Uriah's being full with wine. In different circumstances, the words could mean Uriah's being full of virtue.

"I will, my lord," Uriah answered.

Absalom said, "Now, Lord Uriah, drink one full draught to me."

"No, sir, I'll drink to the king," Uriah said. "Your father is a better man than you."

Uriah was becoming drunk. Some drunk people become rude.

"Do so, Uriah," King David said. "I will pledge thee immediately."

King David wanted Uriah to be drunker. Some drunk people do such things as forget their vows.

"I will, indeed, my lord and sovereign," Uriah said. "I'll for once in my days be so bold."

"Fill his glass," King David ordered.

"Fill my glass," Uriah said, giving an attendant his glass.

"Quickly, I say," King David said.

"Quickly, I say," Uriah said.

He was so drunk that he had started to repeat what others said.

He said, "Here, my lord, by your favor now I drink to you."

Uriah drank.

King David said, "I pledge thee, good Uriah, immediately."

King David drank.

Absalom said, "Here, then, Uriah, once again for me, and to the health of David's children."

Absalom drank.

“David’s children!” Uriah said.

“Aye, David’s children,” Absalom said. “Will thou pledge me, man?”

“Pledge me, man!” Uriah said.

“Pledge me, I say,” Absalom said, “or else thou don’t love us.”

“Do you talk? Do you talk?” Uriah said. “I’ll drink no more; I’ll lie down here.”

King David said, “Instead of lying down here, Uriah, go home and sleep.”

King David’s purpose in getting Uriah drunk was to muddle his thinking so that he would forget his vows and go home to Bathsheba. If being drunk meant he wouldn’t be able to have sex with her this night, he could have sex with her the next day.

“Oh, ho, sir!” Uriah said. “Would you make me break my vows?”

He lay down and said, “Home, sir! No, indeed, sir! I’ll sleep upon my arm, like a soldier. I’ll sleep like a man as long as I live in Israel.”

King David thought, *If nothing will serve to save his wife’s reputation, I’ll send him with a letter to Joab to put him in the front lines of the wars, so my purposes may take effect.*

If Uriah were to serve in the front lines — the most dangerous position in battle — he could be killed and then King David would be able to marry Bathsheba.

King David ordered, “Help him in, sirs.”

He and Absalom exited.

Cusay said, “Come, rise, Uriah. Get thee inside and sleep.”

“I will not go home, sir,” Uriah said. “That’s for certain.”

Cusay replied, “Then come and rest thyself upon David’s bed.”

“On, afore, my lords,” Uriah said. “On, afore.”

CHAPTER 6 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Chorus 1 —

The Chorus entered and criticized the evil behavior of King David:

“Oh, proud revolt of a presumptuous man, laying his bridle on the neck of sin, ready to bear him past his grave to Hell!”

King David was like a man getting on a horse that was ready to carry him to Hell.

“The death-prophesying raven, which in his voice carries the dreadful summons of our deaths, flies by the fair Arabian spices and Arabia’s pleasant gardens and delightsome parks, seeming to curse them with his hoarse caws, and yet stoops with hungry violence to eat a piece of hateful carrion.

“Just like that raven, wretched man, displeased with those delights that would yield a quickening savor — a life-giving aroma — to his soul, pursues with eager and unquenched thirst the greedy longings of his loathsome flesh.

“If holy David has so shaken hands with sin, what shall our baser spirits glory in?

“This king who is giving lust her rein pursues the sequel with a greater ill.

“Uriah in the front lines of the wars has been murdered by the hateful heathens’ sword, and David enjoys his too dear Bathsheba.

“Readers, know that this has happened, and that Bathsheba has given birth to a child, whose death the prophet solemnly does mourn.”

After the death of Uriah, King David married Bathsheba, but the prophet Nathan rebuked King David because of his sin and predicted the death of his child who was conceived in adultery.

CHAPTER 7 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 6 —

In the Royal Palace at Jerusalem, Bathsheba sat with her handmaid.

She said to herself, “Mourn, Bathsheba, bewail thy foolishness, thy sin, thy shame, the sorrow of thy soul. Sin, shame, and sorrow swarm about thy soul. And, in the gates and entrance of my heart, sadness, whose arms are most often wrapped around herself, hangs her lamentations. No comfort comes from the ten-stringed lyre, the twinkling cymbal, or the ivory lute, nor does the sound of David’s kingly harp make glad the broken heart of Bathsheba.

“Jerusalem is filled with thy lamentations, and in the streets of Zion sits thy grief.

“The babe is sick, sick to the death, I fear, the fruit that sprung from thee to David’s house; nor may the pot of honey and of oil gladden David or his handmaid’s countenance.”

By “handmaid,” Bathsheba meant herself.

Deuteronomy 8:8 calls Israel “*a land wherein is oil olive and honey*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

2 Kings 18:32 calls Israel “*a land of oil, of olive trees, and of honey*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

Bathsheba continued, “Uriah — it causes me grief to think about him! For who among the sons of men does not say to my soul, ‘The king has sinned, David has done amiss, and Bathsheba has laid snares of death to take Uriah’s life’?”

“My sweet Uriah, thou have fallen into the pit and gone even to the gates of Hell on account of Bathsheba, who would not shroud and conceal her shame.

“Oh, what is it to serve the lust of kings! How lion-like they rage when we resist!

“But, Bathsheba, in humbleness attend the grace that God will send to his handmaid.”

CHAPTER 8 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 7 —**

King David, wearing loosely fitting clothing, walked sadly in a room in the palace at Jerusalem. Some attendants were present.

He said to himself, “The babe is sick, and sad is David’s heart to see the guiltless bear the guilty’s pain.

“David, hang up thy harp, hang down thy head, and dash thy ivory lute against the stones. The dew that falls on the hill of Hermon does not rain on Zion’s tops and lofty towers. The plains of the Philistine cities Gath and Askaron rejoice, and David’s thoughts are spent in pensiveness.”

The Philistines were enemies of King David and Israel.

King David continued, “The babe is sick, sweet babe, whom Bathsheba with the woman’s pain of childbirth brought forth to Israel.”

The prophet Nathan entered the room.

King David asked, “But what has Nathan to say to his lord the king?”

The prophet replied, “Thus Nathan says to his lord the king: There were two men who were both dwellers in one town. The one was mighty, and exceedingly rich in oxen, sheep, and cattle of the field. The other was poor, having neither ox, nor calf, nor other animals, except for one little lamb that he had bought and nourished by hand. And it grew up, and fed with him and his family, and ate and drank as he and his family were accustomed to eat and drink, and in his bosom slept, and was to him as was his daughter or his dearest child. There came a stranger to this wealthy man, and the wealthy man refused to take one of his own animals or some of the abundance from his own storehouse to prepare and make the stranger food, but he took the poor man’s sheep, which was a large part of the poor man’s possessions, and prepared it for this stranger in his house.

“Tell me, what shall be done to the wealthy man for doing this?”

King David replied, “Now, as the Lord does live, this wicked man is judged and shall become the child of death. The wealthy man who without mercy took the poor man’s lamb away shall restore fourfold to the poor man.”

King David did not realize this, but Nathan the prophet had told a parable in which the wealthy man was King David, the poor man was Uriah, and the lamb was Bathsheba.

Nathan said to King David, “Thou art the man; and thou have judged thyself. David, thus says the Lord thy God by me:

“I anointed thee king in Israel, and saved thee from the tyranny of Saul. Thy master’s house — his palace and kingdom — I gave thee to possess. His wives into thy bosom I did give to you, and Judah and Jerusalem I also did give to you. And, thou know, if this had been too little to give to you, I might have given thee more. Why, then, have thou gone so far astray, and have done evil, and sinned in my sight? Thou have killed Uriah with the sword. Yes, with the sword of the uncircumcised thou have slain him. For that reason, from this day forth, the sword shall never go from thee and thine, for thou have taken this Hittite’s wife to thee. For this reason, behold, I will, says Jacob’s God, in thine own house stir evil up to thee. Yes, I before thy face will take thy wives, and give them to thy neighbor to possess. This shall be done to David in the light of day, so that Israel openly may see thy shame.”

King David said, “Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord, I have. Oh, I have sinned grievously! And, lo, from Heaven’s throne David does throw himself and groan and grovel to the gates of Hell!”

He fell down.

Raising him, Nathan the prophet said, “David, stand up. Thus says the Lord by me: *David the king shall live, for he has seen the true repentant sorrow of thy heart.*

“But, because thou have in this misdeed of thine stirred up the enemies of Israel to triumph, and to blaspheme the God of Hosts, and say that he set a wicked man to reign over his loved people and his tribes — the child shall surely die, that earlier was born, his mother’s sin, his kingly father’s disgrace.”

Nathan the prophet exited.

King David said to himself, “How just is Jacob’s God in all his works! But must the babe die that David loves so?

“Oh, the Mighty One of Israel will not change His judgment, and says the babe must die!

“Mourn, Israel, and weep in the gates of Zion. Wither, you cedar-trees of Lebanon; you sprouting almonds, with your flowering tops, droop, drown, and drench in Hebron’s fearful streams.”

The word “drench” meant to sink in water.

King David continued, “The babe must die who was to David born, his mother’s sin, his kingly father’s disgrace.”

He sadly sat down.

Cusay entered the room.

The first servant asked Cusay, “What tidings does Cusay bring to the king?”

Cusay said, “To thee, the servant of King David’s court, this is the news that Cusay brings. Just as the prophet prophesized, the Lord has surely stricken to the death the newborn child given birth to by the wife of Uriah, who by the sons of Ammon was earlier slain.”

“Cusay, be quiet,” the first servant said. “The king is sorely vexed. How shall the person who first brings this news fare, when, while the child was yet alive, we spoke, and David’s heart would not be comforted?”

Overhearing these last few words, King David said, “Yes, David’s heart will not be comforted! What are you

murmuring, you servants of the king? What news does Cusay have to tell to the king? Tell me, Cusay, is the child still living, or is he dead?"

Cusay answered, "The child is dead whom David fathered with Uriah's wife."

"Uriah's wife, say thou?" King David said.

He paused and then said, "The child is dead, so then David's shame ceases."

King David would never have to look at the child as the child grew, and so he therefore would no longer be reminded of his sin and shame were he to look at the child.

King David then said, "Fetch me food to eat, and give me wine to drink, water to wash, and oil to rub on my skin to clear my looks.

"Bring down your shalms, your cymbals, and your pipes."

All of these items were musical instruments.

He continued, "Let David's harp and lute, his hand and voice, give praise to Him who loves Israel, and sing the praise of Him who defended David's reputation, who put away his sin from out of his sight, and sent his shame into the streets of Gath."

Gath was the home of some of his and Israel's enemies; they would rejoice when hearing of King David's shame.

King David continued, "Bring to me the mother of the babe, so that I may wipe the tears from off her face, and give her comfort with this hand of mine, and dress fair Bathsheba in beautiful clothing, so that she may bear to me another son who may be loved by the Lord of Hosts.

"For where my dead son is, David must necessarily go, but never may my dead son come where David is now."

Some attendants brought in water, wine, and olive oil. They also brought in musical instruments and a banquet of food.

Bathsheba entered the room.

King David said to her, “Fair Bathsheba, sit thou, and sigh no more.”

He ordered the servants, “Sing and play, you servants of the king. Now David’s sorrow sleeps with the dead, and Bathsheba lives to Israel.”

They ate, drank, and sang.

King David said, “Now prepare at once weapons and warlike engines for assault, you men of Israel, you men of Judah and Jerusalem, so that Rabbah may be taken by the king, lest it be called after Joab’s name and David’s glory will not shine in the streets of Zion.

“To Rabbah King David marches with his men, in order to chastise Ammon and the wicked ones.”

CHAPTER 9 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 8 —**

The sheep-feast was occurring. Amnon was present at the sheep-feast, and he was the master of the feast, but Absalom and many men who obeyed his orders were also present at the sheep-feast.

Absalom had wanted Amnon to attend his sheep-feast, but instead he was attending Amnon's sheep-feast.

Or perhaps this was Absalom's sheep-feast, and he was honoring Amnon by making him the master of the feast.

Either way, Absalom had a malicious purpose hidden in his heart.

Absalom and several of his men stood together in a field.

Absalom said to them, "Set up your mules and give them good provender to eat, and let us meet our brothers at the feast.

"Accursed is the master of this feast. He is the dishonor of the house of Israel, he is the cause of his half-sister's loss of reputation, and he is his mother's shame.

"Shame be the share of him who could such ill contrive, to rape Tamar, and, without a pause, to drive her shamefully out of his house.

"But may his wickedness find just reward! Therefore, Absalom conspires with you to bring it about that Amnon dies at whatever time he sits to eat, for in the holy temple I have sworn to get revenge for his villainy in Tamar's rape."

Seeing Amnon and some others coming toward them, he said, "And here he comes. All of you, speak gently to him, this man whose death is deeply engraved in my heart.

Amnon, Adonia, and Jonadab came over to Absalom and his followers. Amnon and Adonia were two of King David's sons. Jonadab was King David's nephew and a close friend to Amnon.

Amnon said, "Our shearers are not far from here, I know, and Amnon to you, all his brethren, gives such welcome as

our fathers formerly were accustomed to give in Judah and Jerusalem.”

He then said, “But, especially, Lord Absalom, Amnon gives welcome to thee, the honor of thy house and progeny. Sit down and dine with me, King David’s son, thou fair young man, whose hairs shine in my eye like the golden wires of David’s ivory lute.”

Absalom asked, “Amnon, where are thy shearers and thy men, so that we may pour in us plenty of thy wines, and eat thy goats’-milk, and rejoice with thee?”

Amnon replied, “Here come Amnon’s shearers and his men. Absalom, sit and rejoice with me.”

A company of shepherds arrived and danced and sang.

Amnon said, “Drink, Absalom, in praise of Israel. Welcome to Amnon’s fields from David’s court.”

Stabbing Amnon as he drank, Absalom said, “Die with thy draught; perish, and die accursed, you dishonor to the honor of us all. Die for the villainy you did to Tamar. You are unworthy to be King David’s son!”

With Amnon dead, Absalom exited with his followers.

Jonadab, Amnon’s good friend, said, “Oh, what has Absalom done for Tamar? He has murdered his half-brother, great King David’s son!”

Adonia said, “Run away, Jonadab, and make it known what cruelty this Absalom has shown to Amnon.”

He then said to Amnon’s corpse, “Amnon, thy brother Adonia shall bury thy body among other dead men’s bones, and we will grieve as we tell Israel about Amnon’s death and Absalom’s pride.”

Absalom was proud because he had punished Amnon instead of allowing King David to do it, as King David had wanted.

CHAPTER 10 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 9 —**

Outside the walls of Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites, stood King David, Joab, Abisai, Cusay, and others, including a drummer and an ensign carrying the army's banner.

King David said, "This is Rabbah, the town of the uncircumcised, the city of the kingdom, where wicked Hanon sits as king. Rob this king, this Hanon of his crown. Unpeople Rabbah and the streets thereof. Kill everyone, for in their blood and the slaughter of the slain lies the honor of King David's line. Joab, Abisai, and the rest of you, fight this day for great Jerusalem."

The Ammonite King Hanon and others appeared on the walls of Rabbah.

Joab said, "See where Hanon shows himself on the walls. Why, then, do we refrain from assaulting the city so that Israel may, as it is promised, subdue the daughters of the Gentiles' tribes? All this must be performed by David's hand."

King David said, "Listen to me, Hanon, and remember well. As surely as He does live who kept my army safe, at that time our young men, by the pool of Gibeon, went forth against the strength of Isboseth, and twelve to twelve did with their weapons play, so surely are thou and thy men of war to feel the sword of Israel this day, because thou have defied Jacob's God, and allowed Rabbah with the Philistine allies to rail upon and insult the tribe of Benjamin."

After King Saul of Israel died, Isboseth — his son — and David contended for the throne of Israel. They met by the city of Gibeon and agreed that twenty-four men — twelve men from each side — would fight to decide who would become King of Israel. All twenty-four warriors were killed, and then the two sides engaged in a full-out battle, with David's army earning the victory.

King Hanon replied, “Listen, man. As surely as Saul thy master fell, and gored his sides upon the mountain-tops, and Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchisua, watered the dales and deeps of Askaron with bloody streams that from Gilboa ran in channels through the wilderness of Ziph, at that time the sword of the uncircumcised was drunken with the blood of Israel, so surely shall David perish with his men under the walls of Rabbah, Hanon’s town.”

The Philistines had defeated the Israelites at Mount Gilboa. Seeing that the Israelites were losing the battle, Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword.

Joab said, “Hanon, the God of Israel has said, *David the king shall wear that crown of thine that weighs a talent of the finest gold, and triumph in the spoil of Hanon’s town, when Israel shall hale thy people hence, and turn them to the tile-kiln, man and child, and put them under harrows made of iron, and hew their bones with axes, and their limbs with iron swords divide and tear in twain.*”

King David had ordered the Israelites to kill all the citizens of Rabbah following the forthcoming victory. Some would be baked in ovens for baking tiles. Some would have their flesh torn from their bodies by having harrows dragged over them. Some would be cut to pieces with swords.

2 Samuel 12:30-31 (1568 Bishop’s Bible) described what happened after King David was victorious:

30 And he took their king’s crown from off his head (which weighed a talent of gold, and in it were precious stones) and it was set on David’s head, and he brought away the people of the city, in exceeding great abundance.

31 And he carried away the people that was therein, and put them under saws and under iron harrows, and under axes of iron, and thrust them into the tile-kiln: thus did he with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And so David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

By “put them under saws” is meant “sawed them to death.”

1 Chronicles 20:3 states, “*And he brought out the people that were in it, and tormented them with saws and harrows of iron, and with other sharp instruments, and so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon: And David and all the people came again to Jerusalem*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

(Many translations of the Bible say that King David set the conquered people to work with these implements and to work in the tile-kiln.)

Joab said, “Hanon, this shall be done to thee and thine because thou have defied Israel.”

He then ordered his troops, “To arms, to arms, so that Rabbah feels revenge, and Hanon’s town becomes King David’s spoil!”

They fought the battle, and the Israelite army was victorious. Hanon was killed in the battle.

Wearing the late King Hanon’s crown, King David met with Joab, Abisai, Cusai, and other Israelites.

King David said, “Now clattering arms and wrathful storms of war have thundered over Rabbah’s razed, pulled-down towers. The avenging ire of great Jehovah’s arm made the gates of Rabbah to open for His people, and clothed the cherubim in fiery coats to fight against the wicked Hanon’s town.

“Pay thanks, you men of Judah, to the King, the God of Zion and Jerusalem, Who has exalted and raised Israel to this, and crowned David with this diadem.”

Joab said, “As beauteous and bright is he among the tribes as when the sun, attired in his shiny, glittering robe, comes dancing from his oriental, eastern gate and hurls like a bridegroom his radiant beams through the gloomy air. Like such does King David appear, crowned with the honor of his enemies’ town, shining in riches like the firmament, the starry vault that overhangs the earth — so appears David, King of Israel.”

Abisai said, “Joab, why doesn’t David mount his throne, David, whom Heaven has beautified with Hanon’s crown? Sound trumpets, shalms, and instruments of praise, to Jacob’s God for David’s victory.”

The musical instruments sounded.

Having traveled from the place of Amnon’s murder, Jonadab entered the scene.

Jonadab said, “Why does the King of Israel rejoice? Why sits David crowned with Rabbah’s rule? Behold, there has great sorrow befallen in Amnon’s fields because of the evil deed of Absalom. Absalom has overturned with his sword Amnon’s shearers and their feast of mirth, nor do any of King David’s sons live to bring these bitter tidings to the king.”

Jonadab was incorrect when he said that none of King David’s sons were alive to carry the news to him. Absalom had killed only Amnon. Jonadab may have been afraid that after he left, Absalom had returned and had killed David’s son Adonia and David’s other sons.

King David said, “Evil hurts me! How soon are David’s triumphs dashed, how suddenly declines David’s pride! As the daylight sets and diminishes in the west, so dims David’s glory and his magnificence. Die, David, for to thee is left no seed who may revive thy name in Israel.”

Without sons to succeed him as King of Israel, his name could be lost to memory and history.

Seeing Adonia and some of King David’s other sons coming toward them, Jonadab said: “In Israel some of David’s seed is left.”

Perhaps Amnon had been killed in Judah, and perhaps Jonadab had earlier meant that none of David’s sons in Judah were still alive.

Jonadab said to the people around King David, “Comfort your lord, you servants of the king.”

He then said to King David, “Behold, thy sons return in mourning clothing, and Absalom has slain only Amnon.”

Adonia and some other sons of King David entered the scene.

King David said, “Welcome, my sons. You are dearer to me than is this golden crown or Hanon’s spoil.

“Oh, tell me, then, tell me, my sons, I say, how came it to pass that Absalom has slain his brother Amnon with the sword?”

Adonia replied, “Oh, king, thy sons went up to Amnon’s fields to feast with him and eat his bread and oil, and Absalom upon his mule came, and to his men he said, ‘When Amnon’s heart is merry and secure, then strike him dead because he raped Tamar shamefully, and hated her, and threw her out of his doors.’ This he did, and they with him conspired and killed thy son Absalom to get revenge for the wrong done to Tamar.”

King David asked, “How long shall Judah and Jerusalem grieve and water Zion with their tears! How long shall Israel lament in vain, and not a man among the mighty ones will hear the sorrows of King David’s heart!

“Amnon, thy life was as pleasing to thy lord as to my ears is the music of my lute, or songs that David tunes to his harp, and Absalom has taken away from me the gladness of my sad distressed soul.”

Joab and some others exited.

Following the murder of Amnon, Absalom went into exile and stayed with his grandfather Talmai, the king of Geshur.

A woman from the town of Thecoa, which was about ten miles from Jerusalem, arrived and stood before King David.

The woman of Thecoa knelt and said, “God save King David, King of Israel, and bless the gates of Zion for his sake!”

King David said to her, “Woman, why do thou mourn? Rise up from the earth. Tell me what sorrow has befallen thy soul.”

The woman of Thecoa rose and said, “Oh, king, thy servant’s soul is sorely troubled, and grievous is the anguish of her heart. From Thecoa has thy handmaid — thy servant — come.”

King David said, “Tell me, thou woman of Thecoa, what ails thee and what has happened.”

The woman of Thecoa replied, “Thy servant is a widow in Thecoa. Two sons thy handmaid had, and they, my lord, fought in the field, and no man went between them to stop the fight, and so the one did smite and slay the other.

“And then the relatives of my sons arose and cried against the one who smote his brother, wanting him therefore to be the child of death and saying, ‘For we will follow and destroy the heir.’”

In other words, the relatives wanted to kill the living son to avenge the killing of the other son.

She continued, “So they will quench that sparkle that is left, and leave neither name nor children on the earth to me or to thy handmaid’s dead husband.”

King David said, “Woman, return; go home to thy house. I will give the command that thy son shall be safe. If any man say that thy son shall be otherwise than well, bring him to me, and I shall chastise him, for I swear that as the Lord does live, not a hair shall shed from thy son or fall upon the earth. Woman, to God alone belongs revenge. Shall, then, the relatives slay thy living son for his sin?”

King David did not realize this, but the woman of Thecoa had told a parable in which the two sons were Absalom and Amnon, and the relatives included King David.

The woman of Thecoa said, “King David has spoken well to his handmaid. But why, then, have thou determined so hard a part against the righteous tribes, to follow and pursue the banished, when to God alone belongs revenge? Assuredly thou have spoken against thyself. Therefore, call home again the banished. Call home the banished so that he may live, and raise to thee some fruit in Israel.”

She was asking that Absalom be allowed to return to Israel and father some children.

An intelligent man, King David said, “Thou woman of Thecoa, answer me one thing I shall ask of thee: Isn’t the hand of Joab in this action? Tell me, isn’t his finger in this deed?”

The woman of Thecoa replied, “It is, my lord; his hand is in this deed. Assure thyself that Joab, captain of thy army, has put these words into thy handmaid’s mouth, and thou are as an angel from on high to understand the meaning of my heart.

“Look, Joab is coming to his lord the king.”

Joab wanted to reconcile King David and his son Absalom. As a military man, Joab knew that if the two men remained unreconciled, Absalom could decide to raise an army, oust David, and become King of Israel. Chances of that happening were much less if the two men were reconciled, although it could still happen if Absalom were ambitious.

Joab entered the scene.

King David said, “Tell me, Joab, did thou send this woman in to tell me this parable in behalf of Absalom?”

Referring to himself in the third person, Joab said, “My lord, Joab did ask this woman to speak. And she has spoken, and thou have understood.”

King David replied, “I have, and I am content to do the thing you want me to do. Go and fetch my son, so that he may live with me.”

Joab knelt and said, “Now God be blessed for King David’s life! Thy servant Joab has found grace with thee, in that thou are sparing Absalom, thy child.”

He stood up and said about Absalom, “He is a beautiful and fair young man. In all his body no blemish is seen. His hair that twines about his bright and ivory-white neck is like the wires of David’s harp. In Israel there is not such a splendid man, and here I bring him to entreat you for grace.”

Joab brought in Absalom to see King David.

King David started to upbraid Absalom for murdering Amnon: “Did thou slain Amnon in the fields of Hazor —”

But then he stopped and rejoiced that Absalom had returned to Israel: “— ah, Absalom, my son. Ah, my son, Absalom!”

“But why do I vex thy spirit so? Live, and return from Gesur to thy house. Return from Gesur to Jerusalem. What good does it do for me to be bitter to thy soul? Amnon is dead, and Absalom survives.”

Absalom said, “Father, I have offended Israel, and I have offended David and his house. To avenge the wrong done to Tamar, Absalom has done wrong.

“But David’s heart is free from sharp revenge, and Joab has gotten grace for Absalom.”

King David said, “Depart with me, you men of Israel, you who have followed Rabbah with the sword, and ransack Ammon’s richest treasuries.”

He then said, “Live, Absalom, my son, live once more in peace. Peace be with thee, and with Jerusalem!”

Everyone except Absalom exited.

Absalom said to himself, “David is gone, and Absalom remains, flowering in the pleasant springtime of his youth.”

But he was ambitious, and his ambition was unfulfilled.

He said, “Why does Absalom live without being honored by the tribes and elders and the mightiest ones, so that round about his temples he may wear garlands and wreaths set on him with respect so that everyone who has a cause to plead might come to Absalom and call for right?”

“Then in the gates of Zion I would sit, and publish laws in great Jerusalem, and not a man would live in all the land unless Absalom would do him reason’s due.

“Therefore I shall address me, as I may, to love the men and tribes of Israel.”

Absalom was thinking ahead. He would become a judge and resolve disputes. By settling disputes in favor of the

northern tribes, he would become influential among them, and when he wanted them to, they would follow him.

CHAPTER 11 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 10 —

King David, Ithay, Sadoc, Ahimaas, Jonathan, and others met on the Mount of Olives.

Ithay, a military captain from Gath, commanded 600 soldiers. Although Gath was a Philistine city, when David was a young man, Ithay's father, the King of Gath, had been kind to him.

Sadoc was a high priest, and Ahimaas was his son. Abiathar was a priest, and Jonathan was his son.

King David was barefoot, with some loose covering over his head, and all of them were mourning.

Absalom had raised an army and was rebelling against his father. King David had fled Jerusalem with some followers, and he and they were mourning on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.

King David said, "Proud lust, the bloodiest traitor to our souls, whose greedy throat not earth, not air, not sea, and not Heaven can glut or satisfy with any abundance, thou are the causes for these torments that suck my blood, piercing with the venom of thy poisoned eyes the strength and marrow of my tainted bones."

The lust could be King David's sexual lust for Bathsheba, or Absalom's lust for power, or both.

King David then described God's parting of the Red Sea to save the Jews and to punish the Jews' enemies: "To punish Pharaoh and his cursed army, the waters shrunk at great Adonai's voice, and the sandy bottom of the sea appeared, offering his service at his servant's feet."

He continued, "And, to inflict a plague on David's sin, He makes his bowels traitors to his breast, winding about his heart with deadly grip.

"Ah, Absalom, the wrath of Heaven inflames thy scorched bosom with ambitious heat, and Satan sets thee on

a tower of lust, showing thy thoughts the pride of Israel, of choice to cast thee on her ruthless stones!”

Satan was tempting Absalom with power over Israel, but he was tempting Absalom only so that he could destroy Absalom.

King David continued, “Weep with me, then, ye sons of Israel. Lie down with David, and with David mourn before the Holy One Who sees our hearts.”

King David lay down on the ground, as did all the others with him.

He continued, “And fill the face of every flower with the dew of your tears. Season this heavy soil with showers of tears. Weep, Israel, for David’s soul dissolves into tears, filling the fountains of his drowned eyes and pours her tears on the unfeeling earth.”

Sadoc, high priest of the Israelites, said, “Weep, Israel. Oh, weep for David’s soul, strewing the ground with hair and torn garments to serve as the tragic witness of your hearty woes!”

While mourning, ancient people would sometimes cut off some of their hair. They would also tear their clothing.

Ahimaas, Sadoc’s son, said, “Oh, I wish our eyes were conduits to our hearts, and I wish that our hearts were seas of liquid blood, to pour in streams upon this holy mountain, to serve as witness that we would die for David’s woes!”

Jonathan, the son of the priest Abiathar, said, “Then this Mount of Olives would seem to be a plain drowned with a sea, which with our sighs should roar, and, in the murmur of its mounting waves, would report our bleeding sorrows to the heavens as witness we would die for David’s woes.”

Ithay, a military captain from Gath, said, “Earth cannot weep enough for David’s woes. Then weep, you heavens, and, all you clouds, dissolve into drops of tears, so that piteous stars may see our miseries, and drop their golden tears upon the ground to serve as witness how they weep for David’s woes.”

Sadoc the high priest said, “Now let my sovereign raise his prostrate bones, and mourn not as a faithless man would do, but let him be assured that Jacob’s righteous God, Who promised never to forsake your throne, will still be just and pure in his vows.”

King David said, “Sadoc, high priest, preserver of the Ark of the Covenant, whose sacred virtue keeps the chosen crown, I know my God is spotless in His vows, and that these hairs shall greet my grave in peace.

“But that my son would wrong his tendered soul, and fight against his father’s happiness, turns all my hopes into despair of him, and that despair feeds all my veins with grief.”

Ithay, the military captain from Gath, said, “Think of it, David, as a fatal plague that grief preserves, but does not prevent, and turn thy drooping eyes upon the troops that, because of their affection for thy worthiness, swarm about the person of the king. Cherish their valor and their zealous love with pleasant looks and sweet encouragements.”

King David said, “I think the voice of Ithay fills my ears.”

Ithay replied, “Don’t let the voice of Ithay be hateful to thine ears. Ithay’s heart would soothe thy bosom with his tears.”

King David asked why Ithay and his soldiers were loyal to him: “But why do thou go to the wars with us? Thou are a stranger here in Israel, and thou are a son of Achis, the mighty King of Gath. Therefore return to Gath, and stay with thy father. Thou came to me only yesterday. Should I now let thee partake in these troubles here with us? Keep both thyself and all thy soldiers safe. Let me abide the hazards of these battles, and may God requite the friendship thou have shown to me.”

Ithay replied, “As surely as Israel’s God gives David life, whatever place or peril shall contain or threaten David the king, the same will Ithay share in life and death. I will go

wherever you will go, and I will share whatever danger you face.”

King David said, “Then, gentle Ithay, be thou still with us, a joy to David, and a grace to Israel.”

He then spoke to Sadoc, who had taken the Ark of the Covenant with him when fleeing from Jerusalem:

“Go, Sadoc, now, and bear the Ark of God into great Jerusalem again. If I find favor in God’s gracious eyes, then He will lay his hand upon my heart yet once again before I visit death, giving it strength, and giving virtue to my eyes, to taste the comforts and behold the form of his fair Ark of the Covenant and holy tabernacle.

“But if he should say, *My wonted love is worn, and I have no delight in David now*, then here lie I armed with a humble heart to embrace the pains that anger shall impose, and kiss the sword my lord shall kill me with.

“Sadoc, take thy son Ahimaas, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, with you when you return to Jerusalem, and in these fields I will rest until they return from you some certain news.”

Sadoc, Ahimaas, and Jonathan would serve as spies for King David in Jerusalem.

Sadoc replied, “Thy servants will with joy obey the king and hope to cheer his heart with happy news.”

Sadoc, Ahimaas, and Jonathan exited.

Ithay said to King David, “Now that it shall be no grief to the king, let me for good inform his majesty that, with unkind-to-kindred and graceless Absalom, Achitophel your ancient counselor directs the state of this rebellion.”

Achitophel, one of King David’s counselors, had gone over to the side of Absalom and was advising him.

King David said, “Then does it — Achitophel’s advice — aim with danger at my crown.”

He knelt and prayed, “Oh, Thou, Who holds His raging bloody boundary within the circle of the silver moon, Who girds Earth’s center with His watery scarf, limit the counsel

of Achitophel, no bounds extending to my soul's distress, but turn his wisdom into foolishness!"

God's raging bloody boundary was the circle of the silver moon, which meant that God's raging bloody territory included the entire Earth. God's watery scarf was the ocean, which wrapped around the Earth like a scarf.

King David was praying that God would limit Achitophel's counsel, which should be wise, so that it would not hurt King David. He wanted Achitophel's counsel to be that of a foolish, not a wise, man.

Cusay entered the scene. His coat was torn, and his head was covered with dust.

In ancient times, grieving people sometimes poured dust on their head.

Cusay said, "Happiness and honor to my lord the king!"

King David replied, "What happiness or honor may betide the state of him who toils in my dangers and extreme circumstances?"

Cusay replied, "Oh, let my gracious sovereign cease these griefs, unless he wishes his servant Cusay to die — Cusay's life depends upon my lord's relief!

"Let my presence with my sighs perfume the pleasant repository of my sovereign's soul."

Cusay wanted to do King David's mourning for him.

"No, Cusay, no," King David said. "Thy presence to me will be a burden, since I care for thee and cannot endure thy sighs for David's sake. But if thou return to fair Jerusalem, and say to Absalom that just as thou have been a trusty friend to his father's seat, so thou will be to him, and call him king, Achitophel's counsel may be brought to naught."

King David wanted Cusay to pretend to serve Absalom but to give bad advice that would counter Achitophel's good advice.

King David continued, "Then along with Sadoc and Abiathar, thou and they may learn the secrets of my son, and

thou can send to me messages by Ahimaas and friendly Jonathan, who both are there in Jerusalem.”

Cusay replied, “Then rise, and trust God with the outcome of these actions.”

“Cusay, I rise,” King David said, “although with unwieldy bones I carry weapons against my Absalom.”

CHAPTER 12 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 11 —

In the palace in Jerusalem were Absalom, Amasa, and Achitophel, along with the concubines of David. Others were also present. Everyone was very well dressed, and Absalom had been crowned.

Amasa was King David's nephew; he was the son of David's sister Abigail. He was also the captain of Absalom's army.

Absalom said, "Now you who were my father's concubines, liquor to his unchaste and lustful fire, have seen his honor shaken in his house, which I possess in the sight of all the world. I bring you forth as foils to my renown, and to eclipse the glory of your king, whose life is with his honor fast enclosed within the entrails of a jet-black cloud, whose dissolution into rain shall pour down in showers the substance of his life and swelling pride."

A foil is a thin piece of metal put under a jewel to show it off to better effect.

By taking possession of King David's concubines, Absalom was showing off his power.

He continued, "Then shall the stars light earth with rich aspects, and Heaven shall burn in love with Absalom, whose beauty will suffice to chase away all mists, and clothe the sun's sphere with a triple fire, sooner than his clear eyes should suffer stain, or be offended with a lowering day."

Absalom was saying that his beauty outshone the fire of the Sun by three times.

King David's concubines quickly showed that they remained loyal to him.

The first concubine said, "Thy father's honor, graceless Absalom, and ours thus beaten with thy violent arms, will cry for vengeance to the Host of Heaven, whose power is always and forever armed against the proud, and will dart

plagues at thy aspiring head for doing this disgrace to David's throne."

The Host of Heaven is the armies of angels under God.

The second concubine picked up where the first concubine left off:

"— to David's throne, to David's holy throne, whose scepter angels guard with swords of fire, and sit as eagles on his conquering fist, ready to prey upon his enemies.

"So then don't think that thou, the captain of his foes, even if thou were much swifter than Azahell was, who could outrun the nimble-footed roe, to escape the fury of their thumping beaks or the dreadful reach of their commanding wings."

Azahell, the brother of Joab and Abisai, had died in the Battle at Gibeon.

Achitophel advised, "Let not my lord the King of Israel be angry with a silly woman's threats, but with the pleasure he has earlier enjoyed, let him turn them back to their private quarters again until David's conquest becomes their overthrow."

Absalom said, "Into your bowers, you daughters of disdain, begotten by the fury of unbridled lust, and wash your couches with your mourning tears, for grief that David's kingdom is decayed and ruined."

The first concubine said, "No, Absalom, King David's kingdom is chained fast to the finger of great Jacob's God, Who will not loosen it for a rebel's love."

The concubines exited.

Amasa said to Absalom, "If I might give advice to the king, these concubines should buy their taunts with blood."

He was advising that the concubines be killed.

"Amasa, no," Absalom replied, "but let thy martial sword empty the veins of David's armed men, and let these foolish women escape our hands to recompense the shame they have sustained."

As concubines, they served the king's lust.

2 Samuel 16:22 states, “*And so they spread a tent upon the top of the house, and Absalom went in unto his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

Absalom continued, “First, Absalom was by the trumpet’s sound proclaimed throughout Hebron King of Israel, and now he is set in fair Jerusalem with complete state and the glory of a crown. Fifty fair footmen by my chariot run, and to the air whose rupture rings my fame, wherever I ride, they offer reverence and veneration.

“Why shouldn’t Absalom, who in his face carries the final purpose of his God, which is to work him grace in Israel, endeavor to achieve with all his strength the magnificence that most may satisfy his joy, keeping his statutes and his covenants pure?”

So Absalom said. One wonders *who* would work *him* grace in Israel. Was Absalom going to work God grace in Israel, or was God going to work Absalom grace in Israel? Would Absalom serve God, or would God serve Absalom?

Absalom continued, “His thunder is entangled in my hair, and with my beauty is His lightning quenched.”

Absalom was vain.

He continued, “I am the man he made to glory in, when by the errors of my father’s sin David lost the path that led into the land with which our chosen ancestors were blessed.”

Cusay, whom King David had sent to be his undercover agent, entered the throne room and said to Absalom, whom he called “king” without meaning it, “Long may the beautiful King of Israel live, to whom the people do by the thousands swarm!”

Absalom asked, “Why does Cusay so greet his foe? Is this the love thou show to David’s soul, to whose assistance thou have vowed thy life? Why do thou leave him in this emergency?”

Cusay replied, “Because the Lord and Israel have chosen thee. As I have previously served thy father’s turn with

counsel acceptable in his sight, so likewise I will now serve and obey his son.”

Absalom said, “Then welcome, Cusay, to King Absalom.”

He then said, “And now, my lords and loving counselors, I think it is time to exercise our arms and do battle against forsaken David and his army.

“Give counsel first, my good Achitophel, and say what times and orders we may best observe for the prosperous management of these high exploits.”

Achitophel said, “Let me choose out twelve thousand valiant men, and, while the night hides with her sable mists the close endeavors cunning soldiers use, I will assault thy discontented sire, and, while with weakness of their weary arms, overwhelmed with toil, David’s people flee in huge disordered troops to escape from the sudden attack of thy army in order to save their lives, and leave the king alone, then I will smite him with his last and final wound, and bring the people to thy feet in peace.”

His advice was good. He would quickly raise twelve thousand soldiers and attack King David and his weary soldiers in a surprise attack at night. These twelve thousand soldiers would be enough to rout David’s army, and in the confusion, when David was not protected, Achitophel would kill him.

Absalom said, “Well has Achitophel given his advice. Yet let us hear the counsel of Cusay, whose great experience is well worth hearing.”

King David had sent Cusay to Absalom to give him bad advice that would counter the good advice of Achitophel.

Referring to Absalom as his “king,” Cusay said, “Although wise Achitophel is much more fitting to purchase hearing with my lord the king, on account of all his former counsels, than myself, yet, not offending Absalom or him, this time is not good for nor worth pursuit of David, for, as well thou know, thy father’s men are strong, and they are as

enraged as she-bears are that have been robbed of their cubs. Besides, the king himself is a valiant man, trained and educated in the feats and stratagems of war, and he will not, in order to prevent the worst that could happen — his death — lodge with the common soldiers in the field.

“But now, I know, his accustomed policies have taught him to lurk within some secret cave, guarded with all his bravest soldiers, who if the forefront of his army grow faint, will yet give out that Absalom flees, and so discourage thy soldiers.”

Even if Absalom’s soldiers were to defeat those of David’s soldiers in the front ranks, David’s bravest soldiers would spread the false news that it was Absalom’s soldiers who were being defeated. This would help rally David’s soldiers and could cause Absalom’s soldiers to grow faint.

Cusay continued, “David himself, also, whose angry heart is as a lion’s annoyed in his walk, will fight, and all his men to a man will fight, before a few shall vanquish him by fear.

“My counsel therefore is, with trumpet’s sound to gather men throughout Israel, from the settlement of Dan in the north to the town of Bersabe in the south, so that they may march in numbers like those of sea-sands that nestle close to one another’s neck. So shall we come upon him in our strength, like the dew that falls in showers from Heaven, and we will leave him not a man to march with.”

Cusay advised gathering a vast army of soldiers — as numerous as the grains of sand — from the men throughout Israel and then attacking David with overwhelming force.

Cusay’s advice would help David by keeping him from being attacked and defeated quickly. At this time, twelve thousand soldiers would be enough to defeat him with a surprise attack at night.

Cusay continued, “Besides, if any city succor David, the numbers of our men shall fetch ropes for us, and we will pull

the city down the river's stream, so that not a stone is left to keep us out."

Absalom asked Amasa, the leader of his army, "What says my lord to Cusay's counsel now?"

Amasa said, "I fancy Cusay's counsel far better than the advice that Achitophel gave us, and so, I think, does every soldier here."

The soldiers present said, "Cusay's counsel is better than Achitophel's."

Absalom said, "Then march we all after Cusay's counsel: We will follow his advice.

"Sound trumpets through the territory of Israel, and muster all the men to serve the king, so that Absalom may glut his longing soul with the sole possession of his father's crown."

Achitophel thought, *Ill shall they fare who follow the military expeditions of you, who scorn the counsel of Achitophel.*

Everyone except Cusay exited.

Cusay said to himself, "Thus has the power of Jacob's jealous God fulfilled his servant David's plan through me, and brought Achitophel's advice to scorn."

Sadoc, Abiathar, Ahimaas, and Jonathan entered. All of these served King David, although like Cusay, they pretended to serve Absalom.

Sadoc the high priest said, "God save Lord Cusay and direct his zeal to obtain David's conquest against his son!"

Abiathar the priest asked Cusay, "What secrets have thou gleaned from Absalom?"

"Sacred priests that bear the Ark of God, I have learned about this secret plot:

"Achitophel advised Absalom to let him choose twelve thousand fighting men, and he would come on and attack David in the night while he was unaware and was weary with his violent toil.

“But I advised Absalom to get a greater army and gather men from Dan to Bersabe to come upon him strongly in the fields.

“Now send your sons Ahimaas and Jonathan to deliver these secrets to the king. Let them advise him not to stay this night out in the open field, but to get over the Jordan River immediately, lest he and all his people kiss the sword and die.”

Sadoc said, “Go, Ahimaas and Jonathan, and immediately convey this message to King David.”

Ahimaas replied, “Father, we will, if Absalom’s chief spies don’t stop us and keep us here.”

CHAPTER 13 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 12 —**

Semei stood on a road near the village of Bahurim, which was located east of the Mount of Olives. Semei had been a follower of Saul, and he hated David because David had succeeded Saul as King of Israel. He regarded David, who had been a shepherd in his youth, as a tyrant. His pockets were filled with stones to throw as weapons, and he was waiting for David.

Semei said to himself, “The man of Israel who has ruled as king, or rather as the tyrant of the land, bolstering his hateful head upon the throne that God unworthily has blessed him with, shall now, I hope, lay as low as Hell, and be deposed from his detested chair — the throne he sits on.

“Oh, I wish that my bosom could by nature bear a sea of poison that would be poured upon David’s cursed head — the head that sacred balm has graced and consecrated King of Israel!

“Or I wish that my breath were made the smoke of Hell, infected with the sighs of damned souls, or with the reeking vapor of the throat of that serpent that feeds on adders, toads, and venomous roots, so that, as I opened my revenging lips to curse the shepherd for his tyranny, my words might cast rank poison into his pores, and make his swollen and rankling sinews crack like the combat-blows that break the clouds when Jove’s brave champions — God’s angels — fight with fiery swords.”

King David and his men were traveling east.

Seeing David, Semei said to himself, “See where is coming he whom my soul abhors! I have prepared my pocket full of stones, mingled with earth and dust, to throw at him, Bursting with disdain, I greet him with stones and earth and dust.”

King David, Joab, Abisai, Ithay, and others arrived on the scene.

Semei yelled, "Come forth, thou murderer and wicked man. The lord has brought upon thy cursed head the guiltless, innocent blood of Saul and all his sons, whose royal throne thy baseness has usurped.

"And, to revenge it deeply on thy soul, the Lord has given the kingdom to thy son Absalom, and he shall avenge the traitorous wrongs of Saul."

Apparently, Semei meant that Absalom would avenge the traitorous wrongs committed against Saul. Or perhaps Saul had committed a wrong: the wrong of acting in such a way that allowed David to become king.

Semei continued:

"Even as thy sin has still importuned Heaven, so shall thy murders and adultery be punished in the sight of Israel, as thou deserve, with blood, with death, and with Hell.

"Hence, murderer, flee away from here!

"Let me alone to take away his head."

He threw stones and earth and dust at David.

Abisai, who was the son of Zeruaia, asked about Semei, "Why does this dead dog curse my lord the king?"

King David said, "Why meddles thus the son of Zeruaia to interrupt the action of our God?"

"Semei accosts me with this reproach because the Lord has sent him to reprove the sins of David, printed in David's own brows with blood. David blushes for his conscience's guilt.

"Who dares, then, ask him why he curses me?"

Hearing David, Semei said, "If, then, thy conscience tells thee that thou have sinned, and that thy life is odious to the world, command thy followers to shun thy face; and by thyself here make away thy soul and commit suicide, so that I may stand and glory in thy shame."

David replied, "I am not desperate, Semei, like thyself, for I instead trust the covenant of my God, which is founded on mercy, built with repentance, and finished with the glory of my soul."

David knew that he had sinned, but he was hopeful and not desperate about his future life.

Semei said, “You are a murderer — and you hope for mercy in thy end! May hate and destruction sit upon thy brows to watch the exit from your body of thy damned ghost, which with thy last gasp they’ll take and tear, hurling a piece in every part of Hell. Hence, murderer, thou shame to Israel, foul lecher, drunkard, plague to Heaven and earth!”

He again threw stones and earth and dust at King David.

Joab said, “Does David think it is merciful to refrain like this from following the laws of self-preservation in this extremity of his distress, in order to allow his subjects to be so reckless in words and deeds?”

“Send hence the dog with sorrow to his grave.”

Joab and Abisai, his brother — both were sons of Zeruaia — wanted Semei dead.

King David said, “Why should the sons of Zeruaia seek to check Semei’s spirit, which the Lord has thus inspired?”

“Behold, my son Absalom, who issued from my flesh, seeks to take my life with equal fury to that which thou two want to take the life of Semei.

“How much more then the grandson of Jemini — Semei — wants to take my life, chiefly since Semei does nothing but God’s command?”

“It may happen that God will look on me this day with gracious eyes, and as a result of Semei’s cursing bless the heart of David in his bitterness.”

Semei said, “Do thou fret and vex my soul with sufferance and tolerance? Oh, I wish that the souls of Isboseth and Abner, whom thou sent swimming to their graves in blood, with wounds freshly bleeding, gasping for revenge, were here to execute my burning hate!”

Isboseth was Saul’s son, and Abner was the commander of Isboseth’s army. The two men quarreled when Isboseth took one of Abner’s concubines. Abner left Isboseth and attempted to join the side of David, but Joab killed him

because Abner had earlier killed Joab's brother. Isboseth's own soldiers killed Isboseth.

Semei continued, "But I will hunt thy foot with curses still.

"Hence, monster, murderer, mirror of contempt!"

He again threw stones and earth and dust at King David.

Ahimaas and Jonathan entered the scene, bearing Cusay's news for King David.

Ahimaas said, "Long life to David, and death to his enemies!"

"Welcome, Ahimaas and Jonathan," King David said. "What news does Cusay send to thy lord the king?"

Ahimaas said, "Cusay wishes my lord the king to cross the Jordan River immediately, lest he and all his people perish here, for wise Achitophel has counseled Absalom to take advantage of your weary arms, and come this night upon you in the fields and attack you.

"But the Lord has made Achitophel's counsel scorned, and Cusay's policy preferred with praise. Cusay's policy was to enroll every Israelite man as a soldier, and so attack you in their pride of strength, vastly outnumbering you and your men."

Referring to King David in the third person, Jonathan said, "Abiathar in addition entreats the king to send his men of war against his son Absalom, and not risk his person in the field."

Abiathar did not want King David to fight in the forthcoming battle.

King David said, "Thanks to Abiathar, and to you both, and to my Cusay, whom the Lord reward. But ten times treble — ten times three — thanks to His soft hand Whose pleasant touch has made my heart to dance, and play and sing Him praises in my zealous breast, who turned the counsel of Achitophel into accordance with the prayers of his servant's — my — lips.

“Now we will cross the river all this night, and in the morning we will sound the voice of war, the voice of bloody and unkindly and un-kin-ly war of son against father.”

Joab said, “Tell us how thou will divide thy men, and who shall have the special charge herein.”

He was asking into how many battalions King David would divide the soldiers, and who would lead each battalion.

King David said, “Joab, thou thyself shall for thy charge conduct the first of three battalions of all my valiant men.

“Abisai’s valor shall lead the second of three battalions.

“The third of three battalions fair Ithay, whom I most should grace for the comfort he has done to David’s woes, shall lead.

“And I myself will follow with my guard in the midst.”

Ithay said, “That David should not do; for if we soldiers were to flee from battle, even ten thousand of us would not be valued half as much by David’s enemies as he himself is. Thy soldiers, loving thee, deny thee this. Thy soldiers won’t let thee participate in the battle.”

Ithay was saying that if King David’s soldiers were to be forced to flee from the battlefield, David’s enemies would devote all their efforts to finding and killing David, even if it meant missing the opportunity to kill ten thousand of David’s soldiers. For that reason, King David’s soldiers wanted King David to not participate in the battle.

King David said, “What seems best to them, my people, then, that will David do.

“But now, my lords and captains, hear the voice of him — me — who never yet pierced piteous Heaven with his prayers in vain. So then let my words not slip lightly through your ears.

“For my sake, spare the young man Absalom. Joab, thyself did once use friendly words to reconcile my incensed heart to him. If, then, thy love to thy kinsman is sound and unimpaired, and thou will prove thyself to be a perfect

Israelite, befriend him with deeds, and touch not a hair of his — touch not that fair hair with which the wanton, playful winds delight to play, and love to make curl, and in which the nightingales would build their nests, and make sweet bowers in every golden tress to sing their lover to sleep every night.

“Oh, Joab, don’t spoil Jove’s — God’s — fair ornaments, which he has sent to solace David’s soul!

“The best, you see, my lords, are swift to sin. When we sin, our feet are washed with the milk of roe deer, and dried again with coals of lightning. We enjoy committing the sin, but we hate enduring the punishment of that sin.

“Oh, Lord, thou see the proudest sin’s poor slave, and with his bridle thou pull him to the grave!

“For my sake, then, spare lovely Absalom.”

Ithay replied, “We will, my lord, for thy sake favor him. We will spare Absalom.”

CHAPTER 14 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 13 —

In his house, Achitophel stood alone, holding a noose.

He said to himself, “Now Achitophel has set his house in order and settled his affairs and taken leave of every pleasure there.”

Looking at the noose, he said, “On this depends Achitophel’s ‘delights,’ and in this circle must his life be closed.”

He paused and then continued, “The wise Achitophel, whose counsel proved always as sound for fortunate success as if men asked the oracle of God, is now treated like the fool of Israel.

“So then set thy angry soul upon thy soul’s wings, and let her fly into the shadow of death; and for my death let Heaven forever weep, making huge floods with its tears upon the land I leave, to ravish them and all their fairest fruits. Let the flood of tears destroy the agricultural crops of Israel. Let all the sighs I breathed for this disgrace hang on my hedges like eternal mists, to serve as mourning garments for their master’s death.”

Garments were sometimes hung on hedges to dry after being washed.

Achitophel continued, “Open, earth, and take thy miserable son into the bowels of thy cursed womb. Once in a surfeit thou did spew him forth. Now because of deadly hunger suck him in again, and let his body be poison to thy veins.”

The earth had once over-eaten and then vomited forth Achitophel; now, he wanted the earth to devour him.

He continued, “And now, thou Hellish instrument of Heaven, at once execute the arrest of Jove’s just decision, and stop the breast of him who curses Israel.”

Jove literally refers to Jupiter, the Roman name of the king of the gods, but metaphorically it refers to God. All of

God's decisions are just, and God had decided to have Achitophel treated like a fool. To stop being treated like a fool and thereby arrest Jove's just decision, Achitophel committed suicide.

The suicide stopped the heart of Achitophel, who had just now cursed Israel: "... and for my death let Heaven forever weep, making huge floods with its tears upon the land I leave, to ravish them and all their fairest fruits. Let the flood of tears destroy the agricultural crops of Israel."

2 Samuel 17:23 states, "*And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose and gat him home to his own house, and to his own city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father*" (1568 Bishop's Bible).

CHAPTER 15 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 14 —

In the Wood of Ephraim, Absalom stood with Amasa and the rest of his train.

Absalom had gathered many soldiers and was ready to fight King David's army.

The battle was about to start.

Absalom said, "Now for the crown and throne of Israel to be confirmed with the power of my sword and written with David's blood upon the blade.

"Now, Jove, let forth the golden firmament — the stars — to look on him — me — with all Thy fiery eyes that Thou have made to give their glories light.

"To show Thou love the power of me, who is Thy hand, let fall a wreath of stars upon my head, whose influence may govern Israel with state exceeding all her other kings.

"Fight, lords and captains, so that your sovereign's face may shine in honor brighter than the sun; and with the virtue of my beauteous rays make this fair land as fruitful as the fields that with sweet milk and honey overflowed. God, in the whizzing of a pleasant wind, shall march upon the tops of mulberry-trees, to cool all breasts that burn with any griefs, as in the past when he was good to Moses' men.

"By day the Lord shall sit within a cloud, to guide your footsteps to the fields of joy, and in the night a pillar, bright as fire, shall go before you, like a second sun, in which is the essence of his godhead.

"So that day and night you may be brought to peace, and never swerve from that delightsome path that leads your souls to perfect happiness, this shall God do for joy when I am king.

"So then fight, brave captains, so that these joys may fly into your bosoms with sweet victory."

CHAPTER 16 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)

— Scene 15 —

The battle, which had taken place by the Wood of Ephraim, was over. Absalom's army had lost, and he had attempted to escape by riding away on a mule. But his long hair got caught in the branches of a tree, the mule kept going, and Absalom was left hanging by his hair.

Absalom said to himself, "What angry angel, sitting in these shadows, has laid his cruel hands upon my hair and holds my body thus between Heaven and earth?"

"Has Absalom no soldier near his hand who may untwine for me this unpleasant curl, or wound and cut this tree that seizes his lord?"

One of his soldiers could untangle and release his hair or cut off the branches that held Absalom's hair.

Absalom did not mention cutting his hair in order to be released.

"Oh, God, see the glory of Thy hand, and the choicest fruit of nature's workmanship, hang, like a rotten branch, upon this tree, fit for the axe and ready for the fire!"

"Since thou withhold all ordinary help to release my body from this bond of death, oh, let my beauty fill these senseless plants with the sense and power to release me from this plague, and work some wonder to prevent the death of Absalom, whose life thou made a special miracle!"

Joab and one of his soldiers entered the scene.

The soldier said to Joab, "My lord, I saw the young Prince Absalom hanging by the hair upon a shady oak, and he could by no means get himself freed."

Joab asked, "Why didn't thou slay the wicked Absalom, that rebel to his father and to Heaven, so that I might have given thee for thy pains ten silver shekels and a golden belt?"

The soldier replied, "Not for a thousand shekels would I slay the son of King David. Absalom's father ordered that neither thou, nor Abisai, nor the son of Gath — Ithay —

should touch Absalom with the stroke of deadly violence. King David's order was given in the hearing of us all, and, if I had done it, then, I know, thou thyself, before thou would abide and suffer the king's rebuke, would have accused me as a man of death. I would have been executed immediately."

Joab said, "I must not now stand trifling here with thee."

As a military man, Joab knew that some rebels, despite being pardoned, rebel again.

Absalom begged, "Help, Joab, help, oh, help thy Absalom! Let not thy angry thoughts be laid in blood, in the blood of him who in former times cherished and nourished thee, and softened thy sweet heart with friendly love.

"Oh, give me once again my father's sight, my dearest father and my princely sovereign, so that, as I shed tears of blood from my wounded heart before his face, the ground may witness, and the heavens record, my last submission perfect and full of pity."

Joab replied, "Rebel to nature, hate to Heaven and earth! Shall I give help to him who thirsts after the soul of his dear father and my sovereign lord? Now see, the Lord has tangled in a tree the health and glory of thy stubborn heart, and made thy pride curbed with a plant that lacks the senses of an animal.

"Now, Absalom, how does the Lord regard the beauty whereupon thy hope was built, and which thou thought God's grace did glory in?

"Don't thou find now, with fear of instant death, that God does not love any superficially handsome body or superficially handsome face, when the valuable soul, which ought to be virtuous, is stuffed with nothing but pride and stubbornness?

"But I am preaching to thee while I should revenge thy cursed sin that stained Israel and makes her fields blush with her children's blood!

“Take that as part of thy deserved plague, which worthily no torment can inflict. You deserve to be punished so much more than this.”

Joab stabbed Absalom with a spear.

Absalom cried, “Oh, Joab, Joab, cruel, ruthless Joab! Herewith thou wound thy kingly sovereign’s — David’s — heart, whose heavenly temper hates the sight of his children’s blood, and who will be sick, I know, for Absalom.”

He addressed his absent father: “Oh, my dear father, I wish that thy melting eyes might pierce this thicket to behold thy son, thy dearest son, gored with a mortal spear!”

He then said, “Yet, Joab, pity me. Pity my father, Joab. Pity the distress of the soul of him who mourns my life, and who will die, I know, when he hears of my death.”

Joab said, “If he were so compassionate about thy condition, why did he send me against thee with the sword? All Joab intends to do to give thee pleasure is to dispatch and kill thee quickly and thus stop thy pain.

“Absalom, believe that Joab’s pity is in this; in this, proud Absalom, is Joab’s love for thee.”

Joab stabbed Absalom again and then exited with the soldier.

Absalom said, “Such love, such pity may Israel’s God send thee, Joab, and for His — God’s — love to David pity me!”

He again addressed his absent father: “Ah, my dear father, see thy bowels bleed. See death assault thy dearest Absalom. See, pity, pardon, pray for Absalom!”

Five or six soldiers who were enemies to Absalom entered the scene.

The first soldier said, “See where the rebel in his glory hangs.

“Where is the virtue — the power — of thy beauty, Absalom? Will any of us here now fear thy looks, or be in love with thy golden hair wherein was wrapped rebellion

against thy sire, and ropes prepared to stop thy father's breath?"

The image was of Absalom intending to strangle his father with his — Absalom's — long hair.

"Our captain Joab has begun to pledge a drink to us, and here's an end to thee and all thy sins."

By wounding Absalom, it was as if Joab had begun to drink a toast to his soldiers' health. With Absalom dead, the rebellion would be over, and King David's soldiers would no longer die in the battles of civil war.

The soldiers stabbed Absalom, who died.

The first soldier said, "Come, let us take the beautiful rebel down, and in some ditch in the midst of this dark wood, let us bury his body beneath a heap of stones. Let us bury the body of him whose stony heart did hunt his father's death."

Joab, Abisai, and some soldiers, including a drummer and an ensign carrying the army's flag, entered the scene.

Joab said, "Well done, brave soldiers! Take the traitor down, and in this miry ditch inter his bones, covering his hateful breast with heaps of stones. This shady thicket of the dark wood of Ephraim shall always and forever scowl on his cursed grave. Night-ravens and owls shall ring his fatal knell and sit exclaiming on his damned soul. There shall they heap their preys of carrion, until all his grave shall be clad with stinking bones, so that the grave may make the senses of every man loathe the sight and stink of his grave.

"So shall his end breed horror to his reputation, and eternal shame to his traitorous deed."

CHAPTER 17 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Chorus 2 —**

The Chorus said this:

“Oh, dread-causing President — God — of His just judgment, Whose holy heart is never touched with compassion solely for fickle beauty or for glorious shapes, but is touched with compassion for the virtue of an upright soul that is humble and zealous in his inward thoughts, although in his face and body he is loathsome and deformed!

“Now, since this story lends us enough abundance to make a third discourse of David’s life, adding thereto his most renowned death, and all the deaths of all those whom at his death he judged, here end we this section, and what here is lacking to please the audience, we will supply with treble willingness.”

Note:

Actually, King David’s death does not appear in the play or in this retelling of the play.

CHAPTER 18 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 16 —**

Near the battlefield, trumpets sounded. Joab, Ahimaas, and Cusay marched onto the scene. With them were Amasa and all the other followers of Absalom. Amasa was King David's nephew, but he had been the leader of Absalom's army.

Joab said, "Soldiers of Israel, and you sons of Judah, who have fought in these painful and disgusting battles, and ripped old Israel's bowels with your swords, the godless general of your stubborn arms — Absalom — has been brought by Israel's helper — God — to the grave: a grave of shame, and the scorn of all the tribes of Israel.

"Now, then, to save your honors from the dust, and keep your hot bloods at a moderate temper by your bones, let Joab's ensign shelter your manly heads. Direct your eyes, your weapons, and your hearts to guard the life of David from his foes. Error has masked your much-too-forward minds, and you have sinned against the king chosen by God to rule Israel, against his life, for whom your lives are blessed, and you have followed a usurper to the battlefield.

"In that usurper's just death, your deaths are threatened.

"But Joab pities your disordered and confused souls, and therefore he offers pardon, peace, and love to all who will be friendly and reconciled to Israel's welfare, to David, and to Heaven."

Joab wanted Absalom's former followers to again become faithful followers of King David.

Joab then said, "Amasa, thou are the leader of the army that under Absalom have raised their arms. Now be a captain wise and politic, careful and loving for thy soldiers' lives, and lead them to this honorable league of friendship."

If Amasa, the leader of Absalom's army, were to pledge his loyalty to King David, the defeated rebel soldiers were likely to do the same.

“I will,” Amasa said. “At least, I’ll do my best. And for the gracious offer thou have made I give thee thanks, as much as I give thee thanks for allowing me to keep my head.”

Amasa, who could have been beheaded as punishment for being a traitor, then said to his defeated soldiers, “So then, you deceived poor souls of Israel, since now you see the errors you fell into, now be appeased with thanks and due submission, and as you see my — your captain’s — precedent, here cast we, then, our swords at Joab’s feet, submitting with all zeal and reverence our goods and bodies to his gracious hands.”

Amasa and his defeated soldiers cast down their swords and knelt.

Joab said, “Stand up, and all of you take your swords again.”

All stood up and took their swords.

Joab continued, “David and Joab shall be blessed herein.”

Ahimaas, the son of the high priest Sadoc, said, “Now let me go inform my lord the king about how God has freed him from his enemies.”

“Another time, Ahimaas, not now,” Joab said. “But, Cusay, go thyself, and tell the king the happy message of our good success.”

“I will, my lord,” Cusay replied, “and I thank thee for thy grace.”

He exited.

Ahimaas asked, “What if thy servant — me — should go, too, my lord?”

Joab asked, “What news have thou to bring since Cusay has gone?”

Ahimaas had no new news, but he could go by a route different from the one Cusay took and perhaps get to King David faster than Cusay could.

Ahimaas requested, “Yet give Ahimaas the contentment he would receive by running on so sweet a charge.”

Much of the message was sweet: The army opposing King David had been decisively defeated and the civil war was over. But part of the message was not sweet: Absalom, King David’s rebelling son, was dead.

Joab replied, “Run, if thou will, and may peace be with thy steps.”

Ahimaas exited.

Joab ordered Amasa and the defeated soldiers, “Now follow, so that you may salute the king with humble hearts and reconciled souls.”

Amasa said, “We follow, Joab, and go to our gracious king, and our swords shall honor him to our deaths.”

CHAPTER 19 (DAVID AND BATHSHEBA)**— Scene 17 —**

King David, Bathsheba, Solomon, Chileab, Adonia, and Nathan the prophet were at David's headquarters at Manahaim. With them were their trains of attendants.

Solomon, Chileab, and Adonia were three of David's sons. Solomon's mother was Bathsheba.

None knew yet that King David's army had conquered the rebels and that Absalom was dead.

Bathsheba asked her husband, King David, "Why does my lord, the lamp of Israel, from whose bright eyes all eyes receive their light, dim the glory of his sweet face, and paint his countenance with his heart's distress?"

King David's face showed his distress. He was worried about the battle, and he was worried about his son Absalom.

Bathsheba continued, "Why should his thoughts retain a sadness, when every pleasure kneels before his throne, and sues for sweet acceptance with his grace?"

As king, David had many pleasures available to him. Why, then, should he be sad?

Bathsheba continued, "Just take up your lute, and make the mountains dance, recall the sphere of the sun, and restrain the clouds, give ears to trees, make savage lions tame, impose still silence on the loudest winds, and fill the fairest day with foulest storms."

King David was skilled with the harp, and Bathsheba attributed to his skill such powers as making good weather bad, and bad weather good.

She continued, "Then why should passions of much meaner power bear head against the heart of Israel?"

King David — the heart of Israel — was allowing the emotion of melancholy to affect him.

King David replied, "Fair Bathsheba, thou might increase the strength of these thy arguments, drawn from my skill, by urging thy sweet sight to my sad mood. Your beauty

has always served as sacred balm past all earthly joys to cheer me up and make me forget my griefs.

“But, Bathsheba, fair Peace is the daughter of the Highest and her beauty builds the towers of Israel. Fair Peace is she who in chains of pearl and unicorn horn leads in her wake the ancient golden world, the world that Adam held in paradise, whose breath refines all infectious airs, and makes the meadows smile at her arrival ... she, she ... my dearest Bathsheba, by ‘she’ I mean fair Peace, the goddess of our graces here ... has fled the streets of fair Jerusalem, the fields of Israel, and the heart of David, leading my comforts in her golden chains linked to the life and soul of Absalom.”

King David was mourning because Israel was not at peace and fair Peace had departed, taking with her the things that would comfort him. Among the things that would comfort him were the life and soul of his son Absalom.

Bathsheba said, “Then is the pleasure of my sovereign’s heart so wrapped within the bosom of that son Absalom that the result is that Solomon, whom Israel’s God affects and to whom you gave the name ‘Solomon’ because of God’s love, should be no salve to comfort David’s soul?”

Bathsheba gave birth to her second son with David after God had forgiven David’s sins; because of God’s forgiveness, David named his son Solomon, a name that means Peace.

2 Samuel 12:24 states that King David “*called his name Solomon, and the Lord loved him*” (1568 Bishop’s Bible).

King David said, “Solomon, my love, is David’s lord. Our God has named him lord of Israel. In him — for that, and since he is thy son — David must necessarily be pleased at the heart, and he shall surely sit upon my throne.”

Solomon was figuratively David’s lord because Solomon would succeed him as King of Israel.

King David continued, “But Absalom, the beauty of my bones, fair Absalom, the portrait of love, sweet Absalom, the

image of content, must claim a portion in his father's care, and be in life and death King David's son."

Nathan the prophet said, "Yet, as my lord has said, let Solomon reign, whom God in naming has anointed king.

"Now is he apt to learn the eternal laws, whose knowledge being rooted in his youth will beautify his age with glorious fruits."

Solomon was still young, and he could learn knowledge that would take root in him now and lead to fruits for Israel later when he ruled.

Nathan the prophet continued, "In contrast, Absalom, incensed with graceless pride, usurps and stains the kingdom with his sin.

"Let Solomon be made thy staff of age, fair Israel's rest, and the honor of thy race."

King David said, "Tell me, my Solomon, will thou embrace thy father's moral instructions and engrave them in thy heart, and satisfy my zealous desire for thy renown with the practice of such sacred principles as shall concern the state of Israel?"

King David wanted Solomon to rule well and acquire a lasting reputation as a righteous king.

Solomon replied, "My royal father, if the heavenly zeal, which for my welfare feeds upon your soul, were not sustained with the virtue of my own, and if the sweet accents of your cheerful voice should not each hour reach my ears as sweetly as the breath of Heaven reaches him who gasps while being scorched with the summer's sun, I should be guilty of unpardoned sin, fearing the plague of Heaven and the shame of earth.

"But since I myself vow to learn the skill and holy secrets of his — God's — mighty hand whose cunning tunes the music of my soul, it would content me, father, first to learn these things:

"How the Eternal framed the firmament."

Solomon wanted to know how God created the heavens.

He continued, “Which bodies lead their influence by fire, and which are filled with hoary winter’s ice.”

Astrologers believed that heavenly bodies influenced human lives. The fiery heavenly bodies are stars, which can have a beneficial or malicious influence. The icy heavenly bodies are comets, whose appearance in the sky was regarded as portending evil.

Solomon continued, “What sign is rainy, and what star is fair.”

The constellation Orion appeared in late autumn when bad weather appeared. Astronomers have long used the stars to make weather predictions.

The three astrological water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. The three astrological fire signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. The three astrological earth signs are Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn. The three astrological air signs are Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius.

Solomon continued, “Why by the rules of true proportion the year is still divided into months, the months to days, and the days to certain hours.”

The phrase “true proportion” means “proper ratio.”

We must pay attention to astronomy today to keep our calendars up to date. The Earth orbits the Sun once every 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds, and so every four years we have a leap year in which one extra day is added to the calendar.

Understanding astronomy involves understanding God’s creation that is the universe.

Solomon continued, “What fruitful race shall fill the future world, and for what time shall this round building — the Earth — stand.”

Today, we also want to know about the future of humanity and the planet Earth.

Solomon continued, “What magistrates, what kings shall keep in awe men’s minds with bridles of the eternal law.”

The first things Solomon mentioned were mainly theoretical knowledge, but this was practical knowledge. Studying good and effective kings can help people learn how to rule well and effectively.

King David advised, “Wade not too far, my boy, in waves too deep. The feeble eyes of our aspiring thoughts behold present things and record past things. But things to come exceed our human reach, and they are not depicted yet in angels’ eyes. For those things to come, submit thy sense, and say these things:

“Oh, Lord, Who now is creating the future world, Thou know all to come not by the course of heavenly stars, comets, and planets, not by frail conjectures of inferior signs, not by monstrous floods, not by flights and flocks of birds, not by the bowels of a sacrificed beast, and not by the figures of some hidden art, but by a true and natural presage, laying the ground and perfect architecture of all our actions now before Thine eyes, from Adam to the end of Adam’s seed — the last man on earth.”

The inferior — worthless — signs can include astrological signs. Such unusual natural happenings as huge floods were sometimes thought to predict bad things in the human and political world. Some people thought that the flight of birds — either to the lucky or the unlucky side — could predict the course of future events. Priests examined the entrails of sacrificed animals in an attempt to understand the future. Some people used occult symbols such as those on Tarot cards to try to correctly predict the future. All of these ways to try to predict the future are superstitions.

A true and natural presage is a true and natural sign of what will occur. Today, we make predictions based on science, which is based on knowledge of natural laws and mathematics.

King David continued, *“Oh, Heaven, protect my weakness with thy strength! Look on me so that I may view thy face, and see these secrets written in thy brows.*

“Oh, sun, come shoot thy rays upon my moon! So that now my eyes, eclipsed to the earth, may brightly be refined and cleared and so shine to Heaven.

“Transform me from this flesh, so that I may live, before my death, spiritually reborn with thee.

“Oh, Thou great God, ravish my earthly spirit!

“Do these things so that for the time a more-than-human skill may feed the organons — bodily instruments — of all my mind.

“Do these things so that when I think, Thy thoughts may be my guide, and, when I speak, I may be made by choice the perfect echo of Thy heavenly voice.”

King David paused and then said, “Thus say, my son, and thou shall learn them all.”

Solomon said, “A secret inspired frenzy enraptures my soul, lifting my mind above her human bounds, and, just as the eagle, flying from her resting place with violent hunger, towering in the air, seizes her feathered prey, and thinks to eat, but seeing then a cloud beneath her feet, lets the fowl fall, and is emboldened with eyes intending to challenge and defy the sun, and soars close to the sun’s stately sphere, so Solomon, mounted on the burning wings of divine zeal, lets fall his mortal food, and cheers his senses with celestial air, walks in the golden starry labyrinth, and holds his eyes fixed on Jehovah’s forehead.”

Eagles were thought to be able to look directly at the sun; Solomon wanted to be able to look directly at God.

Solomon continued, “Good father, teach me further what to do.”

Nathan the prophet said, “See, David, how his aspiring spirit mounts and is even now of a height to wear a crown. So then make him the promise that he may succeed you as King of Israel, and make old Israel’s bones rest from the turmoil of war.”

King David said, “Nathan, thou prophet, whose ancestor was Jesse, from whom the Messiah shall be descended, I

promise thee and lovely Bathsheba that my Solomon shall govern after me.”

Bathsheba said, “May He — God — who has touched thee with this righteous thought preserve the harbor of thy thoughts in peace!”

A messenger arrived and said, “My lord, thy servants of the watch-guard have seen one running here from the wars.”

King David said, “If he has come alone, he is bringing news.”

The messenger added, “Another man has thy servant seen, my lord, whose style of running much resembles that of Sadoc’s son.”

“He is a good man and brings good tidings,” King David said.

Ahimaas, the son of Sadoc, entered the scene and said, “May peace and contentment be with my lord the king, whom Israel’s God has blessed with victory.”

King David asked about the other matter that he was greatly concerned about, “Tell me, Ahimaas, does my Absalom still live?”

Ahimaas answered, “I saw a troop of soldiers gathered, but I don’t know what the tumult might mean.”

Ahimaas knew that Absalom was dead, but he also knew that telling a king bad news can be dangerous.

King David said, “Stand nearby, until some other messenger may inform the heart of David with a happy truth.”

Cusay entered the scene and said, “May happiness and honor live with David’s soul, whom God has blessed with the conquest of his foes.”

King David asked, “But, Cusay, does the young man Absalom still live?”

Cusay replied, “May the stubborn enemies to David’s peace, and all who cast their spears against his crown, fare always like the young man Absalom! For as he rode through the woods of Ephraim, which fought for thee as much as all

thy men, his hair was tangled in a shady oak, and hanging there, he sustained the stroke of well-deserved death by Joab and his men.”

Many of the enemy soldiers, in addition to Absalom, had died in the woods of Ephraim.

“Has Absalom sustained the stroke of death?” King David said. “Die, David, because of the death of Absalom, and make this cursed news the bloody spears that through Absalom’s bowels rip thy wretched breast.

“Hence, David, walk the solitary woods, and in the shade of some cedar that the thunder slew, and fire from Heaven — lightning — made its branches black, sit and mourn the decease of Absalom.

“Against the body of that lightning-blasted plant, break thy ivory lute into a thousand slivers and hang thy stringless harp upon the dead cedar’s boughs, and through the sapless hollow-sounding trunk bellow the torments that perplex thy soul.

“There let the winds sit sighing until they burst. Let a tempest, muffled with a pitch-dark cloud, threaten the forests with her hellish face, and, mounted fiercely on her iron wings, tear up by the roots the wretched engine of destruction — the tree — that held my dearest Absalom, leading to his death.

“Then let them toss my broken lute to Heaven, even to His — God’s — hands that whip me with the strings, to show how sadly His poor shepherd sings.”

He went into his pavilion — a large tent — and sat alone with his back to the others.

Bathsheba said, “Die, Bathsheba, to see thy David mourn, to hear his tunes of anguish and of Hell.

“Oh, help, my David, help thy Bathsheba” — she knelt and then lay prostrate — “whose heart is pierced with thy breathy swords, and bursts with the burden of ten thousand griefs!”

King David's cries as he mourned the death of Absalom were swords made out of breath that pierced Bathsheba's heart.

Bathsheba continued speaking about King David's sorrows, "Now thy sorrows sit and suck my blood. Oh, I wish that my blood might be poison to the powers of thy sorrows, and I wish that their lips might draw my bosom dry, as long as David's love might ease him, though she — I, Bathsheba — die!"

Nathan the prophet criticized the extreme grief of David and Bathsheba: "These violent passions don't come from above; they don't come from Heaven. David and Bathsheba offend God the Highest by mourning in this immeasurable way."

King David stood and looked out of his pavilion and said, "Oh, Absalom, Absalom! Oh, my son, my son! I wish to God that I had died for Absalom! But he is dead! Ah, dead! Absalom is dead. And David lives to die for Absalom."

King David sat again inside the pavilion and mourned.

Joab, Abisai, Ithay, and their train of soldiers arrived.

Joab asked, "Why does the queen lie so prostrate on the ground? Why is this company so sadly faced? Why is the king now absent from his soldiers, and why isn't he marching in triumph through the gates?"

He drew back part of the pavilion, revealing King David inside, and said to him:

"David, awake. If sleep has shut thine eyes — the sleep of affection — and so thou cannot see the honor offered to the victor's head, then know Joab brings conquest pierced on his spear, and joy from all the tribes of Israel."

David's affection for the dead Absalom was making him not rejoice in his country's military victory. It was deadening him to the pleasure he would normally have felt because of this good news.

King David asked, “Thou man of blood, thou sepulcher of death, whose marble breast entombs my bowels alive, didn’t I order thee, indeed, beg thee, even for my sake, to spare my Absalom?”

“And have thou now, out of scorn for what would contribute to David’s health, and out of scorn for doing my heart some happiness, given him the sword and spilt his purple soul?”

This society used the word “purple” to refer to both royalty and the color of blood.

Joab, a military man who rejoiced in the victory and knew that it would greatly help Israel, said:

“Does it irritate David that he breathes as a victor and that Judah and the battlefields of Israel should clean their faces and remove from their faces their children’s blood?”

“Are thou weary of thy royal rule?”

“Is Israel’s throne a serpent in thine eyes?”

“Is He — God — Who set thee there so far from and undeserving of thanks, that thou must curse His servant — me — for His sake?”

“Have thou not said that, as is the morning light of the cloudless morning, so should be thine house?”

“Have thou not said that your house should not be as flowers that by the brightest rain grow up quickly and as quickly fade?”

“Have thou not said that the wicked are as thorns, which cannot be preserved and protected with the hand, and that the man who shall touch them must be armed with coats of iron and garments made of steel, and with the shaft of a protected spear?”

Harmful thorns ought not to be protected; they ought to be destroyed.

Joab then said, “And are thou angry that the life is now cut off of the man who led the guiltless swarming to their deaths, and was more wicked than an army of men?”

“Advance thee from thy melancholy den! Come out of thy pavilion! And deck thy body with thy blissful robes, or, by the Lord Who sways the Heaven I swear that I’ll lead thine armies to another king who shall cheer them for their princely chivalry, and not sit daunted, frowning in the dark, at a time when his fair looks, refreshed with oil and wine, should dart gladdening beams into their bosoms, and fill their stomachs with triumphant feasts.

“If thou act the way the other king acts, then when elsewhere stern War shall sound his trumpet, and call another army to the battlefield, Reputation still may bring thy valiant soldiers home after their victory, and for their service Reputation may happily confess that she lacked enough worthy trumpets to sound their prowess. Their prowess was so great that she needed additional trumpets.

“You have a choice to make.

“Take thou this course I am recommending and live. Come out of thy pavilion and reward thy troops and lead Israel and ensure that your reputation will live.

“Or refuse to take this course I am recommending, stay in your pavilion, mourn as I lead away your soldiers, and allow your reputation to die.”

Abisai said, “Come, brother, let him sit there until he sinks. Some other king shall advance the name of Joab.”

The brothers Joab and Abisai started to leave.

Bathsheba rose and said, “Oh, wait, my lords, stay! David mourns no more, but rises to give honor to your acts.”

King David came out of the pavilion and said about Absalom, “Then happy are thou, David’s fairest son, who, freed from the yoke of earthly toils, and sequestered from any perception of human sins, thy soul shall enjoy the sacred lodging — Paradise — of those divine ideas that present thy changed spirit with a Heaven of bliss.

“Then thou are gone; ah, thou are gone, my son! To Heaven, I hope, my Absalom has gone. Thy soul there

placed in honor of the saints, or angels clad with immortality, shall reap a sevenfold grace for all thy griefs.

“Thy eyes, now no longer eyes but shining stars, shall deck the flaming heavens with novel lamps.

“There thou shall taste the drink of seraphim, and cheer thy feelings with the food of archangels.

“Thy day of rest, thy holy Sabbath day, shall be eternal; and, with the curtain drawn back, thou shall behold thy Sovereign face to face with wonder, knit in triple unity, unity infinite and innumerable.”

He then said to Joab and Abisai, “Courage, brave captains! Joab’s tale has stirred me, and made the suit of Israel preferred. I now will rule Israel to the best of my abilities. Now may old Israel and his daughters sing.”

Joab said, “Bravely resolved, and spoken like a king.”

EDWARD I

CAST OF CHARACTERS (EDWARD I)

The English Royal Family:

Edward I, King of England, nicknamed “Longshanks” because of his height. He was six-foot-two, which was impressive in the 1200s. His wife often calls him “Ned.” His father was King Henry III.

Queen Eleanor, Edward’s consort. She is Eleanor of Castile. Her husband often calls her “Nell.”

Katherine, Eleanor’s Attendant. Queen Eleanor, who is from the Kingdom of Castile, calls her Katherina.

Joan of Acre, their daughter. She was born in Acre, a city in Israel.

Edward, Prince of Wales, son of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor. He is born during the course of the play, and he later becomes King Edward II.

Queen-Mother, consort of the deceased Henry III. She is Eleanor of Provence.

Edmund, Duke of Lancaster, Edward’s brother. “Mun” was King Edward I’s nickname for Edmund.

Duchess of Lancaster, Edmund’s wife.

English Nobility:

Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester.

Earl of Sussex.

Sir Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.

Sir Thomas Spencer.

Cressingham, a noble.

Other English Characters:

Bishop.

Mayoress of London. Her name is Mary.

Lady Eleanor, daughter of Simon de Montfort, the Duke of Leicester. Marries Llewelyn, Prince of Wales.

Potter's Wife.

John, Servant to Potter's wife.

The Welsh:

Llewelyn, Prince of Wales.

Sir David of Brecknock, Llewelyn's brother.

Rice ap Meredith, a Baron.

Owen ap Rice, a Baron.

Friar Hugh ap David.

Guenthian, the Friar's wench.

Jack, Novice of the Friar.

Guenther, a Messenger.

Morgan Pigot the harper. Engages in prophecy.

Farmer.

The Scots:

John Baliol, elected King of Scotland.

Versses, a Lord.

Lord Bruce, one of Baliol's attendants.

Others:

English Lords, Scottish Lords, Welsh Barons, Ladies, Messengers, Soldiers, etc.

NOTES:**KING HENRY III: 1216-1272**

Son of King John, he reigned for 56 years. At the beginning of his reign, much of England was controlled by the French Prince Louis (later King Louis VIII), but at the end of his reign, England was controlled by the King of England.

KING EDWARD I: 1272-1307

Edward Longshanks fought and defeated the Welsh chieftains, and he made his eldest son the Prince of Wales. He won victories against the Scots, and he brought the coronation stone from Scone to Westminster.

King Edward I's life dates are June 1239 – 7 July 1307. He became King when his father died on 16 November 1272, and he was crowned on 19 August 1274 after returning from the Ninth Crusade.

Peter Lukacs has an excellent annotated text of the play at ElizabethanDrama.org. It can be downloaded free:

<http://elizabethandrama.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Edward-I-Annotated-B.pdf>

<https://tinyurl.com/y39fp5fg>

Also available there is a free theater script of the play.

Nota Bene:

Classicist Alison Parker translated Peele's original Latin clauses. Some of those translations are used in this book.

George Peele assassinates the character of Queen Eleanor, Edward's consort. She was Eleanor of Castile, the daughter of the King of Spain, and when George Peele wrote his play in the late 16th century, the English greatly disliked Spaniards.

Another name for Wales is Cambria.

Another name for Britain is Albion.

In Elizabethan culture, a man of higher rank would use words such as "thee," "thy," "thine," and "thou" to refer to a servant. However, two close friends or a husband and wife could properly use "thee," "thy," "thine," and "thou" to refer to each other. A person of lower rank would call a person of higher rank "you."

"Sirrah" was a term of address used when a person of high social status spoke to a male of lower social status.

CHAPTER 1 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE 1 —**

At the Royal Palace at Westminster, Gilbert de Clare (the Earl of Gloucester), the Earl of Sussex, Roger Mortimer (the Earl of March), and Sir David (Llewelyn's brother) waited on Eleanor the Queen-Mother.

The Queen-Mother, Eleanor of Castile, is the consort of King Henry III and the mother of Edward, who will soon be crowned King Edward I of England.

Gilbert de Clare, the Earl of Gloucester, is a very rich and very powerful 31-year-old man. He has been Regent of England since the death of King Henry III and as such is addressed as Lord Lieutenant.

Roger Mortimer, the Earl of March, is a cousin of Llewelyn, the Welsh rebel, but he is loyal to England.

Sir David is Llewelyn's brother, but he is pretending to support England, although he actually supports Welsh independence.

The time is August of 1274, and Edward, the oldest son of King Henry III, is returning to England after four years of leading a Crusade to the Holy Land and traveling. King Henry III has died, and Edward is now the King of England.

The Queen-Mother said, "My Lord Lieutenant of Gloucester, and Lord Mortimer, to do you honor in your sovereign's eyes, who, as we hear, has newly come on land in England after traveling from Palestine, with all his men-of-war — the poor remainder of the royal fleet, preserved by a miracle in Sicily — go mount your coursers and meet him as he travels on his way here."

Edward had left for the Ninth Crusade in 1270. His fleet of 13 English ships survived a storm at Sicily in 1270, but that storm destroyed many French ships.

Coursers are powerful horses.

The Queen-Mother continued, "Tell him to spur his steed and hurry here. Minutes seem like hours until his mother sees her princely son shining in the glory of his safe return."

Gloucester and Mortimer exited.

The Queen-Mother then addressed the country of England:

"Illustrious England, ancient seat of Kings whose chivalry has royalized and increased your fame — your fame that sounding bravely throughout the world and proclaiming conquests, spoils, and victories rings glorious echoes through the farthest world.

"What warlike nation, trained in feats of arms, what barbarous and uncivilized people, fierce, and untamed, what land under the constellations of the southern part of the world, and what land in the frozen zone under the Sun's wintry glare, recently have not quaked and trembled at the name of Britain and her mighty conquerors?

"Her neighboring realms — Scotland, Denmark, and France — awed with the deeds of Britain's mighty conquerors, and jealous of her arms, have begged defensive and offensive alliances.

"Thus Europe, rich and mighty in her Kings, has feared brave, splendid England and dreaded her Kings.

"And now, to immortalize Albion's champions and make their reputation equal with the Trojans' ancient fame, comes lovely Edward from Jerusalem, veering before the wind and plowing the sea with his stretched sails filled with the breath of men who throughout the world admire his manliness."

Albion is a name for Britain.

The Queen-Mother continued, "And, look, at last arrived at the port of Dover, Edward Longshanks, your King, your glory, and our son, with troops of conquering lords and warlike knights, like bloody-helmeted Mars, surveys his army. He is taller than all the soldiers in his army by the head, and he marches along as bright as the Sun-god

Phoebus Apollo's eyes! And we, his mother, shall behold our son, and England's peers shall see their sovereign."

The trumpets sounded, and Edward's soldiers entered the scene.

Edward's maimed soldiers wore helmets and garlands, and every man wore a red cross on his coat.

The ancient — the standard-bearer or ensign — was carried in a chair. He wore a garland and plumes were on his helmet, and he carried the army's banner in his hand.

Gloucester and Mortimer, who were bare-headed, and others followed them.

Arriving last were Edward and his wife Eleanor, Edmund Duke of Lancaster (Edward's brother), and Joan (Edward and Eleanor's daughter), and Lady Eleanor de Montfort (the daughter of Simon de Montfort, the Duke of Leicester; she was a prisoner who had been captured while trying to sail to Wales), and Almeric de Montfort her brother, with many sailors and soldiers.

The Queen-Mother greeted them: "Gloucester! Edward! Oh, my sweet sons!"

Her sons were Edward and Edmund Duke of Lancaster. Both of them were returning from the Crusade.

Overcome with emotion, she fainted.

King Edward I said, "Help, ladies!"

"Oh, ungrateful destiny, which welcomes Edward with this tragedy!"

Gloucester said, "Be patient, your highness. It is only the result of your mother's love overwhelmed with the sight of her thrice-valiant sons."

He then said to the Queen-Mother, "Madam, don't be overwhelmed at seeing his majesty returning with glory from the Holy Land."

The Queen-Mother said, "Brave sons, the worthy champions of our God, the honorable soldiers of the Highest, bear with your mother, whose abundant love with tears of

joy salutes your sweet return from famous journeys that were both hard and fortunate.

“But, lords, alas, how heavy is our loss since your departure to these Christian wars! The King your father, and the Prince your son, and your brave uncle, Almain’s Emperor, woe to me, are dead!”

Henry III, Edward’s father, died on 16 November 1272.

Edward and Eleanor’s first son, John, who was born in 1266, died on 3 August 1271.

King Edward I’s uncle, Richard of Cornwall, who had served as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, died on 2 April 1272.

Almain is a name for Germany.

“Take comfort, madam,” King Edward I said. “Leave these sad laments. Dear was my uncle, dearer was my son, and ten times dearer was my noble father. Yet, even if their lives were valued at a thousand worlds, they cannot escape the arrest of dreadful Death, Death who seizes and summons all alike.

“So then, leaving them to heavenly blessedness, to join in thrones of glory with the just, I salute your royal majesty, my gracious mother-Queen, and you, my lords, Gilbert de Clare, Sussex, and Mortimer, and all the princely states of England’s peers, with health and honor to your hearts’ content.

“And welcome are you, wished-for England, on whose ground these feet so often have desired to tread.”

He then addressed his wife, Queen Eleanor, who had traveled with him to the Holy Land for the Crusade and whose nickname was Nell: “Welcome, sweet Queen, my fellow-traveler. Welcome, sweet Nell, my fellow-mate in arms, whose eyes have seen the slaughtered Saracens piled in the ditches of Jerusalem.”

Saracens were those who opposed the Crusaders in the Holy Land.

King Edward I continued, “And lastly welcome, manly followers, who bear the scars of honor and of arms, and on your war-drums carry crowns as Kings — crown mural, naval, and triumphant all.”

A crown mural was a gold crown that was awarded to the first man to scale a wall of a besieged town. It was decorated with battlements.

A naval crown was a gold crown that was awarded to the victor of a naval battle. It was decorated with the beaks of ships.

A triumphant crown was a triumphal crown that was awarded to victorious generals.

King Edward I continued, “At the sight of you, the trembling Turks have fled like sheep before the wolves, and Saracens have made their cottages in walled towns. But bulwarks had no force to beat you back.

“Lords, these are soldiers who will enter brass gates and tear down lime and mortar with their fingernails. Embrace them, barons. These soldiers have gotten the name of English gentlemen and knights-at-arms. Not one of these but in the open battlefield has won his crown, his ornamental chain of knighthood, and his spurs. Not Caesar, leading through the streets of Rome in triumph the captive Kings of conquered nations, was in his princely triumphs honored more than English Edward in this martial sight.”

Many of his soldiers had lost arms or legs in battle. Edward I now addressed them: “Countrymen, your limbs were lost in service of the Lord, Who is your glory and your country’s fame. In replacement of your limbs, you shall have pensions, lordships, and lands, and you will be my counsellors in the affairs of war.

“Soldiers, sit down.

“Nell, sit by my side.

“These soldiers are Prince Edward’s splendid treasury.”

The Queen-Mother sat on one side, and Queen Eleanor sat on the other. King Edward I sat in the middle. He was mounted highest, and at his feet the standard-bearer sat.

King Edward I said, "Oh, glorious Capitol! Beauteous Senate-house! Triumphant Edward, how, like sturdy oaks, do these your soldiers circle around you to shield and shelter you from winter's storms!"

He now singled out two soldiers: old Aimès of the Vies and Matrevers.

"Display your cross, old Aimès of the Vies.

"Beat on your drums, tanned with India's Sun, my lusty western lads.

"Matrevers, you sound on your trumpet proudly here a perfect piece of military music in honor of your sovereign's safe return.

"Thus Longshanks bids his soldiers, *Bien venu*."

"*Bien venu*" is French for "welcome."

Soldiers played drums and trumpets and waved flags.

King Edward I continued, "Oh, God, my God, the brightness of my day, how often have You preserved Your servant and kept him safe, by sea and by land, yea, in the gates of death! Oh, God, to You how highly am I bound for setting me with all these others on English ground!

"One of my mansion-houses will I give to be a hospital for my maimed men, where everyone shall have a hundred marks of yearly pension for his maintenance."

"Marks" are units of money.

King Edward I continued, "A soldier who fights for Christ and country shall lack no pension while King Edward lives.

"Lords, you who love me, now be liberal and generous and give your gift to these maimed men."

He was asking for contributions of money from the lords of England to provide services and pensions to the maimed soldiers.

The Queen-Mother said, "Towards this purpose your mother gives, out of her dowry, five thousand pounds of gold to find them surgeons to heal their wounds. And while this ancient standard-bearer lives, he shall have forty pounds for a yearly pension — and to be my beadsman, father, if you please."

In this society, people called old men, even those to whom they were not related, "father."

The standard-bearer, who was old, nodded his assent.

A beadsman is paid to say prayers for someone.

King Edward I said to his mother, "Madam, I tell you that England never bred a better soldier than your beadsman is — and that is something the Sultan and his army felt in the Crusade."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "Out of the Duchy of rich Lancaster, to find soft bedding for their bruised bones, Duke Edmund gives three thousand pounds."

King Edward I said, "Thank you, brother Edmund. Happy is England under Edward's reign, when men are held so highly in regard that nobles compete over who shall remunerate and reward the soldiers' resolution and courage with their regard.

"My Lord of Gloucester, what is your benevolent gift?"

Gloucester answered, "A thousand marks, if it please your majesty."

"And yours, my Lord of Sussex?" King Edward I asked.

"Five hundred pounds, if it please your majesty," the Earl of Sussex replied.

"What do you say, Sir David of Brecknock?" King Edward I asked.

Sir David replied, "Sir David cannot be too liberal to a soldier, yet so that I may give no more than a poor knight is able, and not presume as a mighty Earl, I give, my lord, four hundred, fourscore, and nineteen pounds."

Sir David was Welsh and "only" a knight, and he did not want to outshine any of the English lords, and so he pledged

to give 499 pounds, one pound less than the Earl of Sussex had pledged.

Sir David said, "And so, my Lord of Sussex, I am behind you an ace."

"And yet, Sir David," the Earl of Sussex said, "you amble after me apace."

The word "amble" means "stroll," while the word "apace" means "speedily."

In other words, Sir David was right behind him in giving and in giving quickly.

King Edward I said, "Well said, David; you could not be a Camber-Briton if you did not love a soldier with your heart."

"Cambria" is a name for Wales.

King Edward I then said, "Let me see now if my arithmetic will serve to total the particulars."

His wife, Queen Eleanor, said, "Why, my lord, I hope you mean I shall be a benefactor to my fellow-soldiers."

She also wanted to contribute to the soldiers' welfare.

"And well said, Nell!" King Edward I said. "What do you want me to set down for your pledge?"

Queen Eleanor said, "No, my lord. I am old enough to set my pledge down for myself. You will allow what I do, won't you?"

"That I will, madam," King Edward I said, "even if your pledge were to the value of my kingdom."

"What is the sum that has been pledged, my lord?" Queen Eleanor asked.

King Edward I answered, "Ten thousand pounds, my Nell."

Queen Eleanor said, "Then, Eleanor, think of a gift worthy of the King of England's wife and the King of Spain's daughter, and give such a largess — generous gift — that the chronicles of this land may crow and boast about the record of your generosity.

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus."

The Latin means, “The mountains are in labor, a ridiculous mouse will be born.” In other words, much is promised, but little will be delivered.

She then added a cipher — a zero — at the end of the number of pounds that had been pledged, thereby turning 10,000 into 100,000.

Queen Eleanor said, “There, my lord: neither one, two, nor three, but a poor zero to enrich good fellows, and compound their figure in their kind.”

The zero would enrich the soldiers and raise their social status.

King Edward I said, “Madam, I commend your writing and your pledge. It is evidence of your honorable disposition. Sweet Nell, you would not be you with your high-mourning mind if your gift to the soldiers did not surpass all the rest of the gifts.”

Gloucester said, “Do you call this a *ridiculus mus*? By the Virgin Mary, sir, this mouse would make a foul hole in a fair cheese. It is only a zero, but it has made of ten thousand pounds a hundred thousand pounds.”

A hundred thousand pounds is a lot of money now, and it was a very enormous sum in the Middle Ages. The King would have to raise the money by raising taxes on his people, thus burdening his country.

The King’s brother, Edmund Duke of Lancaster, said, “It is a princely gift and a worthy memory.”

Gloucester said, “My gracious lord, since earlier I was assigned Lieutenant to his majesty, here I render up the crown, which was left in charge with me by your princely father King Henry, who on his death-bed continually called for you, and dying willed to you the diadem.”

Gloucester had been a regent of England since the death of Edward’s father: King Henry III.

“Thanks, worthy lord,” King Edward I said. “And seeing that it is decreed by the judgment of the heavens, and seeing that it is a lawful line of our succession, unworthy Edward

has become your King. We take it as a blessing from on high. And we order that our coronation will be solemnized upon the next fourteenth of December.”

“Upon the next fourteenth of December!” Queen Eleanor exclaimed. “Alas, my lord, the time is all too short and sudden for so great a ceremony.”

“A year would be scarcely enough to set to work tailors, embroiderers, and men of rare device in fashion for the preparation of clothing of such great estate.”

“Trust me, sweet Ned, hardly shall I have time in twenty weeks to decide what fashion of robes to wear. I ask you, please, then, to defer your coronation until the spring, so that we may have our garments perfect in all details.”

“I intend to send to Spain for tailors, who together with those who are our most cunning English tailors shall provide some fantastic suits of clothing for us.”

Using the King’s nickname, Queen Eleanor then said, “Why, let me show off now or never, Ned!”

“Madam, be content,” King Edward I said. “I wish that this were my greatest worry! You shall have garments to your heart’s desire. I never read but Englishmen excelled for exchange of rare devices every way. Our English tailors are famous for adapting all kinds of foreign fashion.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Yet I ask you, please, Ned, my love, my lord, and King, my fellow-soldier, and companion-in-arms, to do so much honor to your Eleanor, by wearing a suit of clothing that she shall give your grace of her own cost and workmanship perhaps.”

They had been to the Crusade together, so Queen Eleanor referred to King Edward as her fellow-soldier and companion-in-arms.

The Queen-Mother said, “The suit of clothing will take a long time to make, daughter-in-law, then, I fear: You are too fine-fingered and fastidious to be quick at work.”

King Edward I said, “A greater matter than this would cause no disruption between my Queen and me, and I grant her request.

“Let the suit of clothing for me be such, my Nell, as may be fitting for the majesty and greatness of a King.

“And now, my lords and loving friends, follow your general — me — to the court, after his travels, to rest with him. There we all will recount with pleasure war’s alarms, showers, and sharpest storms that have passed.”

Everyone except Queen Eleanor and Joan, her daughter, exited.

Queen Eleanor said to herself, “Now, Eleanor, you who are now England’s lovely Queen, think of the greatness of your status, and think about how to bear yourself with royalty above the other Queens of Christendom, so that with Spain reaping renown by Eleanor, and Eleanor adding renown to Spain, Britain may admire her — my — magnificence.”

She then said to her daughter, “I tell you, Joan, the time has come when our highness — I myself — shall sit as Queen under our royal canopy of state, glistening with pendants of the purest gold.

“Just as if our seat were spangled and decorated all with stars, the world shall wonder at our majesty, our majesty that will be as if the goddess Juno — who was the daughter of eternal Ops, and who turned into the likeness of vermilion-red fumes, where from her cloudy womb the Centaurs leapt — were enthroned in her royal seat.”

The royal seat is a throne. Queen Eleanor was looking forward to sitting on a throne and being as royal as Juno, wife of Jupiter, King of the gods.

Ops, who was also known as Rhea, was the mother of some of the Olympian gods, including both Jupiter and Juno, who were brother and sister as well as husband and wife.

Queen Eleanor’s knowledge of mythology was lacking. Ixion, King of the Lapiths, wanted to have sex with Juno.

Jupiter protected his wife by turning the nymph Naphele into a cloud that resembled Juno. Ixion had sex with the cloud, and from their union came the Centaurs, who were half-man and half-horse. Queen Eleanor's story made it sound as if Juno were turned into a vermilion-red cloud and gave birth to the Centaurs.

Joan replied, "Madam, if Joan your daughter may advise you, don't let your honor make your manners change: Don't become too prideful as Queen. The people of this land are men of war, and the women are courteous, mild, and of gentle temperament. They lay their lives at the feet of Kings who govern them with familiar, friendly majesty. But if their sovereigns once begin to swell with pride, disdain the commoners' love, which is the strength and sureness of the richest commonwealth, then that King would be better off living a private life than ruling with tyranny and discontent."

Queen Eleanor said, "Indeed, we know them to be headstrong Englishmen. But we shall hold them in a Spanish yoke, and make them know and acknowledge their lord and sovereign. Come, daughter, let us go home in order to provide for all the cunning workmen of this isle who shall be set to work creating fashionable expensive clothing in our great chamber and who shall bountifully feed in my hall.

"My King, like Phoebus Apollo, bridegroom-like, shall march with lovely Thetis to her glassy bed, and all the onlookers shall stand amazed to see King Edward and his lovely Queen sit lovely in England's stately throne."

Her words about Phoebus Apollo the Sun-god and Thetis the sea-nymph and the glassy bed that is the sea were a poetic way of referring to the Sun setting over the ocean. Such Sunsets can be magnificent, and she and the King would look magnificent in their costly clothing at the King's coronation ceremony. They would look as magnificent as the Sun setting over the sea.

CHAPTER 2 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE II —**

Llewelyn (the Prince of Wales), Rice ap Meredith, and Owen ap Rice met together at Milford-Haven in Wales. They were carrying swords and small shields that were known as bucklers, and they were wearing close-fitting jackets that were known as frieze jerkins.

Llewelyn had been given the title of Prince of Wales in 1267 in the Treaty of Montgomery when Henry III was King of England, but now he was rebelling against King Edward I.

Rice ap Meredith and Owen ap Rice were noble followers of Llewelyn.

Llewelyn said, “Come, Rice ap Meredith, and rouse yourself for your country’s good. Follow the man who intends to make you great. Follow Llewelyn, rightful Prince of Wales, who was sprung from the loins of great Cadwallader, who was descended from the loins of Trojan Brute.”

Cadwallader was a Prince of northern Wales in the 12th century.

Brute was supposed to be a great-grandson of Aeneas, a Trojan Prince who survived the fall of Troy and went to Italy and became an important ancestor of the Roman people. Brute went to Britain and became its first King.

Llewelyn continued, “And although the traitorous Saxons, Normans, and Danes have pent up the true remains of glorious Troy within the western mountains of this isle, yet we have hope to climb past these stony pales — these mountains on the border between Wales and England.”

The Welsh regarded themselves as the real, original Britons, but invaders — Saxons, Normans, and Danes — had pushed them out of most of Britain and into Wales.

Llewelyn continued, “We hope to lead a Welsh invasion that will amaze the Londoners, as the Romans formerly

amazed them, causing them to tremble and cry, ‘Llewelyn’s at the gate!’ To accomplish this, I have brought you forth disguised to the Welsh port town of Milford-Haven to await the landing of the Lady Eleanor.”

The Lady Eleanor was the daughter of Simon de Montfort, the Duke of Leicester; she was Llewelyn’s new wife. Simon de Montfort had led the barons in their opposition to King Henry III in what was known as the Second Barons’ War.

Llewelyn and Lady Eleanor had married by proxy. Someone had stood in for Llewelyn in the marriage ceremony — Llewelyn was not present.

Simon de Montfort died in 1265, King Henry III died in 1272, and the current year was 1274.

Llewelyn continued, “Her delay does make me wonder: The wind is fair, and ten days ago we expected them to arrive here.

“Neptune, god of the sea, be favorable to my love, and steer her ship’s keel with your three-forked trident, so that from this shore I may behold her sails, and in my arms embrace my dearest dear.”

Rice ap Meredith replied, “Brave Prince of Wales, this honorable match cannot but turn to Cambria’s common good.”

Cambria was another name for Wales.

Rice ap Meredith continued, “Simon de Montfort, her thrice-valiant sire, who was the general in the Second Barons’ War, was loved and honored by the Englishmen. When they hear she’s your espoused wife, your grace can be assured that we shall have a great supply of soldiers to mightily make our inroads into England.”

Owen ap Rice said, “What we resolved must strongly and aggressively be performed, before King Edward I returns from Palestine. While he wins glory at Jerusalem, let us win ground upon the Englishmen.”

The Welshmen had not yet heard that King Edward I had returned from the Crusade. They also had not yet heard that King Edward I had captured Lady Eleanor.

Llewelyn said, "Owen ap Rice, it is that which Llewelyn fears. I fear that Edward will come ashore before we can make provisions for the war. But be it as it will, my brother David is within his court as our spy. He bears a face as if he were my greatest enemy although he is actually on our side. He by this craft shall creep into Edward's heart and give us intelligence from time to time of Edward's intentions, drifts, and stratagems.

"Here let us rest upon the salty seashore, and while our eyes long for our hearts' desires, let us, like friends, entertain ourselves on the sands. Our frolicsome minds are omens for good."

Friar Hugh ap David, Guenthian (who was soon to be his wench, and who was wearing flannel), and Jack (his novice) arrived on the scene. They did not see Llewelyn, Rice ap Meredith, and Owen ap Rice.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

"Guenthian, as I am true man,

"So will I do the best I can.

"Guenthian, as I am true priest,

"So will I be at your behest.

"Guenthian, as I am true Friar,

"So will I be at your desire."

The word "true" means "loyal and faithful."

Jack the novice said:

"My master stands too near the fire.

"Trust him not, wench; he will prove a liar."

Friars are supposed to be celibate, but Friar Hugh ap David had no intention of bring celibate. Because of that, he stood near the "fire" — the wench's vagina. He also stood too near the fire of Hell.

In this society, the word "wench" could be used affectionately.

Llewelyn said, “True man, true Friar, true priest, and true knave, these four in one this trull shall have.”

The word “trull” can mean “female prostitute.” It can also simply mean “girl.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Wench, here I swear by my shaven crown — my tonsure — that if I give you a gay green gown, I’ll take you up as I laid you down, and never bruise nor batter you.”

Prostitutes often wore green gowns. In addition, young men often gave young women green gowns especially in the spring by having sex with them on the grass — the grass stains made their gowns green.

Jack the novice said:

“Oh, don’t swear, master. Flesh is frail.

“Wench, when the sign is in the tail,

“Mighty is love and will prevail.

“This churchman is only flattering you.”

A sign can point, and so can a penis.

Llewelyn said:

“A pretty worm, and a lusty Friar,

“Who was made for the field, not for the choir.”

Friar Hugh ap David was not a good Friar; he would have made a much better farmer.

In this society, “loving worm” was an affectionate reference to a woman.

Guenthian said:

“Mas [Master] Friar, as I am a true maid,

“So do I hold myself by you well paid.

“It is a churchman’s lay and verity

“To live in love and charity.

“And therefore I ween [expect], as my creed,

“Your words shall accompany your deed.

“Davy, my dear, I yield in all,

“I am your own to go and come at call.”

Guenthian had just agreed to be the Friar’s wench and obey his commands.

Rice ap Meredith said, “And so far forth begins our brawl.”

A brawl can be a fight or a dance.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Then, my Guenthian, to begin,

“Since idleness in love is sin”

He then said to Jack the novice:

“Boy, to the town I will have you hie [hurry],

“And so return even by and by [soon],

“When you with cakes and muscadine [a wine],

“And other junkets [delicacies] good and fine,

“Have filled your bottle and your bag.”

For the Friar, it was a good time to eat, drink, and be merry with Guenthian.

Jack the novice said:

“Now, master, as I am a true wag,

“I will be neither late nor lag,

“But go and come with gossip’s cheer [food and drink for a friend],

“Before Gib our cat can lick her ear.

“For long ago I learned in school,

“That lovers’ desires and pleasures cool

“Sans [Without] Ceres’ wheat and Bacchus’ vine:

“Now, master, for the cakes and wine.”

Ceres is the goddess of agriculture and so of the wheat with which we make bread.

Bacchus is the god of grape vines and so of wine.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Wench, to pass away the time in glee, Guenthian, sit down by me, and let our lips and voices join in a merry country song.”

Guenthian said, “Friar, I am at your beck and bay, and at your commandment to sing and say — and to engage in other sports.”

Jack the novice exited.

Owen ap Rice said, “Aye, by the Virgin Mary, my lord, this is what a man wants to buy with his money. Here’s a

wholesome Welsh wench, wrapped in her flannel, as warm as wool and as fit as a pudding for a Friar's mouth.

Friar Hugh ap David and Guenthian sang a country song.

Llewelyn now revealed his and his two followers' presence by saying, "*Pax vobis! Pax vobis!* Good fellows, may fair things befall you!"

Pax vobis! is Latin for "Peace to you!"

Friar Hugh ap David said, "*Et cum spiritu tuo!*"

"*Et cum spiritu tuo!*" is Latin for "And with your spirit!"

He meant, "And may peace be with your spirit!"

Friar Hugh ap David continued, "Friends, have you anything else to say to me, the Friar?"

He wanted to be alone with his wench.

Owen ap Rice said, "Much good to you, much good to you, my masters, heartily."

Friar Hugh ap David replied, "And much good to you, sir, when you eat. Have you anything else to say to the Friar?"

"Nothing," Llewelyn said, "but I would gladly know, if mutton is your first dish, what shall be your last service?"

"Mutton" was both a food and a slang word meaning "prostitute" or "woman."

"Service" meant both "course of food" and "religious service."

To "service" an animal is to breed it. When a male animal such as a bull services a cow, the bull covers the cow.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, "It may be, sir, I count it healthy to feed but on one dish at a sitting. Sir, do you wish anything else with the Friar?"

"Oh, nothing, sir," Rice ap Meredith said, "but if you had any manners, you might bid us to fall to with you."

Of course, it is inappropriate to speak like this. For one thing, Jack the novice was unlikely to buy enough food to feed the unexpected "guests."

That is assuming that that "fall to" meant "fall to and eat with you."

But the words could also mean to fall to and help you sexually satisfy your wench — which is also an inappropriate thing to say.

Rice ap Meredith was not above teasing — or perhaps tormenting — the Friar.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “Nay is the answer; if that is the matter, nay is good enough. Is this all you have to say to the Friar?”

Llewelyn said, “All we have to say to you, sir, is this: It may be, sir, we would walk aside with your wench a little.”

More teasing — or tormenting.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “My masters and friends, I am a poor Friar, a man of God’s making, and as good a fellow as you are. I have legs, feet, face, and hands, and heart, from top to toe, on my word, right shape, and Christendom — and I love a wench as a wench should be loved; and if you love yourselves, walk on and go on your way, good friends, please, and let the Friar alone with his flesh.”

His flesh was his own flesh — and Guenthan’s. It was also the meat that Jack the novice would soon bring.

Llewelyn said, “Oh, Friar, your holy mother, the Church, teaches you to abstain from these morsels.”

He meant morsels such as Guenthan.

Llewelyn then said to his followers, “Therefore, my masters, it is a deed of charity to remove this stumbling-block, a fair wench, a shrewd temptation to a Friar’s conscience.”

Guenthan said, “Friend, if you knew the Friar half as well as the bailiff of the town of Brecknock, you would think you might as soon move the mountain Mannock-deny into the sea as move me, Guenthan, from his side.”

The bailiff may have had cause to arrest the Friar a number of times.

Llewelyn said, “By the Mass, and by your leave, we’ll prove that we are men.”

Guenthian said, “You will try to at your peril, if you try his patience.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Brother, brother, and my good countrymen —”

Pretending that the Friar was English, Llewelyn interrupted, “Countrymen! No!”

Pretending that he was not Welsh, Owen ap Rice said to Llewelyn, “That’s more than you know; and yet, my lord, he might ride, having a filly so near.”

A filly is a female horse, but Owen ap Rice was punning: The Friar could sexually ride his filly — his wench.

Owen ap Rice put his hands on Guenthian.

This was taking the “joke” too far.

Ready to fight, Friar Hugh ap David said, “Hands off, good countrymen, I say with few words and fair warnings.”

Continuing to pretend that the Friar was an Englishman, Llewelyn said, “Countrymen! We are not so, sir; we renounce you, Friar, and reject your country.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Then, brother, and my good friends, hands off, if you love your ease.”

Rice ap Meredith said, “Ease me no easings. We’ll ease you of this carriage.”

A “carriage” is a burden: Rice ap Meredith was referring to Guenthian.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Fellow, be gone quickly, or my pike-staff and I will send you away with a vengeance.”

A pike-staff was a walking stick with a metal tip at one end.

Llewelyn said, “I am sorry, trust me, to see the Church so unpatient.”

“You dogs, by God’s wounds!” the Friar said. “Do me an evil turn and mock me, too? Flesh and blood will not bear this.

“Then rise up, Robert, and say to Richard, *Redde rationem villicationis tuae.*”

The Latin means, “Give an account of your stewardship.”

Friar Hugh ap David was talking to Owen ap Rice, who still had his hands on Guenthian. “Richard” was a name that the Friar had given to his walking-stick, and “Robert” may be a name like Tom, Dick, or Harry that he now gave to Owen ap Rice, whose real name he did not know.

“Robert” was challenging “Richard” by seizing the wench. Now “Richard” would have to show that he was a good steward by fighting and defeating “Robert,” whose stewardship was bad.

“Stewardship” involves use of authority, and Owen ap Rice was misusing his authority. The Prince of Wales and the Welsh nobles should take care of Welsh citizens, not take advantage of them.

The Friar continued, “Sir countryman, kinsman, Englishman, Welshman, you with the wench, return your *habeas corpus*; here’s a *certiorari* for your *procedendo*.”

These were legal terms.

Habeas corpus means “produce the body” — that is, hand over a person whom you are unlawfully holding in custody. In this case, it meant: Hand over Guenthian.

Certiorari is a legal order to provide the record of a legal trial that a person involved alleges was not just.

Procedendo is a legal order to retry or resume a legal proceeding.

Friar Hugh ap David then attacked them with his staff.

The “joke” had really gone too far.

“Stop, Friar!” Owen ap Rice said. “We are your countrymen.”

Rice ap Meredith pleaded, “Stop! Stop! *Digon!* We are your countrymen, *Mundue!*”

Digon! is Welsh for “Enough!”

Mundue is Rice ap Meredith’s Welsh-accented pronunciation of the French *Mon Dieu!* — “My God!”

Still angry, Friar Hugh ap David said, “My countrymen! No, by the Virgin Mary, sir, you shall not be my countrymen.”

He said to Llewelyn, “You shall not be my countryman, sir, you, especially you, sir, who spurn the Friar and renounce his country.”

Llewelyn said, “Friar, hold your hands and stop attacking us. I swear, as I am a gentleman, that I am a Welshman of high rank, and so are these other two men.”

“Of high rank, do you say?” Friar Hugh ap David said. “They who will deny their country are neither gentlemen nor Welshmen.

“Come here, wench. I’ll have a bout of fighting with them once more for denying their country.”

He assumed an attack position.

Rice ap Meredith said, “Friar, you don’t know what you are saying. This is the Prince of Wales, and we are all his attendants, disposed to be pleasant and joke with you a little; but I perceive, Friar, your nose will abide no jest.”

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “Jest as much as you will with me, sir, but do not jest on any account with my wench. I and Richard my man here, are here *contra omnes gentes* — that is, against all people.”

Friar Hugh ap David and Richard were against all people who would try to take his wench away.

Friar Hugh ap added, “But is this man really Llewelyn, the great Camber-Briton?”

Llewelyn said, “It is he, Friar. Give me your hand, and I thank you twenty times. I promise you that you have cudgeled — beaten — two as good lessons into my jacket as ever any churchman did at so short warning.

“The first lesson is not to be too busy with another man’s cattle; the other is not in haste to deny my country.”

“To be busy with” was slang for “to have sex with.” It also meant “to interfere with.”

“Cattle” is similar to “chattel,” aka possession. Guenthian was the Friar’s wench.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “It is a pity, my lord, but you should have more of this learning — you profit so well by it.”

Llewelyn replied, “It is a pity, Friar, but you should be Llewelyn’s chaplain because you teach me so well; and so you shall be, by my honor. Here and now I employ you, your boy-servant, and your trull, to follow my fortune *in secula seculorum*.”

In secula seculorum is Latin for “for all ages.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “And you hire Richard, my man, sir, if you love me — he who stands by me and has not shrunk at all weathers; and then you have me in my true colors — as I really am.”

“Richard” was the name the Friar had given his walking-staff. It had helped and protected him in all weathers — in good times and in bad times and in fights.

Llewelyn said, “Friar, agreed.”

Seeing two people coming toward them, Llewelyn ordered, “Rice ap Meredith, welcome the ruffians.”

Jack the novice returned, bring with him a harper who sang these words to the tune of “Who List [Enlist or Wish] to Lead a Soldier’s Life”:

“Go to, go to [*Go on, go on*], you Britons all,

“And play the men, both great and small:

“A wondrous matter hath befall [*has befallen*],

“That makes the prophet cry and call,

“*Tum date dite dote dum,*

“That you must march, both all and some,

“Against your foes with trump [*trumpet*] and drum:

“*I speak to you from God, that you shall overcome.*”

The harper danced as he sang, turning to the right and then to the left.

The words *Tum date dite dote dum* are simply musical sounds, like Frank Sinatra's *Do be do be do* in "Strangers in the Night."

The harper was also a prophet, apparently prophesizing in his song that Llewelyn would be victorious.

"What now?" Llewelyn said. "Who have we here? 'Tum date dite dote dum'!"

Friar Hugh ap David said, "What! Have we a fellow who dropped out of the heavens? What kind of man is he?"

Rice ap Meredith asked, "Do you know this goosecap?"

A goosecap is a fool.

Friar Hugh ap David said, "What! Not Morgan Pigot, our good Welsh prophet? Oh, he is a holy harper!"

Rice ap Meredith said, "A prophet, with a murrain!"

A murrain is a plague. The words "with a murrain" express astonishment.

Rice ap Meredith continued, "My good lord, let's hear a few of his lines, please."

Jack the novice said, "My lords, he is an odd fellow, I can tell you, as odd as any fellow is in all Wales. He can sing, rhyme with reason, and rhyme without reason, and without reason or rhyme."

"The devil he can!" Llewelyn said. "Rhyme with reason, and rhyme without reason, and reason without rhyme!"

"Then, good Morgan Pigot, pluck out your spigot, and draw us a fresh pot from the kinder-kind of your knowledge."

He was using the metaphor of pulling out a spigot from a kilderkin (cask) to allow the ale to flow freely to ask the harper to let his prophecies flow freely.

Friar Hugh ap David said to Llewelyn, "Knowledge it is, my son, knowledge, I assure you."

He then said, "What do you say, Morgan, aren't you a true prophet?"

Morgan Pigot the harper said, “Friar, Friar, I am a prophet truly, for great Llewelyn’s love, sent from above to bring him victory.”

Llewelyn’s love is his new wife: Lady Eleanor.

“Come, then, gentle prophet,” Rice ap Meredith said, “and let’s see how you can salute your Prince. Say, shall we have good success in our enterprise or not?”

Morgan Pigot the harper prophesied:

“When the weathercock of Carnarvon’s steeple shall begat young ones in the belfry, and a herd of goats leave their pasture to be clothed in silver, then shall Brute be born anew, and Wales record their ancient hue.”

“Ask Friar David if this is not true.”

A weathercock is a weathervane made in the shape of a cock.

“Engender” means “gives birth to.”

Brute is a King, and the “Wales record their ancient hue” means the Welsh shall regain their ancient color — independence.

Friar Hugh ap David said to Llewelyn, “This, my lord, he means by you. Oh, he is a prophet, a prophet.”

Llewelyn said, “Wait a moment now, good Morgan Pigot, and take us with you a little, please — explain your words. What does your wisdom mean by all this?”

Morgan Pigot the harper said, “The weathercock, my lord, was your father, who by foul weather of war was driven to take sanctuary in Saint Mary’s at Carnarvon, where he begat young ones on your mother in the belfry. The young ones he begat were your worship and your brother David.”

Llewelyn asked, “But what did you mean by the goats?”

Morgan Pigot the harper replied, “The goats that leave the pasture to be clothed in silver, are the silver goats — the insignia — your men wear on their sleeves.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Oh, how I love you, Morgan Pigot, our sweet prophet!”

Llewelyn ordered, “Go away, rogue, with your prophecies — get out of my sight!”

Rice ap Meredith said, “Nay, my good lord, let’s have a few more of these meters. He has a great supply of them in his head.”

Jack the novice said, “Yes, and they are of the best in the market, if your lordship would deign to hear them.”

“Villain, go away!” Llewelyn said. “I’ll hear no more of your prophecies.”

Morgan Pigot the harper prophesied:

*“When legs shall lose their length,
And shanks yield up their strength,
Returning weary home from out the holy land,
A Welshman shall be King
And govern merry England.”*

The prophecy seemed to say that a weary Edward Longshanks would return home to England and Llewelyn would become the King of England.

Rice ap Meredith said to Llewelyn, “Didn’t I tell your lordship he would hit it home soon?”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “My lord, he is prophesying about you, that’s for certain.”

Jack the novice said, “Aye, master — if you mark him, he hit the mark pat.”

In other words, “Aye, master — if you pay close attention to him, he hit the center of the target.”

Friar Hugh ap David asked, “How, Jack?”

Jack the novice said, “Why, thus:
*“When legs shall lose their length.
And shanks yield up their strength,
Returning weary home from out the holy land,
A Welshman shall be King
And govern merry England.”*

“Why, my lord, in this prophecy is your promotion and advancement as plainly seen as a three half-pence through a dish of butter on a Sunny day.”

A three half-pence is a coin.

“I think so, Jack,” Friar Hugh ap David said, “for he who sees the three half-pence must wait until the butter has melted in the Sun.

“And so, continue, apply yourself, boy. Interpret the prophecy.”

Jack the novice said, “*Non ego* — not I, master. You do it, if you dare.”

Llewelyn asked Jack the novice, “And so, boy, you mean that he who waits for the fulfilment of this prophecy may see Longshanks shorter by the head and Llewelyn wear the crown in the battlefield?”

“Longshanks shorter by the head” meant that Edward Longshanks would be beheaded.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “By our Lady, the Virgin Mary, my lord, you go near the matter.

“But what more does Morgan Pigot say?”

Morgan Pigot the harper prophesied, “*In the year of our Lord God 1272, shall spring from the loins of Brute, one whose wife’s name being the perfect end of his own, shall consummate the peace between England and Wales, and be advanced to ride through Cheapside with a crown on his head.*”

He then interpreted his prophecy: “And that’s meant by your lordship, for your wife’s name being Ellen, and your own Llewelyn, she bears the perfect end of your own name: so it must necessarily be that, although for a time Ellen flee — that is, is separated — from Llewelyn, you being betrothed in heart each to the other, you must necessarily be advanced to be the highest position of your kin.”

“Llewelyn” is pronounced Lou-ellen, and “Eleanor” is pronounced Ellen-or.

If Llewelyn were promoted to the position of the King of England, that would be the highest position ever held by a member of his family.

Llewelyn said, “Jack, I make this prophet your prisoner. Look what way my fortune inclines, for that way goes he.”

Jack the novice would be in charge of Morgan Pigot the harper and would do such things as see that he was fed.

Morgan Pigot the harper had prophesied good things for Llewelyn, and if Llewelyn had good fortune, then so would Morgan Pigot. But if Llewelyn had bad fortune, then so would Morgan Pigot. So stated Llewelyn.

Rice ap Meredith said to Friar Hugh ap David, “Sirrah, see you run swiftest.”

In other words, go now — quickly.

“Farewell,” Friar Hugh ap David said. “I will be far from the spigot.”

The spigot was Morgan Pigot the harper, a source of prophecies.

Friar Hugh ap David and Guenthian exited.

Jack the novice said to Morgan Pigot the harper, “Now, sir, if our country ale were as good as your metheglin — your strong Welsh mead — I would teach you to play the knave, or you would teach me to play the harper.”

“To play” meant “to act like.”

Morgan Pigot the harper said, “*Ambo* — both, boy. You are too light-witted as I am light-minded.”

“Light-witted” meant “of low intelligence.” “Light-minded” meant “concerned with frivolous things” such as music, perhaps, or “filled with the light of prophecy,” or both.

Jack the novice said, “It seems to me that you are very fit and surpassingly well.”

Jack the novice and Morgan Pigot the harper exited.

A male messenger named Guenther hastily entered the scene. He was carrying letters.

Llewelyn asked, “What news does Guenther bring with his haste? Say, man, what bodes your message, good or bad? Do you bring good news or bad news?”

Guenther replied, “Bad, my lord. All in vain, I know, you dart your eyes upon the rolling sea, as formerly Aegeus did to behold his son, to welcome and receive your welcome love. And sable — black — sails he saw, and so may you, for whose unfortunate event the salty seas lament.”

Aegeus was the father of Theseus, who sailed to Crete to confront the Minotaur, the half-man, half-bull monster that consumed human flesh. Theseus told his father that if he were successful at killing the Minotaur, his ships would sail home with white sails, but if the Minotaur killed him, then the ships would sail home with black sails. He killed the Minotaur but forgot to change the black sails to white sails. His father saw the black sails and committed suicide.

Guenther the messenger then said, “Edward! Oh, Edward!”

Llewelyn asked, “And what about him?”

Guenther said, “He has landed at Dover with his men, returning from Palestine safely. His English lords have welcomed him in triumphant celebrations as if he were an earthly god. He lives to wear his father’s diadem and sway the sword of British Albion. He will be crowned King of England.”

Albion is another name for Britain.

Guenther the messenger then said, “But Lady Eleanor, your Lady Eleanor!”

Llewelyn said, “And what about her? Has amorous Neptune, god of the sea, gazed upon my love, and stopped her passage with his forked trident? Or, that which I rather fear — oh, deadly fear! — does enamored Nereus withhold my Lady Eleanor?”

Neptune might have stopped Lady Eleanor’s ship’s passage, or a minor sea-god named Nereus might have fallen in love with Lady Eleanor and taken her to be his consort.

Guenther replied, “Neither Neptune, Nereus, nor any other god withholds from my gracious lord his love. But

cruel Edward, that injurious King, withholds your dearest lovely Lady Eleanor.

“Four tall ships of Bristol captured her and Lord Almeric, her unhappy noble brother, as they sailed in a pinnace — a small boat — on the narrow seas of the English channel from Montargis, sixty miles south of Paris, to here. This that I say briefly, these letters tell in detail.”

Llewelyn read the letters, which were from his brother Sir David.

Llewelyn said, “Has Longshanks, then, now become so vigorous and active? Has my fair love, my beauteous Lady Eleanor, been captured?”

“Villains, damned villains, who did not guard her and keep her safe, and did not defend her sacred person from her foes!

“Sun, could you shine, and see my love beset, and yet not clothe your clouds in fiery coats, over all the heavens, with winged sulfurous flames, as when your beams, like mounted combatants, battled with the dragon Python in the uncultivated fields?”

Llewelyn wished that the Sun had protected his wife, Lady Eleanor, by destroying her enemies the way that Apollo the Sun-god had destroyed the dragon Python. In Llewelyn’s version of the myth, Apollo destroyed Python by using the heat of the Sun.

Llewelyn continued, “But if kind Cambria — Wales — deign to give me good fortune and make me the chief Brute — King — of western Wales, I’ll shorten that gain-legged Longshanks by the top by cutting off his head, and make his flesh my murdering falchion’s food.”

Longshanks was “gain-legged” because his long legs covered much territory with each step.

A falchion is a kind of sword.

Llewelyn continued, “To arms, true Britons, descended from the Trojans’ seed, and with your swords write in the Book of Time your British names in letters of blood!”

The Book of Time is the metaphorical record of great events of history.

Llewelyn continued, “Owen ap Rice, while we wait for reinforcements, prepare, go away quickly on horseback, and take with you a hundred men chosen from your countrymen, and scour and ravage the marches — the borderlands between Wales and England — with your Welshmen’s hooked weapons, so that Englishmen may think that the devil has come.”

Llewelyn then said, “Rice ap Meredith shall remain with me. Make good use of your staying here to form a resolution to revenge these wrongs with the blood of thousands of men who are guiltless and innocent of this outrage. Fly on them with all speed!

“Edward, may my love — Lady Eleanor — be the ruin of your life!

“Follow me, countrymen! Words make no way: They do no work. My Lady Eleanor has been ambushed and captured. I am robbed of the comfort of my life. And I know this, and yet I am not avenged against him?”

Llewelyn and the other lords exited.

Friar Hugh ap David, Jack the novice, Guenthian, and Morgan Pigot the harper reentered the scene.

Friar Hugh ap David said to Jack the novice, “Come, boy, we must buckle on our swords, I see. The Prince of Wales has the same opinion as I. Rather than lose his wench, he will fight *ab ouo usque ad mala*.”

Ab ouo usque ad mala is Latin for “from the egg to the apple.” It referred to the first course and last course of a Roman feast and means here metaphorically from the beginning to the end, or all the way to the end.

Jack the novice said, “Oh, master, don’t doubt that your novice will prove to be a hot shot, with a bottle of metheglin.”

Guenthian began to sing a Welsh song, Jack the novice sang the chorus, and then Friar Hugh ap David sang the finishing verses.

CHAPTER 3 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE III —**

At Berwick Castle, Berwick, on the border of England and Scotland, several people met to decide who would be King of Scotland following the unexpected death of King Alexander III.

The nine lords of Scotland (including John Baliol) who were competing to be King were present, along with their pages.

Also present were the Earl of Gloucester, the Earl of Sussex, King Edward in his suit of glass, Queen Eleanor, the Queen-Mother, and Joan.

Edward's suit of glass was a robe decorated with small diamond-shaped pieces of reflective glass. The pieces of reflective glass acted like — or were — small mirrors.

The King and Queen of England were under a canopy.

King Edward I said, "Nobles of Scotland, we thank you all for the gentle princely service you have done this day to Edward, England's King and Scotland's lord."

The Kings of England in this era regarded themselves as Scotland's feudal overlords.

King Edward I continued, "Our coronation's due ceremony has ended with the applause of all ranks of people. Now, then, let us repose and rest us here. But especially we thank you, gentle lords, because you so well have governed your griefs, as, being grown unto a general quarrel, you choose King Edward by your messengers, to calm, to qualify, and to settle the enkindled strife of Scotland's climbing peers."

After the Scottish King Alexander III died, several Scottish nobles wanted to become the next King of Scotland. Such a situation can lead to civil war. To avoid that evil, the nobles asked King Edward I of England to decide who shall become the next King of Scotland.

King Edward I continued, "I have no doubt, fair lords, but you well know how factions waste the richest commonwealth, and you well know how discord spoils the seats of mighty Kings."

He then mentioned the rebellion of the nobles against his father, King Henry III, in the Second Barons' War: "The Barons' War, a tragic wicked war, nobles, how it has shaken England's strength!"

King Edward I continued, "Industriously, it seems to me, you have loyally ventured to prevent this shock."

They had avoided civil war by allowing King Edward I to choose which of the nine lords of Scotland would be the next King of Scotland.

King Edward I continued, "Since you have chosen me to be your judge, my lords, I ask you if you will accept the decision I will make regarding who shall be your King?"

Baliol said, "Victorious Edward, to whom the Scottish Kings owe homage — public respect and honor — as their lord and sovereign, among us nine lords there is only one lawful King."

His words acknowledged King Edward I as overlord of Scotland.

Baliol continued, "But if we nine were all to be judges in the case, then in Scotland there would be nine Kings at once because each of the nine judges would choose himself to be King — this contention between we nine lords would never be settled by the selection of nine persons to be King.

"To prevent these quarrels, we nine Scottish lords jointly make an appeal to your imperial throne, who knows our claims to be the next King of Scotland. We stand not on our titles before your grace, but instead we submit ourselves to your award. And to whomever your majesty shall name to be our King, we'll yield our obedience to him as our King. Thus willingly, and of their own accord, do the nobles of Scotland make great England's King Edward Scotland's judge."

Using the royal plural, King Edward I said, “Then, nobles, since you all agree as one to this judgment about a crown you all disagree about whom shall wear, and since what judgment I make shall be unappealable, hold up your hands in the sight of all of you, and with one general voice, state that you are content to accept our decision and obey the man we select to be King of Scotland.”

All nine nobles held up their hands and said, “He shall decide who shall be our King.”

King Edward I said, “Give me the golden diadem.”

This was the crown of the King of Scotland.

He held up the crown and said, “Look, here I hold the goal for which you strived, and here behold it, my worthy Scottish men-at-arms, all of whom for chivalry and worthy wisdom’s praise are worthy each one of you to wear a diadem.

“Expect my judgment, as formerly at Mount Ida’s foothills the divine goddesses awaited the award of Dardan’s son.”

He was referring to the famous Judgment of Paris. Three goddesses — Juno, Venus, and Minerva — argued over who was the most beautiful, so they got Paris, a Prince of Troy and descendant of the King named Dardanus, to decide who was the most beautiful.

King Edward I said, “Baliol, step forward.”

He gave Baliol the crown and said, “Baliol, behold, I give you the Scottish crown. Wear it with heart and with thankfulness.

“Sound trumpets, and say all after me, God save King Baliol, the Scottish King!”

The trumpets sounded, and all cried aloud, “God save King Baliol, the Scottish King.”

King Edward I said, “Thus, lords, although you require no reason why, it is according to the conscience in the cause that I make John Baliol your anointed King.

“Honor and love him, as best suits the man who is in peace possessed of Scotland’s crown.”

Adopting the royal plural, Baliol said, “Thanks, royal King of England, for your honor done to us. This justice that has calmed our civil strife shall now be ceased with honorable love.

“So moved by remorse and pity are we that we will erect a college of my name. In Oxford I will build Baliol College to ensure the memory of Baliol’s generosity and his gratitude.

“And let me have happy days only as long as I shall be loyal to England.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Now, brave John Baliol, Lord of Galloway and King of Scots, shine with your golden-crowned head. Shake your spears, in honor of his name — Edward — under whose royalty you wear the same.”

King Edward I said, “And, lovely King of England, to your lovely Queen, lovely Queen Eleanor, to her turn your eye, whose honor cannot but love you well.”

Queen Eleanor now made a long speech in praise of her husband:

“The sky, spangled throughout with the golden spots that are the stars, reflects no finer sight in a frosty night than lovely Longshanks in his Eleanor’s eye.

“So, Ned, your Nell is in every part of you, your body is garded — adorned — and guarded with a troop of Queens, and every Queen is as brave and splendid as Eleanor.”

Queen Eleanor was reflected in the diamond-shaped pieces of glass adorning his robe. Those pieces of reflective glass were called quarries and orbes.

Queen Eleanor continued, “Each of these reflected Queens gives glory to these glorious crystal quarries, where every orbe entertains an object — a Queen — of rich device and princely majesty.

“Thus like Narcissus, diving in the deep, I die in honor and in the King of England’s arms; and if I drown, it is in my delight.”

In this culture, “to die” can mean “to have an orgasm.”

Narcissus is a mythological man who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water.

Queen Eleanor continued, “Your company is the chief life in death, from forth whose coral — red — lips I suck the sweetness with which are made dainty Cupid’s caudles.”

Cupid is the son of Venus, and he is the god of love.

Caudles are medicinal drinks.

Queen Eleanor continued, “Then live or die, brave Ned, either sink or swim.

“An earthly bliss it is to look on him.

“On you, sweet Ned, it shall befit your Nell to be bounteous — generous — to the beauteous people.

“Look over the tops of the palm trees, sweet fountains of my bliss,

“And I will stand on tiptoe for a kiss.”

The “sweet fountains of my bliss” were Edward’s eyes.

King Edward I replied to Queen Eleanor:

“He [Any man] had no thought of any gentle heart,

“Who would not seize desire for such desart [desert]

“If any heavenly joy in women be,

“Sweet of all sweets, sweet Nell, it is in thee [you].”

He then returned to business:

“Now, lords, let’s go.

“By this time, the Earl of March, Lord Mortimer, has stationed his men over Cambria’s mountain-tops, and feels Llewelyn’s mind. He wants to know what Llewelyn is planning.”

Lord Mortimer, who had much land in Wales, was an enemy to Llewelyn.

Using the royal plural, King Edward I continued, “To which territory, which Llewelyn’s men have been ravaging,

now that our solemn service of coronation is past, we will swiftly travel to back up our friends as needed.

“And into Wales our men-at-arms shall march, and we shall march with them in person, foot by foot.”

He then said to Baliol, King of Scotland, “Brother of Scotland, you shall go to your home and at the coronation you shall meet your loving peers and live in honor there as the fair friend of the King of England.”

He continued speaking to others:

“And thou, sweet Nell, Queen of King Edward’s heart, shall now come lesser at your dainty love — we shall be separated because of war — until storms are past, and we have cooled the rage of these rebellious Welshmen who contend against England’s majesty and Edward’s crown.

“Sound, trumpets!

“Heralds, lead the train of nobles along.

“This is King Edward’s feast and holiday.”

Later, in London, Queen Eleanor, Joan, and the Earl of Gloucester stood together on a street in front of the palace.

A band of musicians played as the Mayoress — the wife of the Mayor of London — returned from church. The Mayoress’ name was Mary.

Queen Eleanor said, “Gloucester, who may this person be? A bride or what?

“Please, Joan, go see,

“And learn the reason for the harmony.”

Joan went to the Mayoress and brought her over to Queen Eleanor.

Joan said to the Mayoress, “Good woman, let it not offend you any in the least to deliver to me the reason why in this unusual manner you pass the streets with music ceremoniously.”

The Mayoress was uncertain of Joan’s rank. If she ranked higher than the Mayoress, then the Mayoress should call her “madam”; if of lower rank, she should call her “mistress.”

She said to Joan, “Mistress, or madam, whichever you are, know that I am the Mayor of London’s wife, who has given birth to a son, which I have not done for the previous dozen years.

“Now in my husband’s year of being the Mayor of London, bringing him a splendid boy, I pass to my house as if I were a maiden bride — a newlywed.

“This private pleasure of mine, something that God approves of, shall here in no way, I hope, offend good people.”

Queen Eleanor said:

“You hope so, gentle mistress. Do you indeed?”

“But do not make it part of your creed.”

A creed is a statement of belief. The Mayoress hoped that the Queen was not offended, but the Queen was offended — capriciously, without reason.

The Mayoress thought, *Alas, I am ruined! She is the Queen — the proudest Queen whom England ever knew.*

The Mayoress and the musicians exited.

Queen Eleanor said, “Come, Gloucester, let’s go to the court and revel there.”

CHAPTER 4 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE IV —**

The English army was now nearing Carnarvon Castle in northwest Wales.

Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith were standing outside the castle. Sir David, Llewelyn's spy and brother, had stolen away from the English army and was approaching the castle.

Seeing Sir David, Rice ap Meredith drew his sword.

Sir David said, "Wait! Isn't it Meredith I see?"

Recognizing his brother, Llewelyn said, "All is well; we are all friends.

"Meredith, see the man who must and will make us great, and who will raise Llewelyn's head so that it wears the crown of the King of England.

"Fight, Llewelyn, for your friends and yourself."

Rice ap Meredith said, "Fight — despite strong fortune, our army's strong — and sweep away your foes before your pointed lance."

Sir David said, "Not too much prowess, my good lord, at once. Let's have some talk of policy another while."

He wanted to talk about strategy in the deployment of that army later. Right now, he had intelligence to deliver to Llewelyn.

Rice ap Meredith asked, "How come your limbs hurt at this assault?"

He thought that Sir David was hesitant about Llewelyn's army attacking Edward I's army.

Llewelyn said, "Sir David's limbs hurt for our good, Meredith. Take note of that."

He was assuring Rice ap Meredith that Sir David was loyal.

Llewelyn said, "Sir David's intelligence is full of good ideas, and he properly will perform what he says he will perform."

“Enough of this, my lord, at once,” Sir David said. “What do you want me to do, now that I am friendly with King Edward I and he trusts me?”

“What shall I especially advise King Edward and the English lords as I am sitting in council? What counsel should I give so that I may help my Welsh friends?”

Llewelyn said, “David, if you will best for me give counsel, advise the English that my love — Lady Eleanor, daughter of Simon de Montfort — should be rendered to my hand.

“Tell them that neither the chains that Mulciber formerly made to tie Prometheus’ limbs to the mountain in the Caucasus, nor Furies’ fangs shall keep me long from her, but I will take her from the usurper’s tent.”

Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. Mulciber (which means “fire allayer” and is another name for Vulcan, the blacksmith god) punished him by chaining him to a boulder in one of the mountains in the Caucasus mountain range.

The Furies are goddesses of vengeance.

Llewelyn continued, “My beautiful Lady Eleanor!

“David, if your intelligence may help your friends in anything in this case, express it, then, in this, and in nothing else. Come up with a plan that will deliver Lady Eleanor, my wife, to me.”

Sir David said, “Aye, there’s a card that puts us to our trump.”

King Edward I’s capture of Lady Eleanor was forcing the Welsh to play their trump cards.

Sir David continued, “For if I could see the star of Leicester’s loins, it would be enough to darken and obscure King Edward’s glory, fortune, and pride.”

Lady Eleanor was “the star of Leicester’s loins.” Her father was the Earl of Leicester: Simon de Montfort.

Sir David continued, "First, here is something that I can put you out of doubt: Lord Mortimer of the King has her in his charge, and he honorably treats your Lady Eleanor.

"Some think he prays that Llewelyn were in Heaven, for if that happens, he hopes to couch his love on earth."

Some people think that Lord Mortimer would love to have and couch (that is, lay horizontally) Lady Eleanor.

Llewelyn said, "No, that will not happen. Where Llewelyn mounts, there Ellen flies. Ineffable are my thoughts for her: She is not from me in death to be divorced.

"Go on, tell us your plan. It shall be done, whatever it shall be.

"Edward is completely convinced that you are loyal to him. So are all the English lords and barons. So then what can prevent you from intruding on them some newfound strategy to test their intelligence and fool them?"

Sir David said, "I have an idea.

"Meredith, take my weapons.

"I am your prisoner. At least, Llewelyn, you will say that I am your prisoner. Go from here, and when you parle on the walls, make a pretense of monstrous tyranny that you say you intend to execute on me, as on the man who shamefully rebels against kin and kind — family and human nature.

"Say that unless you will have your love, Lady Eleanor, you will execute me. Then make your peace with such conditions as shall best concern you.

"Say that David must die a shameful death. Edward, perhaps, moved by mercy and pity, will in exchange yield Lady Eleanor to you, and you through me shall gain your heart's desire."

Llewelyn said, "This is sweetly advised. David, you bless me, my brother David, lengthener of my life!

"Friends, congratulate me on my joyful hopes."

CHAPTER 5 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE V—**

Before Carnarvon Castle in Wales, King Edward I, the Earl of Sussex, Lord Mortimer, and others stood. They had been fighting the Welsh rebels, and King Edward I wanted the assault to continue.

King Edward I said, “Why, barons, do you allow our foes to rest and catch their breath? Assault, assault, and charge them with all speed!

“They fear, they flee, they faint, they fight in vain.

“But where is gentle Sir David? In his den? I am loath that anything but good should happen to him.”

A trumpet sounded.

On the walls of the castle, Llewelyn, Friar Hugh ap David, and some soldiers appeared. Rice ap Meredith, who had a dagger in his hand, also appeared, holding Sir David by the collar.

King Edward I said loudly, “Where is the proud disturber of our state, traitor to Wales and to his sovereign?”

Llewelyn replied, “Usurper, here I am. What do thou want?”

King Edward I replied, “Welshman, I want allegiance, which thou owe your King.”

They were calling each other “thou” instead of the respectful “you.”

Llewelyn responded, “Thou are a traitor and no King — thou seek your country’s sack and despoilation. Thou are the famous runagate of Christendom.”

The word “runagate” means “vagabond” and also “apostate” (one who has renounced his religion) — a cutting insult to King Edward I, who had recently returned from a Crusade.

“Ambitious rebel, do thou know who I am, and how great, how famous, and how fortunate I am?” King Edward I replied. “And do thou dare carry arms against me here, even

when thou should do reverence at my feet? Yes, feared and honored in the farthest parts has Edward, the noble Henry's son, been.

“Traitor, this sword unsheathed has often been shined while reeking — steaming — with the blood of Saracens.”

King Edward I was saying that he had often shined his sword by stabbing Muslims with it.

He continued, “Similar to Perseus on Pegasus, his winged steed, brandishing bright the sword-blade of adamant that aged Saturn gave fair Maia's son, while fighting with Medusa the Gorgon in the valley, I set my army on the Muslims before the gates of Nazareth and stained my horse's hooves in pagans' gore, sending whole centuries of heathen souls to Pluto's house.”

Adamant is a very hard mineral.

Saturn was the father of many of the Olympian gods, including Jupiter and Juno.

Maia is the mother of Mercury.

The word “century” is a Roman military term. A Roman century is a unit of one hundred soldiers.

Pluto is the god of the Land of the Dead.

King Edward I continued, “This sword, this bloodthirsty sword, aims at your head, and shall, I hope, before long, measure and divide your bowels and your belly, disloyal villain, thou, and who is more —”

He was going to say “more disloyal than thou,” but Llewelyn interrupted him.

Llewelyn said, “Why, Longshanks, do thou think I will be scared with words? No. Even if thou spoke in thunder like Jove, or even if thou would, like the monstrous giant Briareus, shake at once a hundred bloody swords with a hundred bloody hands, I tell you, Longshanks, here is a man — me — who faces you whom nothing can daunt, no, not even the stroke of death.

“I am resolved, as you can see, but see here and now the chance of war.”

He pointed to Sir David and said, “Do thou know a traitor if thou see his head? Then, Longshanks, look this villain in the face. This rebel has wrought his country’s wrack and ruin. He is a base rascal; he is bad in his character and hated because of his character. He is an object of wrath, and he is the subject of revenge.”

King Edward I said, “Llewelyn, do thou call this the chance of war? This is bad for us all, pardie, but worse for him.”

“Pardie” is “*par Dieu*,” which is French for “by God.”

King Edward I then said, “Courage, Sir David! Thou know Kings must die, and noble minds defy all dastardly, cowardly fear.”

Sir David said, “Renowned Edward, star of England’s globe, my dearest lord and sweetest sovereign, glorious and happy is this chance occurrence to me, which allows me to reap this fame and honor in my death because I was hewed with foul defiled hands for my beloved King and country’s good and died in grace and favor with my Prince.”

He then said to his “captors,” whose side he was really on, “Seize on me, bloody butchers, with your paws. It is only temporal, earthly harm that you can inflict on me.”

Religious people believe that the glories of Heaven vastly outweigh any and all temporal evils we suffer on Earth.

King Edward I said to Sir David, “Bravely resolved, brave soldier, by my life!”

Friar Hugh ap David, standing beside Sir David, said to him, “Pay attention, sir, I am afraid that you will not be so resolved by that time you know what I can show you. Here there are hot dogs, I can tell you, that mean to have the tormenting of you.”

“Dogs” are pincers, and “hot dogs” are red-hot pincers. They are instruments of torture.

Lord Mortimer said, "Llewelyn, in the midst of all your blustering threats, how will thou treat your brother whom thou have captured? Will thou let his master ransom him?"

Llewelyn said, "No, nor will I allow his mistress, gallant Mortimer, to ransom him with all the gold and silver of the land."

Rice ap Meredith said, "Ransom this Judas — this traitor — to his father's line! Ransom this traitor to his brother's life! No."

He then said to Sir David, "Take this earnest-penny of your death."

He seemed to cut Sir David's arms and shoulders — these were not mortal wounds. An "earnest-penny" is a small down payment of a larger amount of money to come.

Rice ap Meredith continued, "This touch, my lord, comes nothing near the mark."

The mark is the target — the target is a part of Sir David's body, such as the heart — that would result in his death.

King Edward I said, "Oh, damned villain, hold your hands! Stop torturing Sir David! Ask and have."

This meant: "Ask for what you want as a ransom, and you shall have it."

Llewelyn responded, "We will not ask nor have. Do thou see these tools?"

Llewelyn showed King Edward I red-hot pincers and said, "These are the dogs — the pincers — that shall torture him to death. They shall tear his cursed flesh into pieces, and here in your sight he shall hang and suffer."

King Edward I said, "Oh, villains! Traitors, how I will get Sir David avenged!"

Llewelyn said, "What! Do thou threaten us, Edward? Reckless minds scorn that which fury menaces."

He then said, "See the effect your words have on me."

He seemed to cut Sir David's nose.

Sir David cried, "Oh, gracious heavens, dissolve me back into the clay my body came from! This tyranny is more than flesh can bear."

King Edward I said, "Bear it, brave mind, since nothing but your blood may satisfy in these extreme circumstances."

The Earl of Sussex said to King Edward I, "My lord, it is in vain to threaten them. They are resolved, as you see, upon his death."

King Edward I replied, "Sussex, they all shall pay dearly for the death of Sir David. Offer them anything for his life — pardon, or peace, or anything else. May God love me as much as I love my friends!"

He then said, "Llewelyn, let me have your brother's life even at what expense and ransom thou will name."

Llewelyn responded, "Edward — King Edward, as thou wish to be termed — thou know that thou have my beauteous Lady Eleanor as your captive. Produce her here and now to plead for David's life. She may obtain more than an army of men can obtain."

King Edward I replied, "Will thou exchange your prisoner — Sir David — for your love — Lady Eleanor?"

"Talk no more to me," Llewelyn said. "Let me see her face."

Mortimer said, "Why, will your majesty be all so low and base that you stoop to his demands in everything?"

King Edward I said, "Fetch Lady Eleanor at once. Good Mortimer, go now."

Mortimer said to himself, "I go; but how unwillingly Heaven does know."

He was in love with Lady Eleanor.

Rice ap Meredith said, "Hurry, Mortimer, if thou love your friend."

Mortimer said to himself, "I go for dearer than I leave behind."

He valued Lady Eleanor more than he valued Sir David. He exited.

King Edward I said, “See, Sussex, Sir David bleeds within my eyesight. He bears bad fortune’s shock triumphantly.”

Friar Hugh ap David said to Llewelyn, “Sa-ha, master! I have found something! I have found something!”

“Sa-ha” was a hunting cry that announced a discovery of something, such as signs of the prey that the hunters were hunting.

Llewelyn asked, “What have thou found, Friar?”

Rice ap Meredith answered:

“News, my lord, a star from out the sea;

“The same is risen and made a summer’s day.”

This was a poetic way of saying that Lady Eleanor had been sighted. She was compared to the Sun rising over the sea in the summer.

Lord Mortimer returned, leading Lady Eleanor.

Seeing Lady Eleanor and Lord Mortimer, Llewelyn said, “What, Nell, sweet Nell, do I see your face?

“Let the heavens fall, let the stars flee, let Phoebus’ lamp — the Sun — shine no more!

“This is the heavenly body that lends this world her light. This is the star of my fortune, this star that shines so brightly. This is the Queen of my heart, the loadstar — the guiding light — of my delight, this fair manifestation of beauty, this miracle of fame!

“Oh, let me die with Lady Eleanor in my arms!”

In this culture, “to die” can mean “to have an orgasm.”

Llewelyn continued, “What honor shall I lend your loyalty or what praise shall I lend to your sacred godhead?”

Rice ap Meredith said, “By the Virgin Mary, the answer is this, my lord, if I may give you counsel: Sacrifice this mongrel, her friend, in her sight.”

He meant that Lord Mortimer should be sacrificed to honor her.

In this culture, the word “friend” could mean “lover.”

Rice ap Meredith continued, "Once this sacrifice is done, one of your soldiers may dip his foul shirt in Mortimer's blood. If you do this, you shall be waited on by as many crosses as King Edward."

King Edward I's crusading soldiers wore crosses on their coats. Rice ap Meredith meant that the death of Lord Mortimer — a major enemy of the Welsh — would result in many soldiers joining the cause of the Welsh rebels.

King Edward I said, "Maintain good cheer, Sir David; we shall be up on the walls of the castle soon."

Lord Mortimer said to himself, "Die, Mortimer; your life is almost gone."

He felt that he would die if his beloved — Lady Eleanor — were given to Llewelyn.

Lady Eleanor said to Llewelyn, "Sweet Prince of Wales, if I were within your arms, then I would in peace possess my love, and the heavens would open their fair crystal gates so that I may see the palace of my intent."

To Lady Eleanor, being in Llewelyn's arms would be like entering Heaven.

"Llewelyn, set your brother free," King Edward I said. "Let me have Sir David, and thou shall have Lady Eleanor."

Llewelyn said, "Truly, Edward, I prize my Lady Eleanor more dearly than I prize my life; but there belongs more to these affairs than my happiness in love: And to be short, if thou will have your man, whom, I swear, thou over-value, then the safety of Llewelyn and his men must be highly considered in this coming to terms.

"Say, therefore, and be short and quick, will thou give peace and pardon to Llewelyn and his men?"

King Edward I said, "I will need time to seek advice before making a decision."

Llewelyn said, "King Edward, no. We will permit no pause — if there is a pause, then this wretch, this traitor, goes into the cooking pot."

This idiom meant that Sir David would be killed.

Using the royal plural, Llewelyn continued, “And if Llewelyn is pursued so closely by your soldiers, Llewelyn may by some chance show you such a tumbling-cast, as formerly our father suffered when he thought to escape from Julius Caesar’s tower but broke his neck instead.”

If King Edward I would not make peace with and give pardons to Llewelyn and the other Welsh rebels, they would throw Sir David down from the castle wall.

Julius Caesar’s tower was the Tower of London, which the English believed that he had built.

Llewelyn’s father had been held prisoner in the Tower of London, but he fell to his death during an escape attempt.

The Earl of Sussex said, “My lord, these rebels are all desperate.”

Lord Mortimer said to himself, “And Mortimer is of all men the most miserable.”

King Edward I said to Llewelyn’s soldiers, “What do you say, Welshmen? Will you leave your arms — your weapons — and be true and loyal liegemen to Edward’s crown?”

The First Welsh Soldier said, “If Edward will pardon absolutely what is past, upon some conditions we will all be content.”

King Edward I said drily, “It’s likely that you will require some conditions from us, then?”

A common soldier was negotiating with a King. Unusual.

The First Welsh Soldier said, “We have special conditions for our safety first, and also for our country Cambria’s common good, to avoid the effusion of our guilty blood.”

Understandably, the Welsh soldiers wanted to ensure that they and their country would be safe.

“Go on,” King Edward I said. “Continue to speak.”

The First Welsh Soldier said, “First, for our followers, and ourselves, and all, we ask for a pardon in the King’s word.

“Then we ask for this lord’s — Llewelyn’s — possession of his love: Lady Eleanor.

“But we beg these boons for our country’s chief, and we beg England’s princely promise to your Wales: Promise that no one will be Cambria’s Prince to govern us except he who is a Welshman, born in Wales. We want none other than Welshmen to be the chief of Wales.

“Grant this, and swear it on your knightly sword, and you will have your man and us and all in peace.”

“Have your man” was ambiguous. The First Welsh Soldier meant that King Edward I would have Sir David returned to him, but Llewelyn thought that the soldier was referring to him.

Llewelyn said, “Why, Cambria-Britons, are you so incensed against me? Will you deliver me into Edward’s hands?”

The First Welsh Soldier replied, “No, Lord Llewelyn. We will back you up so that you have your life, your love, and golden liberty.”

Mortimer said to himself, “A truce with honorable conditions taken. This means Wales’ happiness, England’s glory, and my poison.”

It was his poison because Lady Eleanor would be given to Llewelyn.

King Edward I ordered, “Command that retreat be sounded in our camp.”

He said to the Welsh soldiers, “Soldiers, I grant in full what you request.”

He then said, “David, have good cheer.

“Llewelyn, open the gates.”

Using the respectful “you,” Llewelyn replied, “The gates are opened. You and yours may enter.”

Sir David said, “The sweetest Sun that ever I saw to shine!”

King Edward I said to Lady Eleanor, “Madam, this was a quarrel well begun for you. Be my guest and Sir Llewelyn’s love.”

Everyone exited except Lord Mortimer.

He said to himself, “Mortimer, this was a brabble ill begun for you. It is a truce containing capital conditions: A prisoner was saved and ransomed with your life.”

The capital conditions meant his death: Without Lady Eleanor, he felt that he would die.

He continued, “Edward, my King, my lord, and dear friend, very little do you know how this retreat, as with a sword, has slain poor Mortimer.

“Farewell the flower, the gem of beauty’s blaze, sweet Ellen, miracle of nature’s hand!

“Hell is in your name, but Heaven is in your looks.”

Ellen is a part of Eleanor’s name. So is *’ell*.

Lord Mortimer continued:

“Sweet Venus, let me saint or devil be

“In that sweet Heaven or Hell that is in thee.”

Venus is the goddess of love and sexual passion.

CHAPTER 6 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE VI —**

At Carnarvon Castle, Wales, Jack the novice and Morgan Pigot the harper found standing places from which to view the Queen as they waited for the arrival of Queen Eleanor.

The trumpets sounded.

Queen Eleanor entered the scene, riding in her litter borne by four black North Africans.

With her were Joan of Acre, Katherine (her attendant), and other ladies.

Her attendants included the Earl of Gloucester and her four footmen. One set a ladder against the side of the litter. Queen Eleanor descended, and her daughter followed her.

“Give me my slippers,” Queen Eleanor said. “Bah, this hot weather — how it makes me sweat! Heigh-ho, my heart!”

“Heigh-ho” indicated fatigue.

She continued, “Bah, I am exceedingly faint! Give me my fan so that I may cool my face. Wait, take my mask, but see that you don’t rumple it.”

In this culture, upper-class ladies wore masks to protect their faces from the Sun and weather.

Queen Eleanor continued, “This wind and dust, see how it smolders me!

“Give me something to drink, good Gloucester, or I will die for lack of something to drink!”

King Edward was not present, but she addressed him in an apostrophe:

“Ah, Ned, you have forgotten your Nell I see,

“Because she is thus forced to follow thee!”

Queen Eleanor was heavily pregnant, but she was obeying his orders to come to Wales. He had promised the Welsh soldiers that only a person born in Wales would be the chief Welshman and rule Wales. Therefore, he hoped that Queen Eleanor would give birth to a boy in Wales.

The Earl of Gloucester said to her, “This air’s heat, if it please your majesty, harmful and noxious through mountains’ vapors and thick mist, must be unpleasant to you and your company, you who never were accustomed to take the air until Flora, goddess of gardens and flowers, has perfumed the earth with sweet scents, with lilies, roses, mints, and eglantine.”

“Eglantine” is the species of rose known as the sweet-briar.

Queen Eleanor replied, “I tell you, the ground is entirely too base for Eleanor to honor with her steps. Eleanor’s footpace, when she travelled in the streets of Acre and the fair Jerusalem, was upon nothing except costly arras-points, fair island-tapestry, and azured — blue — silk.”

In such places as Acre (where her daughter Joan was born) and Jerusalem, she stepped on nothing except rich tapestries and carpeting and silk.

Queen Eleanor continued, “My milk-white steed tread on striped cloth and trampled proudly underneath its feet the choicest of our English woolen fabrics.”

Aeschylus’ play *Agamemnon* shows the leader of the Greeks against the Trojans in the Trojan War trampling underfoot and ruining a rich cloth that his adulterous wife, Clytemnestra, had laid on the ground. This act showed his overweening pride.

She continued, “This climate frowning with black congealed clouds that take their swelling and growing from the marshy soil, fraught with infectious fogs and misty damps, is far too unworthy to be once embalmed with the redolence of this refreshing breath of mine, which sweetens wherever it alights, as do the flames and holy fires of Vesta’s sacrifice.”

This culture regarded fogs and air from marshes as dangerous.

Joan, Queen Eleanor’s daughter, began to praise the air of England: “The pleasant fields of England newly planted

with the spring, make Thamesis mount above its banks, and, like a pleasant person, wallow up and down on Flora's beds and Napae's silver down."

"Thamesis" is the Latinized name of the Thames River.

Flora is the goddess of gardens and flowers.

Napae are nymphs who live in wooded valleys.

At this time, "down" could mean hills and mountains.

Gloucester said to Joan, whom he was courting:

"And Wales is the same for me, madam, while you are here.

"No climate is good unless your grace is near.

"I wish that Wales had something that could please you half so well or I — Gloucester — had any precious thing that your ladyship could demand that I give to you."

"Well said, my lord!" Joan said, "It is as my mother says: You men have learned to woo a thousand ways."

Queen Eleanor was well aware that Gloucester wanted to marry Joan. So was Joan.

Gloucester said, "Oh, madam, had I learned, in case of need, out of all those ways to woo, one way to speed and succeed, my cunning, then, had been my fortune's guide."

He wanted to know just one way to court Joan that would lead to their being married.

Queen Eleanor said, "Truly, Joan, I think you must be Gloucester's bride."

She thought:

The good Earl of Gloucester, how close he steps to her side!

So soon this eye these younglings had espied.

Apparently, the Earl of Gloucester had early and easily fallen in love with Joan, and Queen Eleanor had early and easily learned of his love for Joan and of Joan's love for him.

Queen Eleanor continued speaking to Joan: "I'll tell you, girl, when I was fair and young, I found such honey in sweet Edward's tongue that I could never spend one idle walk with Ned, but he and I would lengthen it with our conversation."

She then said to the Earl of Gloucester:

“So will you, my lord, when you have got your Joan.

“No matter, let Queen-mother be alone.

“Old Nell is mother now, and grandmother may be soon.”

“Queen-mother” and “Old Nell” referred to Queen Eleanor herself. Joan would leave her to marry and live with Gloucester, and likely Queen Eleanor would become a grandmother due to Joan’s having a baby with Gloucester. Also, Queen Eleanor was soon to give birth.

Queen Eleanor continued:

“The greenest grass does droop and turn to hay.

“Woo on, kind scholar, good Gloucester, love your Joan.

“Her heart is yours, her eyes are not her own.”

Joan’s eyes were not her own because they were constantly looking at Gloucester.

Gloucester said, “This comfort, madam, that your grace gives me binds me in double duty while I live.”

He will have his duty to the King and Queen and England, and also to Joan.

He continued, “I wish to God that King Edward will see and say no less!”

Gloucester was grateful for the Queen’s blessing, and he hoped to be grateful for the King’s blessing.

Queen Eleanor said, “Gloucester, I assure you upon my life that my King is pleased to give you his daughter for your wife.

“Sweet Ned has not forgotten, since he did woo,

“The gall of love and all that belongs thereto.”

“Gall” is bitterness. Love has its sweetness but also sometimes its bitterness.

Gloucester asked, “Why, was your grace so shy to one so kind?”

Queen Eleanor replied, “Kind, Gloucester! So, I think, indeed, it seems he loves his wife no more than is necessary, he who sent for us in all speedy haste, knowing his Queen to

be so great with child, and made me leave my princely pleasant seats to come into his ruder part of Wales.”

She was angry at her husband for forcing her to make a long and difficult journey while she was heavily pregnant.

Gloucester said, “His highness has some secret reason why he wishes you to move from England’s pleasant court.

“The Welshmen have for a long time been asking that when the war of the rebels reaches an end, none might be Prince and ruler over them but such a person who is their countryman. This suit, I think, his grace has granted them.”

If only a person born in Wales could rule over the Welsh, King Edward I wanted his son — if Queen Eleanor were to give birth to a boy — to be born in Wales.

Queen Eleanor said, “So, then, it is King Edward’s policy to have his son — indeed, if it should be a son — a Welshman. Well, a Welsh son pleases me. And here the King comes.”

King Edward I and his lords entered the scene.

King Edward I said, “Nell, welcome into Wales! How fares my Eleanor? How are you?”

“Never worse!” Queen Eleanor said. “Curse their hearts! It is a long journey.”

King Edward replied, “Hearts, sweet Nell?”

“Curse no hearts where such sweet saints do dwell.”

He held her hand tightly.

Queen Eleanor said, “Nay, then, I see I have my dream. Please let go.”

King Edward I did not let go of her hand.

“You will not let go, will you, whether I want you to hold my hand or not?” Queen Eleanor said. “You are disposed to make me angry.”

King Edward I replied, “Say anything but that. Once, Nell, you gave me this hand.”

“Please, let go,” Queen Eleanor requested. “You are inclined to be merry and tease me, I think.”

“Aye, madam, very well,” King Edward I said.

Queen Eleanor said, "Let go and be hanged, I say!"

"What ails my Nell?" King Edward I asked.

Queen Eleanor said, "Ah, woe to me. What sudden fits are these I am experiencing? What grief, what pinching pain, like young men's love, that make me run like a madwoman thus hither and thither?"

Still holding her hand, King Edward I asked, "What! Are you melancholy, Nell?"

Queen Eleanor requested, "My lord, please, let go of me."

He let go of her hand.

She requested, "Give me fresh water. Why, how hot it is!"

Gloucester thought, *These be the fits that trouble men's wits.*

In other words, women can drive men crazy.

King Edward I said, "Joan, ask your beauteous mother how she is."

She was angry enough and ill enough that he was afraid to talk directly to her.

"How fares your majesty?" Joan asked her mother.

Queen Eleanor replied, "Joan, I am aggrieved at the heart, and angered worse because I cannot right me."

"Right me" can mean that she was so pregnant that she could not right herself and sit up straight after she leant too far to one side, but it could at the same time mean that as of yet, she cannot get her rights — rights such as not having her hand held when she does not want it held.

She continued, "I think the King comes purposely to spite me.

"My fingers itch until I have had my will:

Proud Edward, call in your Eleanor; be still.

"It will not be, nor rest I anywhere

"Until I have set it soundly on his ear."

Joan thought, *Is that what you want? To hit my father's ear! Then leave me out of it!*

Queen Eleanor said, "Bah, how I fret with grief!"

King Edward I said, "Come here, Joan. Do you know what ails my Queen?"

"Not I, my lord," Joan said, not wanting to tell her father what his wife wanted.

Then she relented: "She longs, I think, to give your grace a box on the ear."

King Edward I said, "Wench, if that is all, we'll 'ear it well."

He meant, using the royal plural, "We'll bear it well."

He then said to his wife, "What, all amort! All dejected! How does my dainty Nell? Look up at me, sweet love. Unkind! You won't kiss me even once? That isn't possible."

Queen Eleanor said, "My lord, I think you do this expressly to annoy me."

King Edward I begged, "Sweetheart, just one kiss."

"For God's sake, let me go," Queen Eleanor said.

The King had grabbed her again.

"Sweetheart, a kiss," King Edward I begged.

"What, whether I want to or not?" Queen Eleanor said. "You will not leave? Let me alone, I say."

King Edward I said, "I must be better chid."

He may have been intentionally provoking her into hitting him so she would get it out of her system and calm down.

Queen Eleanor said, "No? You will?"

She hit her husband on the ear and said, "Take that, then, lusty lord. Sir, stop when you are told to stop."

King Edward I said, "Why, so, this chare is chared. This business is over and done with."

A "chare" is a chore. "To chare" means "to accomplish a chore."

Gloucester said, "A good one, by the cross."

Queen Eleanor said, "No force, no harm."

She believed that she hadn't hit him hard enough to hurt.

King Edward I said, "Nothing is harmful that does my Eleanor any good."

He then said:

"Learn, lords, in preparation for when you become married men, to bow to women's yoke.

"And sturdy though you be, you may not stir for every stroke."

In other words, sometimes you just have to take it.

King Edward I then said, "Now, my sweet Nell, how does my Queen?"

Queen Eleanor replied, "She boasts that the mighty King of England has felt her fist and taken a blow basely at Eleanor's hand."

King Edward I said, "And boast she may, with my kind permission because she is shrewish and disdainful.

"Lack nothing, Nell, until you have brought your lord a lovely boy."

Because of her pregnancy, King Edward I had been indulging her.

Queen Eleanor said, "*Ven acà*. I am sick."

Ven acà is Spanish for "Come here."

She said to her attendant, "Good Katherina, please, be at hand."

Katherine said, "This sickness, I hope, will bring King Edward a jolly boy."

King Edward I said, "And, Katherine, whoever brings me that news shall not go empty-handed."

Any messenger who brought that particular good news would be rewarded.

CHAPTER 7 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE VII —

The English had taken over Carnarvon Castle, and the Welshmen had gone to the mountain Mannock-deny in Wales.

Mortimer, Llewelyn, Rice ap Meredith, and Lady Eleanor were talking together.

Mortimer had delivered Lady Eleanor to Llewelyn, but he was delaying his departure because he wanted to be with Lady Eleanor as long as possible.

“Farewell, Llewelyn, with your loving Nell,” Mortimer said.

“God-a-mercy, Mortimer,” Llewelyn said, “and so farewell.”

“God-a-mercy” means “thank you.”

Mortimer appeared to leave, but he hid nearby to keep an eye on the others.

Rice ap Meredith said, “Farewell and be hanged, half Sinon’s serpent brood.”

In the Trojan War, Sinon was the lying Greek who was intentionally left behind with the Trojan Horse when the Greeks pretended to leave Troy. He convinced the Trojans to take the Horse inside their city by telling them that according to the gods Troy would never be conquered while the Horse was in the city. A Trojan priest named Laocoön opposed taking the Horse inside Troy, and the gods who opposed the Trojans sent two sea-snakes to kill Laocoön and his two sons. The Trojan Horse was hollow and filled with Greek warriors who came out of the Horse that night and let the Greek army into Troy.

Llewelyn said, “Speak good words, Sir Rice ap Meredith. Wrongs have the best remedy when taken with time, patience, and policy.

“But where is the Friar? Who can tell me?”

Friar Hugh ap David entered the scene and said:

“That I can, master, very well.

“And say, indeed, what has happened.

“Must we at once go to Heaven or Hell?”

Lady Eleanor said, “To Heaven, Friar! Friar, no, bah! Such heavy souls mount not so high.”

Their souls were heavy with sin because they had rebelled against King Edward I.

Friar Hugh ap David lay on the ground and said:

“Then, Friar, lie down and die;

“And if any ask the reason why,

“Answer and say you cannot tell,

“Unless because you must go to Hell.”

Lady Eleanor said:

“No, Friar, because you did rebel.

“Gentle Sir Rice ap Meredith, ring out your knell!”

Llewelyn said, “And Mannoek-deny will toll your passing-bell.”

Rice ap Meredith would ring the Friar’s knell, and the mountain’s echo would ring the Friar’s passing-bell.

Both knells and passing-bells ring to announce a person’s death or funeral. In this case, the two would be much the same — the ringing and its echo — because the Friar has just “died,” and his “funeral” was being held.

Llewelyn continued:

“So, there lies a straw.

“And now to the law.”

“To lay a straw” means “to stop talking about something.”

The mock funeral was over, and Llewelyn now began to talk about what he and the others would do in the Welsh mountains.

Because he had just been to a “funeral,” he started with a mock sermon:

“Masters and friends, we came naked into the world, and now we are turned naked out of the good towns into the wilderness.

“Let me see. By the Mass, I think we are a handsome commonwealth. We are a handful of good fellows, set a-Sunning to dog on — to follow — our own discretion. We can do whatever we want, including Sunning ourselves.

“What do you say, sirs? We are enough to keep a passage.”

According to Llewelyn, they were a large enough body of armed men to keep an army from passing through a narrow passage in the mountains.

Llewelyn continued, “Will you be ruled by me? Will you follow me and follow my advice?”

“We’ll get tomorrow from Brecknock the *Book of Robin Hood*. The Friar, who is literate, shall instruct us in Robin’s way of life, and we’ll follow it here fairly and well.

“Since King Edward I has put us among the cards he is discarding, and, as it were, turned us with deuces and treys out of the deck, every man shall take his standing on Mannock-deny, and wander like irregulars — outcasts — up and down the wilderness.

“I’ll be the Master of Misrule — I’ll be Robin Hood, that’s for sure.”

In this society, the Master of Misrule presided over Christmas games.

Llewelyn continued, “Cousin Rice ap Meredith, you shall be Little John.

“And here’s Friar David as fit as a die for Friar Tuck.

“Now, my sweet Nell, if you will make up the mess — be the fourth in a group of four — with a good heart for Maid Marian, and do well with Llewelyn under the green-wood trees, with as good a will as in the good towns, why, *plena est curia*.”

“*Plena est curia*” is Latin for “our company is now complete.”

He was playing with words. “*In plena Curia*” means “in the full Court.”

Lady Eleanor said, “My sweetest love, my infract — broken and unbroken — fortune could never boast her sovereignty.”

Words change meaning over time, and “infract” can mean “broken” or “unbroken.”

Lady Eleanor’s fortune was broken in the sense that she was living in the wilderness and not in a court, but her fortune was unbroken in the sense that she was living with her husband, whom she loved.

She had given her sovereignty to her husband, and he ruled her.

She continued, “And if you should cross the ford of Phlegethon in the Land of the Dead—”

Phlegethon is a river of fire.

She continued, “— or swim the Hellespont with Leander —”

Leander swam the Hellespont, aka the Dardanelles, each night to be with Hero, the woman whom he loved. She lit a torch for him so he would swim in the right direction, but one night the wind blew the torch out and Leander drowned.

She continued, “— or in deserts forever dwell with Onophrius —”

Onophrius, a Catholic hermit, dwelt in the desert for seventy years.

She continued, “— or build your bower on Aetna’s fiery tops —”

A bower is a home, and Aetna is Mount Etna, a volcano.

She concluded:

“Your Nell would follow you and keep with you,

“Your Nell would feed with you and sleep with you.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “*O Cupido quantus quantus!*”

The Latin means, “Oh, Cupid, how great! How great!”

Rice ap Meredith said, “Bravely resolved, madam.”

He then asked, “And then what remains to do, my Lord Robin, but that we will live and die together like Camber-

Britons — like Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, and Maid Marian?”

Llewelyn said, “There remains nothing to do now, cousin, but that I sell my gold chain to get money to dress us all in green, and we’ll all play the diggers to make us a cave and cabin for all weathers. We will build a home to live in.”

Lady Eleanor said:

“My sweet Llewelyn, though this sweet be gall,
“Patience does conquer by out-suffering all.”

Llewelyn appeared to be playful, but his wife realized that he must be suffering bitterness — gall — because of the failure of his rebellion. He had hoped to become King of England.

Her advice to him was to be patient and endure his suffering. Patience and endurance would conquer in the end.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Now, Mannock-deny, I bet you a penny,
“You shall have neither sheep nor goat
“But Friar David will fleece his coat:
“Wherever Jack, my novice, jet [struts],
“All is fish with him that comes to net;
“David, this year you pay no debt.”

Friar Hugh ap David expected that he and Jack the novice would have a good year and a good income. He and Jack would fleece whatever could be fleeced. The sheep, goats, and fishes would include travelers — chances are, some travelers would be unwary.

Everyone except Mortimer exited.

Mortimer said:

“Why, Friar, is it so plain, indeed? Are your intentions so obvious?

“Llewelyn, are you so completely resolved to revel and to roost so near the King?

“What! Shall we have a passage kept in Wales for men-at-arms and adventurous knights?

“By cock, Sir Rice ap Meredith, I see no reason why young Mortimer should not make one among your group and play his part on Mannock-deny here because of his love for his beloved Lady Eleanor.”

“By cock” was a euphemism for “by God.”

Mortimer continued:

“His Eleanor! If she were Mortimer’s, I know, the bitter northern wind upon the plains, the damp vapors that rise from out the marshy grounds, and the influence of contagious, disease-spreading air would not touch her.

“Instead, she should court it — live in a luxurious court — with the proudest dames, wear rich attire, eat sumptuously, and take her ease in beds of softest down.

“Why, Mortimer, may not your offers of love move Lady Eleanor, and win sweet Eleanor away from Llewelyn’s love?

“Why, pleasant gold and gentle eloquence have enticed and won over the chastest nymphs, the fairest dames. And vaunts of words and the delights of wealth and ease have caused a nun to yield.

“Llewelyn’s Sun is setting and sees the last of desperate chance.

“Why should so fair a star as Lady Eleanor stand in a valley, and not be seen to sparkle in the sky?

“It is enough to cause Jove, King of the gods, to change his glittering robes to see Mnemosyne — and he flies to her.”

Jupiter slept with Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, nine nights in a row; she gave birth to the Nine Muses.

Mortimer then addressed you, the audience:

“Masters, let’s go after gentle Robin Hood. You’re not so well accompanied, I hope, that you can’t accept one more.

“If a potter should come to play his part, you’ll give him stripes with a lash or give him welcome, good or worse.”

Mortimer was planning to disguise himself as a potter and join Llewelyn’s band so he could be close to Lady Eleanor and try to entice her to leave Llewelyn and instead be with him.

He said to himself, "Go, Mortimer, and make love-holidays and court Lady Eleanor.

"The King will accept a common excuse from you for your absence — he has more men than Mortimer to attend on him."

CHAPTER 8 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE VIII —

On Mannock-deny in Wales, Llewelyn, Rice ap Meredith, Friar Hugh ap David, the Lady Eleanor, and their train of attendants were gathered. They were all clad in green, and they sang the song “Blithe and Bonny”:

*A blithe and bonny country lass,
 heigh ho, the bonny lass!
 Sat sighing on the tender grass
 and weeping said, will none come woo her.
 A smicker [handsome] boy, a lither swain,
 heigh ho, a smicker [handsome] swain!
 That in his love was wanton fain [joyous],
 with smiling looks straight came unto her.
 Whenas the wanton wench espied,
 heigh ho, when she espied!
 The means to make herself a bride,
 she simpered smooth like Bonnybell:
 The swain, that saw her squint-eyed kind,
 heigh ho, squint-eyed kind!
 His arms about her body twined,
 and: “Fair lass, how fare ye, well?”
 The country kit [kitten (girl, young woman)] said: “Well,
 forsooth,
 heigh ho, well forsooth!
 But that I have a longing tooth,
 a longing tooth that makes me cry.”
 “Alas!” said he, “what gars [causes] thy grief?
 heigh ho, what gars [causes] thy grief?”
 “A wound,” quoth she, “without relief,
 I fear a maid [maiden, virgin] that I shall die.”
 “If that be all,” the shepherd said,
 heigh ho, the shepherd said!
 “I’ll make thee wive it, gentle maid,
 and so recure [heal] thy malady.”*

*Hereon they kissed with many an oath,
 heigh ho, with many an oath!
 And fore [before] God Pan did plight their troth [pledge
 their truth (say their marriage vows)],
 and to the church they hied [hurried] them fast.
 And God send every pretty peat [girl, young woman],
 heigh ho, the pretty peat!
 That [Who] fears to die of this conceit,
 so kind a friend [lover] to help at last.*

Once the song had ended, Llewelyn said, “Why, so, I see, my mates, of old, all were not lies that beldames — old women — told about Robin Hood and Little John, Friar Tuck and Maid Marian.”

Friar Hugh ap David agreed: “Aye, indeed, master.”

Llewelyn continued, “How well they lived in the green forest, frolicsome and lively without trouble, and spent their days in games and glee.

“Llewelyn, seek if anything pleases you, and do not, although your foot be out of town, allow your eyes to look black at and frown angrily at King Edward’s crown. And do not think that this green clothing we are wearing is not as gay as was the golden rich array we wore at the court.”

He said to Lady Eleanor, “And if, sweet Nell, my Marian, trusts me, as I am a gentleman,

“I say that you are as fine in this attire,

“As fine and fit to my desire,

“As when of Leicester’s hall and bower

“You were the rose and sweetest flower.”

Lady Eleanor’s father was the Earl of Leicester; at his court, she had been richly dressed.

Llewelyn then asked Friar Hugh ap David:

“What do you say, Friar? Do I speak well?

“For anything becomes [looks good on] my Nell.”

Friar Hugh ap David replied:

“Never made man of a woman born

“A bullock’s tail a blowing horn.”

No man can make something into something else it was not born to be. Lady Eleanor was born noble, and no man can change that.

He continued:

“Nor can an ass’ hide disguise

“A lion, if he ramp and rise.”

Even the wearing of green rustic clothing cannot disguise Lady Eleanor’s nobility.

Lady Eleanor said to her husband, “My lord, the Friar is wondrous wise.”

Llewelyn, her husband, replied, “Believe him, for he tells no lies.”

He then asked Rice ap Meredith, who was taking the part of Little John in this play-acting, and who was silent, “But what is Little John thinking?”

Rice ap Meredith replied, “That Robin Hood should beware of spies.

“An aged saying and a true,

“Black will take no other hue;

“He who of old has been your foe

“Will die but will continue so.”

Black cloth cannot be dyed another color, and evil stays evil.

An enemy who has been an enemy for a long time will remain an enemy until — and after — death.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Oh, masters, where shall we go?

“Does any living creature know?”

Llewelyn replied:

“Rice ap Meredith and I will walk the round.

“Friar, see about the ground,

“And despoil what prey is to be found.”

Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith would walk in the forest and scout, while the Friar would stay in the camp with Lady Eleanor. Should any edible animal come around, the Friar

would try to kill it. Perhaps he could also rob an unwary traveler.

Llewelyn continued:

“My love I leave within your trust,
“Because I know your actions are just.”

Actually, Friar Hugh ap David’s actions had not always been just. As a Friar, he had sworn to be celibate but had courted a wench.

As Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith were leaving the camp, Mortimer entered the scene, disguised as a potter.

Llewelyn said, “Come, potter, come, and welcome, too.
“Fare as we fare, and do as we do.”

Llewelyn then said to Lady Eleanor, “Nell, adieu. We go for news.”

Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith exited.

The disguised Mortimer stayed a short distance from the camp.

Friar Hugh ap David and Lady Eleanor thought that Mortimer had gone with Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith, and so they thought they were alone together.

Friar Hugh ap David said to himself:

“A little serves the Friar’s lust,
“When *nolens volens* fast I must:
“Master, at all that you refuse.”

Nolens is Latin for “unwillingly” or “involuntarily,” and *volens* is Latin for “willingly” or “voluntarily.” The Friar is supposed to be celibate whether willingly or unwillingly.

The Friar, however, is unwilling to be celibate and therefore he will try to get a little — a kiss, or more — whenever an opportunity — such as now — presented itself.

Gamblers cried “at all” when risking everything on a single throw. The Friar was going to risk everything by attempting to seduce Lady Eleanor while he was alone — he thought — with her.

Llewelyn had “refused” Lady Eleanor by leaving her behind in the camp.

Mortimer, who could hear Friar Hugh ap David clearly, said to himself:

“Such a potter would I choose,

“When I mean to blind an excuse.”

A blind excuse is “a poor excuse” or “a sorry shrift.” The Friar was a sorry excuse for a Friar when it came to celibacy.

In addition, Mortimer, who was disguised as a potter, was choosing to be and act like the Friar. The Friar is at a sorry shrift because of his vow of celibacy, but he chooses to ignore it and pursue women. Mortimer is at a sorry shrift because he loves a married woman, but he chooses to ignore her marriage vows and pursue that woman. Neither the Friar nor Mortimer can have a good excuse for going against holy vows.

The disguised Mortimer continued:

“While Robin walks with Little John,

“The Friar will lick — kiss — his Marian:

“So will the potter if he can.”

Lady Eleanor said:

“Now, Friar, since your lord is gone,

“And you and I are left alone,

“What can the Friar do or say

“To pass the weary time away?

“Weary, God knows, poor wench, to thee,

“Who never thought these days to see.”

Llewelyn was trying to enjoy their time in the forest, but Lady Eleanor, although she wanted to be with her husband, preferred life in the court to life in the forest.

The disguised Mortimer said to himself:

“Break, heart! And split, my eyes, in twain!

“Never let me hear those words again.”

He hated to hear that Lady Eleanor was unhappy.

(But perhaps he didn’t want to suffer much pain on her behalf — his eyes were already split in twain!)

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“What can the Friar do or say

“To pass the weary time away?

“More dare he do than he dare say,

“Because he doubts to get away.”

What he wanted to do was seduce Lady Eleanor, but attempting that was risky because of her husband. If he were caught, he might not be able to get away.

Lady Eleanor requested:

“Do something, Friar, speak or sing,

“That may to sorrows solace bring;

“And I meanwhile will garlands make.”

The garlands were wreaths made of flowers.

The disguised Mortimer said to himself:

“Oh, Mortimer, were it for your sake,

“A garland were the happiest stake

“That ever this unhappy hand drew!”

If only Lady Eleanor were making the wreath for him, he would value it more than any gambling wager he had ever won.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Mistress, shall I tell you true?”

A “mistress” is a female head of household.

The Friar continued:

“I have a song, I learned it long ago:

“I don’t know whether you’ll like it well or no.

“It is short and sweet, but somewhat brawled before:

“Once let me sing it, and I ask no more.”

In this context, “brawled” means “sung clamorously.”

Lady Eleanor said:

“What, Friar, will you so indeed?

“Agrees it somewhat with your need?”

Friar Hugh ap David’s need — that is, desire — was not to be celibate. The song he had in mind was possibly a bawdy drinking song.

He asked, “Why, mistress, shall I sing my creed?”

He could instead sing a religious song.

Lady Eleanor said, “That’s the fitter of the two at need.”

Since now was a time of trouble, a religious song was more appropriate.

The disguised Mortimer said to himself: “Oh, wench, how may you hope to speed and succeed?”

The disguised Mortimer knew that Friar Hugh ap David was unlikely to stick to religious songs — or to obey his religious vows.

Friar Hugh ap David said to himself:

“Oh, mistress, out it goes:

“Look what comes next — the Friar throws.”

He was about to take his chance at seducing Lady Eleanor.

He sat beside her in preparation to sing — and seduce.

The disguised Mortimer said:

“Such a sitting who ever saw?

“An eagle’s bird beside a jackdaw.”

Lady Eleanor’s was the eagle’s fledgling, while the Friar was a much less majestic bird — a small crow.

Lady Eleanor said to the Friar, “So, sir, is this all?”

The disguised Mortimer came forward, revealing himself, and said, “Sweetheart, here’s no more.”

Lady Eleanor said:

“How are you now, good fellow!

“We are more indeed by one than we were before.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “What now! The devil instead of a ditty!”

The disguised Mortimer replied,

“Friar, a ditty

“Come recently from the city ...”

“To ask some pity

“Of this lass so pretty.”

He then said to Lady Eleanor, “Give me some pity, sweet mistress, please.”

Lady Eleanor asked, “What’s going on, Friar? Where are we now, and you play not the man?”

Friar Hugh ap David was supposed to be her protector while her husband and Rice ap Meredith were away. He should be standing up for her and accosting the potter.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Friend copesmate, you who

“Came recently from the city,

A “copesmate” is a friend or partner.

The Friar continued:

“To ask some pity

“Of this lass so pretty,

“In likeness of a doleful ditty,

“Hang me if I do not pay ye.”

The Friar was saying to hang him if he did not beat the potter.

“Oh, Friar, you grow choleric and angry,” the disguised Mortimer said. “Well, you want to have no man court your mistress but yourself. On my word, I’ll take you down a button-hole.”

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “You talk, you talk, child. You are nothing but talk, boy.”

The disguised Mortimer and the Friar began to fight.

As they were fighting, Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith returned to the camp, and the disguised Mortimer and the Friar stopped fighting.

Llewelyn said, “It is well, potter; you fight in a good quarrel.”

The potter had been fighting well. Of course, Mortimer was an experienced military man, although Llewelyn did not recognize him.

Rice ap Meredith took Mortimer’s staff, looked it over, and said, “By the Mass, this ‘sword’ will hold.”

He then said, “Let me see your staff, Friar.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Mine’s for my own turn, my own use, I promise you. Give him back his tools.”

The Friar then said to the disguised Mortimer, “Rise, and let’s go to it — but no change, if you love me. I scorn the odds, I can tell you.”

The Friar thought that the disguised Mortimer’s staff was longer than the Friar’s staff, but the Friar was still willing to fight him. Or, perhaps, he thought that Mortimer was the better fighter.

When two men are dueling, the weapons — whether swords or staffs — ought to be of equal length in order for the fight to be fair.

Friar Hugh ap David then said to Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith, “See fair play, if you are gentlemen.”

Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith would be the referees of the fight.

Llewelyn replied, “By the Virgin Mary, we shall be, Friar.”

Llewelyn checked the two staffs, saying, “Let us see. Are their staffs of a similar length? Good.

“So, now let us decide the matter,

“Friar and potter, without more clatter.

“I have cast your water,

“And see as deep into your desire,

“As any man who had dived every day into your bosom.”

In this society, doctors cast water — that is, they examined the patient’s urine and diagnosed illnesses when they were present.

The illness of both the Friar and the potter was lust. Llewelyn could guess that they were fighting over Lady Eleanor.

Llewelyn then said to Friar Hugh ap David:

“Oh, Friar, will nothing serve your turn but larks?

“Are such fine birds for such coarse clerks?

“None but my Marian can serve your turn?”

“Clerks” (pronounced “clarks”) are clerics.

Lady Eleanor said, “Cast water, for the house will burn.”

She was capable of wit and punning.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Oh, mistress, mistress, flesh is frail;

“Beware when the sign is in the tail:

“Mighty is love and it does prevail.”

“Beware when the sign is in the tail” is good advice for Friar Hugh ap David. A wedding ring on a woman’s finger is a sign or symbol that this tail is taken. The sign can literally be in the tail when fingering occurs.

Llewelyn said:

“Therefore, Friar, shall you not fail,

“But mightily your foe assail,

“And thrash this potter with your flail.”

A flail is used in threshing grain. It has a short free-swinging club attached to a longer wooden handle. Llewelyn was punning: “to thrash” meant “to beat up” and “to thresh.”

Llewelyn then said:

“And, potter, never rave nor rail,

“Nor ask questions what I ail [about what ails me],

“But take this tool, and do not quail,

“But thrash this Friar’s russet coat;

“And make him sing a dastard’s note.”

A “dastard” is a coward.

He continued:

“And cry, *Peccavi miserere David*

“In amo amavi.

“Go to it.”

The Latin means, “I have sinned. Have pity on David [that is, the Friar] in that I have loved.”

The disguised Mortimer said, “Strike! Strike!”

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Strike, potter, be thou lief or loath [willing or unwilling]:

“If you’ll not strike, I’ll strike for both.”

The disguised Mortimer struck the Friar and then said:

“He must needs [necessarily] go whom the devil drives.

“So, then, Friar, beware of other men’s wives.”

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“I wish, master arrogant potter, that the devil will have my soul.

“As long as I’ll make my flail circumscribe your noll.”

“Circumscribe your noll” meant “make a circle on your head.” Of course, the Friar’s tonsure made a circle on his head.

The Friar struck the disguised Mortimer.

Llewelyn said:

“Why, so; now it cottons [goes well]. Now the game begins.

“One knave curries [beats] another for his sins.”

Friar Hugh ap David knelt before Llewelyn and said, “Oh, master, shorten my offences in your eyes! Forgive me for my offense!”

He added:

“If this crucifix I am wearing does not suffice,

“Send me to Heaven in a hempen sacrifice.”

Friar Hugh ap David wanted Llewelyn to forgive him. If Llewelyn would not forgive him, the Friar wanted to be hung with a hempen rope and then go to Heaven.

The disguised Mortimer knelt before Llewelyn and Rice ap Meredith and said:

“Oh, masters, masters, let this be warning!

“The Friar has infected me with his learning.”

Llewelyn said:

“Villains, do not touch the forbidden tree,

“Now to delude or to dishonor me.”

In other words, leave Lady Eleanor (the forbidden tree) alone.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Oh, master, *quae negata sunt grata sunt.*”

The Latin means, “Things that are denied are pleasing.”

Llewelyn said to Rice ap Meredith:

“Rice, every day thus shall it be:

“We’ll have a thrashing set among the Friars; and he

“Who of these challengers lays on the slowest load,
 “Be thou at hand, Rice ap Meredith, to gore him with
 your goad.”

Llewelyn used the word “Friars” because the potter had admitted that the Friar had “infected” him with the Friar’s “learning.”

Llewelyn wanted the Friar and the potter to fight each day. Rice ap Meredith would use a goad to force the person who held back the most at fighting to fight harder.

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Ah, potter, potter, the Friar may rue
 “That ever this day this our quarrel he knew;
 “My pate [head] is addled [foggy (from being beaten)];
 my arms are black and blue.”

The disguised Mortimer replied:

“Ah, Friar, who may his fate’s force eschew?
 “I think, Friar, you are prettily schooled.”

In other words, no one can escape his fate, and you, the Friar, have learned a lesson.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “And I think the potter is handsomely cooled.”

In other words, you, the potter, have received your share of blows that cooled your ardor.

Everyone exited the scene except the disguised Mortimer, who said to himself:

“No, Mortimer; here’s that eternal fire
 “That burns and flames with firebrands of hot desire.
 “Why, Mortimer, why don’t you discover [reveal]
 “Yourself [to be] her knight, her liegeman [faithful follower], and her lover?”

CHAPTER 9 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE IX —**

At Berwick, on the border of Scotland and England, were John Baliol, who was now King of Scots, and his train of attendants, who included Lord Versses and some French Lords.

King Baliol of Scotland said, “Lords of Albania, and my peers in France, since Baliol is invested in his rights as King of Scotland, and wears the royal Scottish diadem, it is time to rouse him so that the world may know that Scotland disdains to carry England’s yoke.”

Albania was an ancient name for Scotland.

King Baliol continued, “Therefore, my friends, thus prepared in readiness for war, why do we waste time and delay greeting the English King with a resolute message that will let him know our minds and our demands?

“Lord Versses, although your faith and oath have been taken to follow Baliol’s arms for Scotland’s right, yet your heart is knit to England’s honor. Although you have pledged to follow me, I know that you are still partial to England.

“Therefore, to spite England and yourself, you will bear defiance proudly to your King: Edward I. Tell him that Albania finds heart and hope to shake off England’s tyranny at once and to rescue Scotland’s honor with the sword.

“Lord Bruce, see cast about Versses’ neck a strangling halter, so that he remembers to do this task in haste.”

Lord Robert Bruce was the grandfather of the great King Robert the Bruce of Scotland. Robert the Bruce was born on 11 July 1274.

King Baliol was demeaning Versses by requiring him to wear a noose around his neck as he performed the task of delivering Baliol’s defiant message to King Edward I. The noose was a reminder of what would happen to him if he did not perform his task well and quickly.

Not using the respectful “you,” King Baliol asked, “What do thou, Versses? Will thou deliver this message?”

Versses replied, “Although no common post, yet, for my King, I will go to England, despite England’s might, and do my errand boldly, as is fitting although I honor English Edward’s name and hold this slavish contemptible noose in scorn.”

Using the royal “we,” King Baliol said, “Then hurry away, as swift as a swallow flies, and meet me on our inroads into England’s ground. While we are there, we will think of your message and your haste.”

In other words, perform this task well and quickly, or the noose will strangle you.

CHAPTER 10 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE X —**

At Carnarvon Castle in Wales, King Edward I, Edmund Duke of Lancaster (the King's brother), Gloucester, Sussex, Sir David, and Cressingham (a noble) arrived. They were still wearing their riding boots after travelling on horseback from Northampton, which was located 60 miles north-west of London. They stood outside the Queen's tent. Queen Eleanor had recently delivered a son in Wales, as King Edward had wanted.

King Edward I said, "Now I have time, lords, to give you welcome to Wales.

"Welcome, sweet Edmund, to christen your young nephew.

"And welcome, Cressingham; give me your hand.

"But, Sussex, what has become of Mortimer? We have not seen the man for many days."

The Earl of Sussex replied, "Before your highness rode from here to Northampton, Sir Roger Mortimer was a suitor to your grace concerning fair Lady Eleanor, Llewelyn's love. He wanted to marry her, but she was given to Llewelyn in exchange for Sir David.

"And since his suit was denied, it seems likely that he, discontented, stays away from your royal presence."

King Edward I said, "Why, Sussex, didn't we say to Lady Eleanor that as long as she would leave Llewelyn, whom she had loved too long, she might have favor with my Queen and me?"

"But, man, her mind above her fortune mounts,

"And that's a cause she fails in her accounts."

In other words, in his opinion Lady Eleanor had made the wrong decision: She would stay with Llewelyn, although her way of life would have been much richer and more luxurious if she had stayed with King Edward I and had rejected Llewelyn.

King Edward I continued, "But go with me, my Lord Edmund of Lancaster. We will go see my beauteous lovely Queen, who has enriched me with a splendid boy."

The Queen's tent opened, revealing Queen Eleanor sitting up in her bed, attended by the Duchess of Lancaster, Joan of Acre, Mary (the Mayoress of London), and other attendants. The Queen was dandling her young son on her knee.

King Edward, Edmund, and Gloucester went into the Queen's chamber.

King Edward I said, "Ladies, by your leave."

He was politely requesting the permission of the Queen's attendants to visit the Queen. Such permission, of course, was readily granted.

He asked:

"How is my Nell, my own, my love, my life,

"My heart, my dear, my dove, my Queen, my wife?"

Queen Eleanor replied, "Ned, have you come, sweet Ned? Welcome, my joy! Your Nell presents you with a lovely boy. Kiss him, and christen him after your own name."

Edward's son would be named Edward.

She continued, "Heigh-ho! Whom do I see? My Lord Edmund of Lancaster! Welcome heartily."

"Heigh-ho" indicated fatigue.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster replied, "I thank your grace. Sweet Nell, we are well met. This is a good meeting."

Referring to her baby boy, Queen Eleanor said, "Brother Edmund, here's a kinsman of yours. You must be acquainted with him."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster was the boy's uncle and Queen Eleanor's brother-in-law.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster replied, "A splendid boy. God bless him!"

He said to the baby boy, "Give me your hand, sir. You are welcome into Wales."

He put his finger on one of the boy's palms, and the boy's fingers curled around it.

Queen Eleanor said, "Brother, there's a fist, I promise you, that will hold a mace as tightly as ever did his father or grandfather before him."

The boy's father and grandfather, of course, were King Edward I and Edward I's father, King Henry III.

King Edward I said:

"But tell me now, wrapped in lily bands [white cloth],

"How with my Queen and my lovely boy it stands,

"After your journey and these childbed pains?"

He was asking how his wife and son were. Queen Eleanor had undergone a rigorous journey and had recently given birth.

Queen Eleanor replied:

"Sick, my own Ned, is your Nell for your company;

"You who lured her with your lies all so far,

"To follow you unwieldy [awkwardly] in your war."

Queen Eleanor had to be told by Gloucester why her husband had required her to come to Wales: He wanted their son to be born in Wales and thereby become eligible to be Prince of Wales and rule Wales.

She continued:

"But I forgive you, Ned, my life's delight.

"So long as you see that your young son will be bravely dight [finely dressed],

"And in Carnarvon christened royally.

"Sweet love, let him be lapped [wrapped] most curiously [handsomely]:

"He is thine own, as true as he is mine;

"Take order, then, that he be passing fine."

"Passing fine" meant "surpassingly finely dressed."

King Edward I replied:

"My lovely lady, let that care be your least:

"For my young son the country will I feast,

“And have him borne [carried] as bravely [splendidly dressed] to the font [baptismal fountain]

“As ever yet King’s son to christening went.

“Lack thou no precious thing to comfort thee,

“[Thou who are d]earer than England’s diadem to me.”

Queen Eleanor replied, “Thanks, gentle lord.”

She then said:

“Nurse, rock the cradle: fie [bah, or darn it],

“The King so near, and he hear the boy cry.

“Joan, take him up, and sing a lullaby.”

Joan, her daughter, picked up the boy and soothed him.

King Edward I said, “It is well, believe me, girl. Thank you, Joan!”

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “She learns, my lord, to lull a young one of her own.”

Queen Eleanor requested, “Give me something to drink.”

King Edward I replied:

“Drink nectar, my sweet Nell,

“You who are worthy for a seat in Heaven with Jove to dwell.”

Nectar is the drink of the gods, and Jove, aka Jupiter, is the King of the gods.

Queen Eleanor drank and said, “Thank you, Ned. Now, I remember; I have a suit — a request — to ask of you, sweet lord, and you must not deny it.”

“Where’s my Lord of Gloucester, good Clare [Gloucester’s family name], my host, my guide?”

Gloucester had guided her during the trip to Wales.

“Good Ned, let Joan of Acre be his bride.

“Assure yourself that they are thoroughly wooed.”

She was reassuring the King that this was not a sudden passion; Gloucester had been wooing Joan for a long time.

Gloucester said to himself, “May God send the King an agreeable mood!”

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “Then, niece, it is likely that you shall have a husband.”

King Edward I said, "Come here, Gloucester. Now, give her your hand. Take her, sole daughter to the Queen of England."

Joan and Gloucester held hands.

King Edward I said:

"For the news he brought, Nell, of my young son,
"I promised him as much as I have done."

It was Gloucester who had ridden to Northampton to give him the good news that he was the father of a son in Wales. Edward had promised to reward the messenger who brought him good news, and he was now fulfilling his promise.

Still holding hands, Gloucester and Joan said, "We humbly thank your majesty."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "May much joy fall to them. A gallant bridegroom and a princely bride!"

King Edward I said, "Now say, sweet Queen, what does my lady crave? Tell me what name this young Welshman shall have, who was born Prince of Wales by Cambria's full consent?"

Of course, *Cambria* is another name for *Wales*. The Welsh name for the country is *Cymru*, and *Cambria* is its Latinized form.

Queen Eleanor replied, "Edward is the name that makes me well content."

"Then Edward of Carnarvon shall he be," King Edward I said, "and Prince of Wales, christened in royalty."

Seeing that Queen Eleanor looked tired, Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "My lord, I think the Queen would like to take a nap."

Joan said, "Nurse, take the child, and hold him in your lap."

King Edward I said, "Farewell, good Joan. Take care of my Queen.

"Sleep, Nell, the fairest swan my eyes have seen."

They closed the tent opening, and Sussex exited.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said to the King, "I forgot to ask your majesty what do you intend to do about the rebels here in Wales?"

King Edward I said, "I intend to do what Kings do with rebels, Mun; our right prevails."

"Mun" was his nickname for Edmund Duke of Lancaster.

King Edward I continued, "We have good Robin Hood and Little John, the Friar and the good Maid Marian. Why, our Llewelyn is a mighty man."

He was aware that the Welsh rebels were living in the mountains.

"Trust me, my lord," Gloucester said, "I think it would be very good if some good fellows went and scoured the wood, and made it their task to beat Robin Hood. I think the Friar, for all his lusty looks, and Robin's rabble with their glaives and hooks would be quickly driven to the nooks."

"Glaives and hooks" are pole-weapons. At the end of a glaive is a blade. At the end of a Welsh hook is a curved blade and a spike.

Sir David said, "I can assure your highness of what I know: The false, traitorous Llewelyn will not run nor go, nor will that proud rebel called Little John, nor will they give an inch of ground, come man for man, to him who wields the weightiest sword of England."

He was saying that the Welsh would fight ferociously, something that Gloucester disagreed with.

Gloucester said, "Welshman, how will you speak so that we understand?"

The words he would understand were words that praised the English side and dispraised the rebels.

He continued:

"But what you say about Llewelyn, David, I deny.

"England has men who will make Llewelyn fly [flee],

"Maugre [Despite] his beard, and hide him in a hole,

"Weary of England's dints and manly dole."

“Maugre his beard” means “despite his manliness” or “despite what he can do.”

“Dints” are blows and “dole” is the giving of something — in this case, it is the giving of blows.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “Gloucester, don’t be so angry that you make every argument a defense of England’s honor.”

King Edward I said, “By Gis, fair lords, before many days have passed, England shall give this Robin Hood his breakfast.”

“By Gis” is an oath using a euphemistic pronunciation of “Jesus.”

Llewelyn’s “breakfast” would be defeat.

King Edward I then said, “Sir David, friend, keep what I say secret if I use your skill. You know the way to where this proud Robin and his yeomen roam.”

He wanted to ambush Llewelyn and the other rebels in their mountain camp. He trusted Sir David enough to tell him secrets and to use Sir David’s knowledge.

“I do, my lord,” Sir David said, “and I can run blindfold there.”

“Sir David, enough,” King Edward I said. “As I am a gentleman, I’ll have one merry flirt with Little John, and Robin Hood, and his Maid Marian.

“Be thou my counsel and my company,

“And thou may the King of England’s resolution see.”

The Earl of Sussex returned and said, “May it please your majesty, here are four good squires of the cantreds where they do dwell, come in the name of the whole country to congratulate your highness on all your good fortunes, and by me offer their most humble service to your young son, their Prince, whom they most heartily beseech God to bless with long life and honor.”

A squire’s rank is just below that of a knight.

These Welsh squires were also called barons.

Cantreds are geographical units consisting of a hundred townships.

King Edward I replied, "Well said, Sussex. Please tell them to come near."

Sussex exited.

King Edward I said, "Sir David, trust me, this is kindly done by your countrymen."

Sir David said to himself, "They are villains, traitors to the ancient glory and renown of Cambria!"

Sussex returned with the four barons of Wales. He carried a blanket made of coarse wool. The barons knelt.

Recognizing two of them, Sir David said to himself, "Morris Vaughan, are you there? And you, proud Lord of Anglesey?"

The first Welsh baron said, "The poor country of Cambria, by us unworthy messengers, congratulates your majesty on the birth of your young son, Prince of Wales, and in this poor gift express their most zealous duty and affection, which with all humbleness we present to your highness' sweet and sacred hands."

The gift was the blanket.

King Edward I said, "Thank you, barons, for your gifts and good-wills. By this means my boy shall wear a mantle of the Welsh people's weaving to keep him warm, and so my boy shall live for England's honor and Cambria's good. I shall not need, I trust, courteously to invite you to the christening."

He meant that they should already know that they were welcome.

He continued, "I don't doubt, lords, that you will be all in readiness to wait on your young Prince, and do him honor at his christening."

The Earl of Sussex said, "The whole country of Cambria round about, all well-horsed and attended on, both men and women in their best array, have come down to do service of

love and honor to our recently born Prince, your majesty's son and heir.

"The men and women of Snowdon especially have sent in a great abundance of cattle and corn, enough by computation to feed your highness' household a whole month and more."

King Edward I said, "We thank them all, and we will present our Queen with these courtesies and presents bestowed on her young son, and greatly account you as our friends."

The four Welsh barons exited.

The Queen's tent opened, and the King, his brother Edmund Duke of Lancaster, and the Earl of Gloucester entered.

Queen Eleanor asked, "Who is talking there?"

"A friend, madam," King Edward I answered.

Joan said, "Madam, it is the King."

"Welcome, my lord," Queen Eleanor said. "Heigh-ho, what have we there?"

She was looking at the woolen blanket.

Using the royal plural, King Edward I said, "Madam, the Welsh people, in all kindness and duty, recommend their service and good-will to your son, and in token of their pure good-will present to him by us a blanket made of frieze, richly lined to keep him warm."

Frieze is coarse wool cloth.

Queen Eleanor said, "A blanket made of frieze! Bah! Bah! For God's sake, let me hear no more of it, if you love me. Bah, my lord! Is this the wisdom and kindness of the Welsh people?"

"Now I commend me to them all, and if Wales have no more wit or manners than to clothe a King's son in frieze, I have a blanket in store for my boy that shall, I think, make him shine like the Sun, and perfume the streets where he comes."

She wanted their son to be clothed in expensive fabric, but wool is a warm fabric and in cold weather warm fabric is better than not-warm expensive fabric.

King Edward I said, "In good time, madam — he is your own, so wrap him as you wish, but I promise you, Nell, I would not for ten thousand pounds want the Welsh people to take unkindness at your words."

The Welsh people would be insulted by Queen Eleanor's rejection of their gift to her son.

Queen Eleanor replied, "It is no wonder, I am sure: You have been royally received at their hands.

"No, Ned, your Nell can't do as she wishes. If she could, her boy would glisten like the summer's Sun in robes as rich as those of Jove when he triumphs. His baby food would be made of precious nectar, and his food would be ambrosia — no earthly woman's milk for him.

"Sweet fires of cinnamon would warm him. The goddesses known as the three Graces would attend on his cradle, Venus would make his bed and wait on him, and Phoebus' daughter would always sing him asleep."

Phoebus Apollo's only daughter was Parthenos, who became the constellation Virgo after an early death. Her mother was Chrysothemis. "Parthenos" means "the virgin."

Queen Eleanor continued:

"Thus would I have my boy treated as divine,

"Because he is King Edward's son and mine:

"And do you mean to wrap him up in a blanket made of frieze?

"For God's sake store it away charily — carefully — and perfume it in readiness for winter; it will make him a goodly warm Christmas coat."

Her instructions to perfume the frieze blanket may mean that to her it stank.

King Edward I said to Edmund Duke of Lancaster, "Ah, Mun, my brother, dearer than my life, how this proud, arrogant temperament slays my heart with grief!"

He wanted his son to rule Wales. A Queen who infuriated the Welsh people could make that unlikely to happen.

He continued, “Sweet Queen, how much I pity the effects — the consequences that can follow your words! This Spanish pride agrees not with England’s King, who dislikes it.

“Mild is the mind where honor builds his bower,

“And yet is earthly honor but a flower.”

Earthly honor doesn’t last long.

He continued, “Fast to those looks are all my fancies tied,

“Pleased with your sweetness, angry with your pride.”

Much of his pleasure and displeasure in life came from his Queen. When she was sweet, he felt pleasure. When she was proud and arrogant, as now, he felt anger.

Queen Eleanor said, “Bah! Bah!

“I think that I am not where I should be,

“Or at the least I am not where I would be.”

She would prefer not to be in Wales.

King Edward I asked, “What does my Queen lack that would make perfect her contentment? Only ask for it and you will have it. The King will not repent his words: You will get what you ask for.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Thanks, gentle Edward.

“Lords, have at you, then!

“Have at you all, long-bearded Englishmen!

“Have at you, lords and ladies, when I crave

“To give your English pride a Spanish brave.”

“Have at you!” were words spoken at the beginning of a fight.

A “brave” is an act of defiance or an insult.

King Edward I asked, “What does my Queen mean?”

Gloucester thought to himself, *This is a Spanish fit.*

Queen Eleanor said, “Ned, you have granted this to me, and you cannot revoke it.”

King Edward I replied, "Sweet Queen, speak on. My word shall be my deed."

Queen Eleanor said, "Then shall my words make many a bosom bleed.

"Read, Ned, your Queen's request enclosed up in rhyme,
"And say your Nell had skill to choose her time."

She had chosen her time well — a time when her husband must grant to her what she wanted or go back on his word to her. That she had written the note ahead of time indicated that she had prepared for when that time would come.

Queen Eleanor gave King Edward I a piece of paper.

King Edward I read out loud:

"The pride of Englishmen's long hair

"Is more than England's Queen can bear:

"Women's right breasts, cut them off all;

"And let the great tree perish with the small."

The last line may mean: Let the great and not-great people of England be humiliated.

King Edward I then asked her, "What means my lovely Eleanor by this?"

Queen Eleanor replied, "I mean not to be denied, for it is my request."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "Gloucester, this is an often-said old saying:

"He who grants all that is asked,

"Is much harder than Hercules tasked."

Gloucester said to himself:

"If the King were as mad as the Queen is wood,

"Here would be an end of England's good."

The words "mad" and "wood" both meant "insane."

King Edward I said:

"I gave her my word — I am well agreed.

"Let men's beards molt and women's bosoms bleed!

"Call forth my barbers! Lords, we'll first begin."

He used the royal we to say that he would be the first to have his beard shaved off.

Two barbers entered and King Edward I said:

“Come, sirrah, cut me close to the chin,

“And round me even, see that thou do, by a dish.

“Leave not a lock: my Queen shall have her wish.”

This sounds as if the King would also get a bowl haircut in addition to having his beard cut off.

Queen Eleanor said:

“What, Ned, those locks that always pleased your Nell,

“Where her desire, where her delight does dwell!

“Will you deface that silver labyrinth,

“More brilliant than purpled hyacinth?

“Sweet Ned, your sacred person ought not droop,

“Though my command makes other gallants stoop.”

In other words, her orders did not apply to him. She was willing to humiliate noblemen, but she would allow her husband to keep his beard and long hair because she liked it. Of course, she was not willing to cut off her own right breast, although she was willing to make English ladies do that.

King Edward I replied:

“Madam, pardon me and pardon all.

“No justice but the great runs with the small.”

For justice to be justice, rules must apply to the great (the upper class) as well as to the small (the other classes).

He then asked, “Tell me, good Gloucester, aren’t you afeard [afraid]?”

“No, my lord,” Gloucester replied, “but I am resolved to lose my beard.”

King Edward I said to Queen Eleanor:

“Now, madam, if you purpose to proceed

“To make so many guiltless ladies bleed,

“Here must the law begin, sweet Eleanor, at your breast,

“And stretch itself with violence to the rest.

“Else kings ought no other do,

“Fair lady, than they would be done unto.”

This is the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you want to be treated. Do not treat others as you do not want to be treated.”

Queen Eleanor replied, “What logic do you call this? Is Edward mocking his love?”

She did not want her right breast cut off, and she saw nothing wrong with a rule not applying to a Queen although other women had to follow it.

King Edward I said:

“No, Nell; he does as best in honor does behoove.”

In other words, he was behaving as honor demanded.

He continued:

“And he prays to you, gentle Queen — and let my prayers move you to [that is, persuade you to]

“Leave these ungentle thoughts, put on a milder mind;

“Have sweet looks, not lofty — a civil mood becomes a woman’s kind:

“And live, as, being dead and buried in the ground,

“You may for affability and honor be renowned.”

Queen Eleanor said:

“Nay, if you preach, I pray, my lord, be gone:

“The child will cry and trouble you anon [soon].

The Nurse closed the tent.

The Mayoress and the ladies remained outside the tent.

The Mayoress said to herself:

“*Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu.*”

The Latin means, “A jar will long retain the odor of what it was dipped in when new.”

Mayoress Mary was quoting Horace’s *Epistles* (Book 1, Epistle 2, lines 69-70).

She continued speaking to herself:

“Proud incest in the cradle of disdain,”

No biological incest occurred with Queen Eleanor’s parents, so the Mayoress may have regarded her as the offspring of disdain and pride.

She continued:

“Bred up in court of pride, brought up in Spain,
 “Do you command him coyly from your sight,
 “Him who is your star, the glory of your light?”

In this culture, a good wife was a wife who obeyed her husband and who did not cause him unnecessary trouble. But since Queen Eleanor had been badly raised in Spain, according to the Mayoress, Queen Eleanor did not do that.

King Edward I said, “Oh, if only I could with the riches of my crown buy better thoughts for my renowned Nell, your mind, sweet Queen, should be as beautiful as your face, as beautiful as all your features, laden with pure honor’s treasure, and enriched with incomparable virtues and glory.”

He then ordered, “Ladies, look after her majesty. See that the Queen your mistress does not learn what I now tell you.

“At any hand our pleasure is that our young son be borne in this Welsh blanket to his christening because I have special reasons for this. But when he has left the church, he shall be dressed as best it pleases your women’s wits to devise.”

The Mayoress and the ladies went into the tent, but Joan stayed outside.

King Edward I then said, “Yet, sweet Joan, see this faithfully performed — and, listen, daughter, look you be not last up when this day comes, lest Gloucester find another bride in your stead.”

This was gentle joking. The early bird gets the worm, and a woman up earlier than Joan could get Gloucester.

King Edward I said, “David, come with me.”

King Edward and Sir David exited.

Gloucester joked, “She rises early, Joan, whatever woman beguiles you of a Gloucester.”

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said to Joan, “Don’t believe him, sweet niece. Women can speak smoothly to get an advantage.”

In other words, women can be persuasive when it benefits them. This was more gentle joking: He meant that a

woman could steal Gloucester from her through flattering him — without the woman rising early.

Joan joked back, “Do you mean ‘we MEN’ do that, my good uncle? Well, be the accent where it will, women are women.”

Accent the second syllable of the word “women” and MEN is stressed.

Joan continued, “I will believe you for as great a matter as this comes to, my lord.”

In other words, she would act in such a way that she would not lose Gloucester.

Gloucester said, “Thank you, sweet lady, *et habebis fidei mercedem contra.*”

The Latin means, “And you will be rewarded for your faith.”

CHAPTER 11 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XI —**

At Carnorvan Castle in Wales, Jack the novice and his company of musicians arrived to perform music for the Queen at her tent.

Jack the novice said, “Come, fellows, cast yourselves even round in a string — a *ring*, I meant to say. Come merrily on my word, for the Queen is most liberal and generous, and if you will please her well, she will pay you royally. So, la full well to show off your British vigorously to solace our good Queen.”

In English, very many non-verb words can be verbed. “La” is a musical syllable, but Jack used it as a verb meaning “sing.”

Jack the novice continued, “God save her grace, and give our young Prince a carol in their kind!

“Come on, come on, tune your fiddles, and beat your heads together, and behave handsomely.”

Hmm. I think I would prefer to beat my hands together. They played and sang and then exited.

CHAPTER 12 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE XII —

Near the rebel camp on Mannock-deny, Wales, Friar Hugh ap David thought about cheating a farmer out of his money.

He said, “I smell a wallet with my nose this gay morning, and now will I test how clerkly — cleverly — the Friar, by which I mean me, can behave himself.

“It is a common fashion to get gold by saying, ‘Stand, and deliver your purses!’ Friar Davy, however, will once in his days get money by the use of his wit and intelligence.

“There is a rich farmer who should pass this way to receive a round sum of money. If he shall come to me, the money is mine, and the law shall take no advantage of me. I will cut off the law as the hangman would cut a man down when he has shaken his heels half-an-hour under the gallows. Well, I must take some pains for this gold, and let’s get to it!”

Friar Hugh ap David spread part of his gown on the ground, and then he began to throw dice.

The farmer entered the scene and said, “It is an oftensaid old saying. I remember I read it in Cato’s *Pueriles* that *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*; that is, a man penniless may sing before a thief.”

In other words, a man who is penniless is free to go among thieves.

Actually, Leonhard Culmann collected the *Sententiae Pueriles*. The quote, which comes from Juvenal’s Satire X, appears in William Lily’s *Short Introduction to Grammar*.

The farmer continued, “True, as I have not one penny, which makes me so pertly — briskly and brazenly — pass through these thickets. But indeed I am to receive a hundred marks; and all my concern is how I shall pass this way again. Well, I am resolved either to ride twenty miles round about,

or else to be so well accompanied that I will not worry about the rogues who live in this area.”

Friar Hugh ap David pretended to be talking to himself, but he spoke loudly enough for the farmer to hear him: “Did ever any man play with such uncircumcised — that is, heathen — hands? Size-ace to eleven and lose the chance!”

He was pretending to be playing at dice and losing. “Size-ace” is a six and a one on a throw of the dice.

The farmer said, “God speed, good fellow! May God send you success! But why are you so very angry? There’s nobody who will win your money from you.”

Since the Friar was playing dice with himself, he would not lose money. It would simply pass from one of his hands to the other.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “By God’s wounds, you do me injury, sir, when you speak when I cast the dice.”

Surprised, the farmer said to himself, “The Friar undoubtedly is a lunatic.”

He then said, “I ask you, good fellow, to stop raging and to get some warm drink to comfort your brains.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Alas, sir, I am not a lunatic. It is not so well, for I have lost my money, which is far worse. I have lost five gold nobles to Saint Francis; and if I knew where to meet with his receiver, I would pay him immediately.”

A receiver collects money for another person.

The farmer asked, “Do you want to speak with Saint Francis’ receiver?”

“Oh, Lord, yes, sir, very gladly,” Friar Hugh ap David said.

The farmer said, “Why, man, I am Saint Francis’ receiver, if you have any business to do with him.”

Friar Hugh ap David asked, “Are you Saint Francis’ receiver? Jesus, Jesus! Are you Saint Francis’ receiver? And how is he doing?”

“I am his receiver, and I am now going to him,” the farmer said. “He invited Saint Thomas a’ Waterings to a calf’s-head and bacon breakfast this morning.”

St. Francis had died on 3 October 1226. King Edward I had been born in June 1239.

Saint Thomas a’ Waterings is a place, but the farmer was using it as if it were the name of a person to mock Friar Hugh ap David and to test if he were really insane.

“Good Lord, sir,” Friar Hugh ap David said, “I beg you to carry to him these five nobles, and tell him I deal as honestly with him as if he were here present.”

Friar Hugh ap David gave the farmer five nobles.

The farmer replied, “I will do so on my word and honesty, Friar; and so farewell.”

“Farewell, Saint Francis’ receiver, even heartily,” Friar Hugh ap David said.

The farmer exited.

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Well, now the Friar is out of cash five nobles. God knows how he shall come into cash again, but I must go to playing with dice again.”

He threw the dice and said, “There’s nine for your holiness and six for me.”

He was still pretending to play dice with “your holiness” — St. Francis.

Llewelyn, Rice ap Meredith, and Mortimer (still disguised as a potter) entered the scene with some prisoners. They were surviving by hunting and fishing — and by robbing travelers.

“Come on, my hearts,” Llewelyn said. “Bring forth your prisoners, and let us see what supply of fish there is in their purse-nets.”

The fish were coins.

Seeing and hearing Friar Hugh ap David, Llewelyn said, “Friar, why are you raging, man? Here’s nobody who will offer you any foul play, I promise you.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Oh, good master, give me permission to keep on playing. I have been losing money, but I trust I shall recover my losses.”

“The Friar is mad,” Llewelyn said, “but let him alone with his device.”

A device in this context is a plan or plot; Llewelyn guessed that there was a method to the Friar’s “madness.”

He then said, “And now to you, my masters, peddler, priest, and piper. Throw down your wallets in the meanwhile, and when the Friar is at leisure he shall tell you what you must do.”

The peddler said, “Alas, Sir, I have but three pence in the corner of my shoe.”

Rice ap Meredith said, “Never a shoulder of mutton, Piper, in your tabor?”

A tabor is a small drum.

Rice ap Meredith may have meant, “Playing music doesn’t pay well, Piper?”

He then said, “But wait! Here comes company.”

King Edward Longshanks, Sir David, and the farmer entered the scene. King Edward Longshanks and Sir David were disguised as common travelers.

The farmer said, “Alas, gentlemen, if you love yourselves and want to avoid being robbed, do not venture through this mountain passage: Here’s such an uproar with Robin Hood and his rabble that every cross in my purse trembles for fear.”

The coins in his wallet, aka purse, had a cross on one side.

The disguised King Edward I replied, “Honest man, as I said to you before, conduct us through this wood, and if you are robbed or have any violence directed at you, as I am a gentleman, I will repay you again.”

The disguised Sir David asked, “How much money do you have on you?”

“Truly, sir, a hundred marks,” the farmer said. “I received it even now at Brecknock. But, oh, no! We are done for! Yonder is Robin Hood and all the strong thieves in the mountain. I have no hope left but your honor’s assurance that you will repay me for my loss.”

The disguised King Edward I said, “Don’t worry. I will be my word’s master: I will do what I said I would do.”

Friar Hugh ap David said, “Good master, if you love the Friar, help him for a while, I ask of you, and as you like what I am doing, so love him — me — who holds the dice.”

The Friar was asking his master — if the Friar were a Franciscan, that would be St. Francis — for help in cheating the rich farmer. Or he was slyly asking Llewelyn (or the disguised King) for help in cheating the rich farmer. Or both. Or all three.

The farmer asked, “What! Friar, are you still laboring at dice so hard? Will you have anything more to give to Saint Francis?”

“Good Lord, are you here, sweet Saint Francis’ receiver?” Friar Hugh ap David said. “How is his holiness doing, and all his good family?”

As a celibate priest, and saint, St. Francis had no biological children.

“He is in good health, truly, Friar,” the farmer replied. “Do you have any nobles for him?”

Friar Hugh ap David answered, “You know the dice are not biased. If Saint Francis were ten saints, they will favor him no more than they would favor the devil, if he should play at dice. In very truth, my friend, they have favored the Friar, and I have won a hundred marks from Saint Francis. Come, sir; please, sirrah, hand it over: I know, sirrah, he is a good man, and never deceives none.”

“Hand it over!” the farmer said. “What do you mean by that?”

Friar Hugh ap David answered, “Why, *in numeratis pecuniis legem pone.*”

He then loosely translated the Latin: "Pay me my winnings."

"What an ass is this Friar!" the farmer said. "Why should I pay you your winnings?"

Friar Hugh ap David asked, "Why, aren't you, sirrah, Saint Francis' receiver?"

"Indeed, I do receive money for Saint Francis," the farmer replied.

"Then I'll make you pay for Saint Francis, that's certain," Friar Hugh ap David said.

The two men fought.

The farmer shouted, "Help, help! I am robbed, I am robbed!"

The disguised King Edward I said, "Villain, you wrong the man. Hands off!"

Friar Hugh ap David said, "Masters, I beg you to stop this brawling and give me permission to speak. This is how it is. I went to dice with Saint Francis, and lost five nobles. By good fortune, his cashier came by" — he pointed to the farmer — "and received five nobles from me in ready cash. I, being very desirous to try my luck further, played on; and as the dice, not being bound as an apprentice to him or any man (and thus forced to favor him), favored me, I drew a hand and won a hundred marks. Now I refer it to your judgments, whether the Friar is to seek his winnings."

The disguised King Edward I could see that the farmer had attempted to cheat the Friar of five nobles, and so he ruled, "By the Virgin Mary, Friar, the farmer must and shall pay you honestly before he passes by you."

"Shall I, sir?" the farmer said. "Why, will you be content to pay half, as you promised me?"

The disguised King Edward I had promised to repay all the money if the farmer were robbed, but the farmer — being guilty of fraud — would have happily accepted half.

The disguised King Edward I answered, "Aye, farmer, if you had been robbed of it; but if you are a gambler, I'll take no responsibility for your losses."

The farmer said, "Alas, I am ruined!"

The farmer gave Friar Hugh ap David the money and exited.

Llewelyn, who had been quietly watching the scene, said, "So, Sir Friar, now you have gathered up your winnings, I ask you to stand up and give the travelers their orders, so that Robin Hood may receive his toll."

Friar Hugh ap David said, "And I shall, my lord. Our thrice-renowned Llewelyn, Prince of Wales and Robin Hood of the great mountain, wills and commands all passengers, at the sight of my staff Richard, servant to me, Friar David ap Tuck, to lay down their weapons, and quietly to yield, for taxes towards the maintenance of his highness' wars, half of all such gold, silver, money, and valuable possessions, as the said traveler has then about him; and if he conceals any part or parcel of the same, then he shall forfeit all that he possesses at that present. And this sentence is irrevocable, confirmed by our lord Llewelyn, who is Prince of Wales and Robin Hood of the great mountain."

Richard was the name the Friar had given his walking-staff.

Llewelyn said, "So surrender your wallets to Robin of the mountain."

He then said to the disguised King Edward I, "But who are you who disdains to pay this tax, as if you scorn the greatness of the Prince of Wales?"

The disguised King Edward I replied, "Truly, Robin, you seem to be a good fellow. There's my bag of money; half is mine, and half is yours. But let's fight, if you dare, man for man, to see who shall have the whole bag of money. If you win, you get the whole bag of money. If I win, I get the whole bag of money."

Llewelyn said, "Why, you speak as you should speak."

The disguised King Edward I spoke like a man, impressing Llewelyn.

Llewelyn then said to the others present, “My masters, on pain of my displeasure, depart this place, and leave us two to ourselves. I must lop his longshanks, before I’ll ear to a pair of longshanks.”

By “ear,” he meant bow so low that his ears were near his opponent’s long legs.

The disguised King Edward I said, “They are fair marks — valuable coins — sir, and I must defend them as I may.

“Davy, leave.”

Davy was the disguised Sir David.

The disguised King Edward I then said, “Hold here, my hearts. Long-legs gives you this among you to spend blows one with another.”

He threw the moneybag on the ground between Llewelyn and himself. They were the “hearts” who would fight over the money.

Friar Hugh ap David and Rice ap Meredith exited with the prisoners.

Sir David said to himself, “Now Davy’s days have almost come at an end.”

There was a strong possibility that the disguised King Edward I would defeat and kill Llewelyn. If that would happen, Sir David’s life would become harder.

Sir David exited.

Mortimer, still disguised as a potter, said to himself, “But, Mortimer, this sight is strange. Stay out of sight in some corner to see what will happen in this battle.”

He withdrew and watched.

King Edward I removed part of his disguise and said, “Now, Robin of the Wood, alias Robin Hood, be it known to your worship by my words that the longshanks that you aim at have brought the King of England into these mountains to see Llewelyn and to crack a blade with this man who supposes himself to be Prince of Wales.”

King Edward I now regarded his newborn son and not Llewelyn as the lawful Prince of Wales.

“What, Sir King!” Llewelyn said. “Welcome to Cambria. What, foolish Edward, do you dare to endanger yourself to travel in these mountains? Are you so foolhardy as to combat with the Prince of Wales?”

King Edward I said, “What I dare, you can see for yourself; what I can perform, you shall shortly know. I think you are a gentleman, and therefore I do not scorn to fight with you.”

Gentlemen were willing to fight each other, but they would refuse to fight a lowly born man.

Llewelyn said, “Edward, I am as good a man as yourself.”

“That I shall try and test if it is really so,” King Edward I said.

They fought. Sir David returned and fought on the side of his brother Llewelyn. Seeing that, Mortimer fought on the King’s side.

Seeing Sir David, King Edward I said, “Hallo, Edward! How are your senses confounded!”

He then said, “What, Davy, is it possible that you are false and disloyal to the King of England?”

Sir David, who had been spying for his brother Llewelyn while pretending to be loyal to King Edward I, said, “Edward, I am true to Wales, and I have been friends with Wales since my birth, and that shall the King of England know to his cost.”

Llewelyn said to the still-disguised Mortimer, “What, potter, didn’t I order you to be gone with your fellows?”

Removing part of his disguise, Mortimer said, “Traitor, I am no potter. I am Mortimer, the Earl of March, whose purpose in coming to these woods is to deceive you and take away from you your love: Lady Eleanor. And I held myself ready to save my sovereign’s life.”

“Upon them, brother!” Sir David said to Llewelyn. “Let them not rest.”

All four men fought.

King Edward defeated Llewelyn and had him at his mercy, and Sir David defeated Mortimer and had him at his mercy.

King Edward I said to Llewelyn, “Villain, you die! God and my right have prevailed.”

Sir David said to Mortimer, “Base Earl! Now David triumphs in your overthrow.”

He then looked at King Edward I and Llewelyn and said, “Damn! Llewelyn is at the feet of Longshanks!”

King Edward I looked at Mortimer and Sir David and said, “What! Mortimer is under the sword of such a traitor!”

Willing to die for his King, Mortimer said, “Brave King, run your sword up to the hilts into the blood of the rebel Llewelyn.”

King Edward I replied, “Oh, Mortimer, your life is dearer to me than millions of rebels!”

“Edward, release my brother, and Mortimer lives,” Sir David said.

King Edward I replied, “Aye, villain, you know too well how dearly I regard my Mortimer.”

He said to Llewelyn, “Rise, man, and assure yourself that the hate I bear to you is love in comparison to the deadly hatred I bear to that notorious rebel — your brother, Sir David.”

Mortimer said to King Edward I, “Let’s leave! His sight to me is like the sight of a cockatrice.”

A cockatrice is a mythological monster that can kill someone by looking at him or her.

Mortimer said to Sir David, “Villain, I go to revenge myself on your treason, and to make you an example to the world of mountainous treason, falsehood, and ingratitude.”

King Edward I and Mortimer exited.

Sir David said, "Brother, he chafes, but hard was your luck to be overmastered by the coward."

"He is no coward, David," Llewelyn said. "His courage is similar to the courage of a lion, and were it not that rule and sovereignty set us against each other, I could love and honor the man for his valor."

"But the potter!" Sir David said about Mortimer. "Oh, the villain will never go out of my mind while I live! He will never leave my thoughts, and I will devise a way to be revenged on his villainy."

Llewelyn replied, "Well, David, what will be shall be; therefore, casting these matters out of our heads, David, I say that you are welcome to Cambria. Let us go in and be merry after this cold cooling, and let us prepare to strengthen ourselves against the latest threats."

CHAPTER 13 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XIII —**

At Carnarvon Castle in Wales, the newborn baby had been christened Edward, and Gloucester and Joan had been married. Heralds were present, and two noblemen — Edmund Duke of Lancaster and the Earl of Sussex — attended on Joan. A Bishop was also present.

Gloucester said, “Welcome, Joan, Countess of Gloucester, to Gilbert de Clare forever!”

The name of the Earl of Gloucester was Gilbert de Clare.

The Earl of Sussex said, “God give them joy!

“Cousin Gloucester, let us now go visit the King and Queen, and present their majesties with their young son: Edward Prince of Wales.”

They went to King Edward I’s pavilion; the King was sitting in his tent, with his pages present.

The Bishop said, “We here present your highness most humbly with your young son: Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales.”

Trumpets sounded.

All said, “God save Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales.”

King Edward I said, “Edward, Prince of Wales, God bless you with long life and honor!”

He kissed his son.

He said to Joan, “Welcome, Joan, Countess of Gloucester! God bless you and yours forever!”

He kissed her.

He then said, “Lords, let us visit my Queen and wife, whom we will at once present with a son and daughter honored to her desire.”

Trumpets sounded, and they marched to Queen Eleanor’s chamber. She lay in her bed.

The Bishop said, “We humbly present your majesty with your young son, Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales.”

Trumpets sounded.

All present said, "God save Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales."

Queen Eleanor kissed the Prince and said, "Many thanks, Bishop."

She gave him a purse of money and said, "Here, take that to buy yourself a rochet."

A rochet is an ecclesiastical vestment that Bishops wear.

She said to her son, "Welcome, Welshman."

She then said, "Here, nurse, open the front of his clothing and hold him close to the fire to warm him, for God's sake; they have touzled him, and they have washed him thoroughly by dunking him in the baptismal fount, and that is good."

"To touzel" means "to handle roughly."

She then said:

"And welcome, Joan, Countess of Gloucester! God bless you with long life, honor, and heart's-ease!

"I am now as good as my word, Earl of Gloucester: She is yours. Make much of her, gentle Earl.

King Edward I said, "Now, my sweet Nell, what more commands my Queen, so that nothing may be lacking to make perfect her contentment?"

"Nothing, sweet Ned," Queen Eleanor said, "but please, my King, feast the lords and ladies royally."

She said to the people around her, "And thanks a thousand times, good men and women, to you all for this duty and honor done to your Prince."

King Edward I said to Gloucester, "Master bridegroom, by old custom this is your waiting-day."

This was his day to wait on and attend to his new wife.

King Edward I then said:

"Brother Edmund, revel it now or never for honor of your England's son.

"Gloucester, now, like a splendid bridegroom, marshal this group of people, and set these lords and ladies to

dancing; so shall you fulfill the old English proverb, ‘It is merry in hall when beards wag all.’”

The beards would waggle with laughter.

The lords and ladies danced, and then they, with the King and Queen, sat down.

Versses entered the scene with a halter — a noose — around his neck. He was delivering the message from King John Baliol of Scotland.

Recognizing Versses, King Edward I asked, “What tidings does Versses bring to our court?”

Versses replied, “Tidings to make you tremble, English King.”

“Me tremble, boy!” King Edward I said. “No news from Scotland can even once make English Edward stand aghast.”

Versses said, “Baliol has chosen at this time to stir — to rouse himself like a lion and cast off the yoke that the Scots ingloriously have borne from you and all the predecessors of your line. And he will make his inroads into your country to re-obtain his right to rule autonomously, and for his homage to you, he sends you this despite.”

The “despite” was the noose Versses was wearing, in addition to the words of defiance.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “Why, how is it now, princox! Do thou prate to a King?”

The word “princox” means “impertinent fellow.”

Versses said, “I deliver my message truly from my King. This sword and target [small shield] chide and reprove in louder terms. I bring defiance from King John Baliol of Scotland to English Edward and all his barons.”

King Edward I said, “By the Virgin Mary, so I think, thou defy me with a vengeance.”

Versses said, “Baliol, my King, in Berwick makes his court. His military camp he spreads upon the sandy plain and dares you to come to battle as is his right.”

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “What! Court and camp in Englishmen’s despite?”

King Edward I said to Versses, “Wait, messenger: Commend me to your King: Wear around your neck my gold chain, and carry this message to him.”

The gold chain was a valuable gift. The chain was a necklace that could be worn with honor by males.

King Edward I then told Versses the message: “Greet all his rout of rebels, both greater and lesser in social status. Tell them such shameful end will hit them all: They will all be hanged. Proceed with this message as resolutely back as thou brought to England your Scottish insults.

“Tell Baliol, then, disdainfully from us that we’ll rouse him from his hold, and make him soon dislodge his camp and we will capture his walled town.

“Say what I bid you to say, Versses, to his teeth and to his face, and earn this favor and a better thing.”

By delivering the message, Versses would earn the gold chain. A “better thing” could be the favor of King Edward I. That favor could be valuable indeed once the Scottish forces were defeated.

Versses, who had delivered the defiant Scottish message under duress, replied, “Yes, King of England, whom my heart beloves: Know that as I promised John Baliol to bravely defy you here, so shall I deliver to John Baliol this challenge from you. I shall bid him base from you.”

He was referring to a children’s game called Prisoner’s Bars or Prisoners’ Base. Children would divide into two teams, and members of one team would try to catch and imprison members of the other team who ventured out of their home base, aka home territory. “To bid base” meant “to challenge to a pursuit.” Baliol had challenged King Edward I basely, and now King Edward I was returning the challenge and the insult.

King Edward I said, “So shall thou earn my chain and favor, Versses. And carry to him this token — the noose — that thou delivered.”

Versses exited.

King Edward I said, "Why, now is England's harvest ripe."

He was looking forward to fighting the Scots.

He continued, "Barons, now may you reap the rich renown and fame that under warlike colors springs in the battlefield, and grows where banners wave upon the plains."

By fighting bravely in battles where colorful banners waved, the barons could gain a reputation for bravery.

King Edward I then said, "False, disloyal Baliol, Berwick is no proven stronghold that will shroud you from the strength of Edward's arm. No, Scot; your treason's fear shall make the breach for England's pure renown to enter in."

He believed that Berwick would definitely fall to the English army.

All present shouted, "At full speed, fall upon these treacherous Scots! At full speed, say all, fall upon these treacherous Scots!"

King Edward I said, "While we with Edmund, Gloucester, and the rest, with speedy journeys gather up our forces, and beat these insulting Scots away from England's boundaries, you, Mortimer, shall take the rebels in task who revel here and spoil fair Cambria. You will quell the rebellion here in Wales.

"My Queen, when she is strong and able to walk readily, shall travel to London and remain and refresh herself there.

"Then God shall send us happily all to meet, and enjoy the honors of our victories.

"Take the advantage of our foes and see the time, keep always our stronghold, our fight is yet on the plain.

"Baliol, I come — proud Baliol and ingrate —

"Prepared to chase your men from England's gate."

CHAPTER 14 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XIV —**

Baliol and his train of attendants were at Berwick.

Comparing his listeners to oxen, Baliol said, “Princes of Scotland and my loving friends, whose necks are exhausted with the yoke of and servile bondage to these Englishmen, lift up your horns, and with your strong hoofs kick at the honor of your enemies. It is not ambitious thoughts of private rule that have forced your King to take on him these arms: It is our country’s cause; it is the common good of us and of our brave posterity. To arms! To arms!

“Versses by this time has told King Edward I our minds, and he has defied proud England to the utmost. We will remunerate Versses’ resolution with gold, with glory, and with kingly gifts.”

The First Lord said, “By sweet Saint Jerome, Versses will not spare anything when telling his message to the English King, and he will beard the jolly Longshanks to his face, even if Longshanks were the greatest monarch in the world.”

To figuratively “beard” a man was to insult him. The literal meaning was to pull another man’s beard.

The First Lord continued, “And here Versses comes. His noose makes him hasten here.”

Versses entered the scene.

Versses said to Baliol, “Long live my lord, the rightful King of Scots.”

Baliol replied, “Welcome, Versses! What is the news from England? Is it similar — defiant — to the message that Scotland’s King — me — sent the King of England?”

Referring to himself in the third person, Versses said, “Versses, my lord, speaking terms appropriate to himself, like to the messenger of the Scottish King, defied the peers of England and her lords, so that all his barons trembled at my threats, and Longshanks himself, just as daunted and

amazed, gazed on my face, not knowing what to say, until rousing up he shook his threatening hair.

“‘Versses,’ said he, ‘take for yourself King Edward’s chain, upon condition that you take a message to Baliol, false perjured Baliol’ — for in these terms he told me to greet your grace, and he gave this noose to your excellence. I took the chain, and I give your grace the rope. “

Angry, Baliol said, “You took the chain, and you give my grace the rope!”

He ordered, “Lay hold of him and arrest him.”

He then said to Versses, “Why, miscreate recreant — misshapen traitor — do you dare to bring a noose to your King? But I will reward your pains, and in that chain upon a silver gallows shall you hang, so that honored with a golden rope of England, and a silver gibbet of Scotland, you may hang in the air for fowls to feed upon, and men to wonder at.”

Once dead, the hanged man would stay hanging from the noose for several days.

Baliol ordered, “Away with him! Take him away!”

CHAPTER 15 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XV —**

Somewhere in Wales, Mortimer and his soldiers were pursuing the rebels.

Mortimer shouted, “Strike up that drum!

“Follow, pursue, and chase!

“Follow, pursue!

“Spare not the proudest man who havocs and lays waste to England’s sacred royalty!”

War trumpets sounded.

CHAPTER 16 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XVI —**

At Carnarvon Castle in Wales, Queen Eleanor was alone. She said to herself, "Now is a suitable time to purge our melancholy and be revenged upon this London dame."

The London dame was Mary, the Mayoress of London.

Queen Eleanor called for her attendant: "Katherina!"

Katherine entered the room and said, "I am here, madam."

Queen Eleanor ordered, "Bring our Mayoress here."

Katherine said, "I will, madam."

She exited.

Queen Eleanor said to herself, "Now, Nell, think of some tortures for the dame and then purge your anger to the utmost."

The Mayoress returned with Katherine.

Queen Eleanor said, "Now, Mistress Mayoress, you have asked to attend on me, and therefore to reward your courtesy, our mind is to bestow an office on you immediately."

The office was a job with a title.

The Mayoress replied politely, "I myself, my life, and my service, mighty Queen, are humbly at your majesty's command."

Queen Eleanor said, "Then, Mistress Mayoress, say whether you will be our nurse or our laundress?"

As nurse, the Mayoress would expect to take care of baby Edward Prince of Wales.

If the Mayoress were lactating, she could be a wet nurse to baby Edward: She could breastfeed him.

The Mayoress said, "Then may it please your majesty to employ your handmaid — your servant, me — as your nurse. She will attend the cradle carefully."

Queen Eleanor replied, "Oh, no, nurse; the babe needs no great rocking — it can lull itself."

She ordered, "Katherina, bind her in the chair, and let me see how she will become a nurse."

Katherina bound the Mayoress to the chair.

"Good," Queen Eleanor said. "Now, Katherine, draw forth her breast, and let the serpent suck his fill."

Katherina uncovered the Mayoress' breast, took a poisonous snake from a basket, and applied it to the Mayoress' breast.

"Why, good," Queen Eleanor said. "Now she is a nurse."

She then said to the poisonous snake, "Suck on, sweet babe."

The Mayoress pleaded:

"Ah, Queen, sweet Queen, seek not my blood to spill,

"For I shall die before this adder have his fill!"

Queen Eleanor said, "Whether you die or don't die, my mind is fully pleased."

She then ordered:

"Come, Katherina. To London now will we,

"And leave our Mayoress with her nursery."

Katherine said, "Farewell, sweet Mayoress, look after the babe."

Queen Eleanor and Katherine exited.

The Mayoress of London said, "Farewell, proud Queen, the author of my death, the scourge of England and the scourge to English dames!

"Ah, husband, sweet John Bearmber, Mayor of London, ah, if you knew how your wife Mary is perplexed, soon would you come to Wales, and rid me of this pain.

"But, oh, I die! My wish is all in vain."

She died.

CHAPTER 17 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XVII —**

At Irfon Bridge in Wales, Llewelyn was running away from Mortimer and the English soldiers.

He said, "The angry heavens frown on Britain's woe to eclipse the glory of fair Cambria. With sour aspects the dreadful planets frown."

The stars were against Llewelyn, and his luck was bad.

He continued:

"Llewelyn, shall you basely turn your back and fly [flee]?"

"No, Welshmen fight it out to the last and die.

"For if my men safely have got the bride, heedless of fortune, I'll take no notice of any bad event.

"England's broad womb hasn't got that armed band of soldiers who can expel Llewelyn from his land."

As long as his bride — Lady Eleanor — was safe, he could bear whatever bad fortune came his way.

Sir David, running from the English soldiers, entered the scene. He was carrying a noose and was ready to hang himself.

He said, "Flee, Lord of Cambria! Flee, Prince of Wales! Sweet brother, flee! The battlefield is won by the English and lost by us! You are beset by England's furious troops, and cursed Mortimer, like a lion, leads them. Our men have gotten the bridge, but all in vain. The Englishmen are now upon our backs. Either flee or die, for Edward has won the day.

"As for me, I have my rescue in my hand. England shall inflict no torments on me.

"Farewell, Llewelyn, until we meet in Heaven."

Sir David exited, and four English soldiers entered the scene.

The First Soldier ordered, "Follow, pursue!"

Seeing but not recognizing Llewelyn, he said, "Lie there, whoever you are."

He killed Llewelyn with a pike-staff.

Looking closer at Llewelyn, he said, "But wait, my hearts!"

His "hearts" were his fellow soldiers.

He added, "Let us his countenance see. This is the Prince: Llewelyn. I know him by his face.

"Oh, gracious fortune that made me so fortunate to spoil the weed that chokes fair Cambria! Drag him away from here, and in this bushy wood bury his corpse; but as for his head, I vow I will present our governor — Mortimer — with it."

The head was proof of Llewelyn's death. As the soldier who had killed Llewelyn, English's enemy, the First Soldier would receive a rich reward.

CHAPTER 18 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE XVIII —

Near Irfon Bridge in Wales, Friar Hugh ap David stood. He had placed a noose about his neck.

He said to his pike-staff, "Come, my gentle Richard, my true servant, that in some storms have stood by your master. May you hang, I plead to you, lest I hang for you."

Friar Hugh ap David knew that the Welsh had lost the battle and that Mortimer, if he wished not to be merciful, could hang many Welshmen, including himself. Therefore, he was retiring from warfare and hanging up his weapon — his pike-staff — as knights did when they grew old and retired from warfare.

He said to himself, "Hang up your pike-staff and go down on your knee marrowbones, like a foolish fellow who has gone far astray, and ask forgiveness from God and King Edward for playing the hell-raiser and the rebel here in Wales."

He continued, "Ah, gentle Richard, many a hot breakfast have we been at together!"

The hot breakfasts were hot fights.

He continued, "And now since, like one of the frozen-by-age knights of Mars, god of war, I must hang my weapon upon this tree, and come *per misericordiam* — appealing to pity — to the mad potter Mortimer, wring your hands, Friar, and sing a pitiful farewell to your pike-staff at parting."

Old soldiers often hung their weapons in a church as a votive offering.

Friar Hugh ap David sang his farewell to his pike-staff, hung it on a tree branch, and then exited.

CHAPTER 19 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XIX —**

Near Irfon Bridge, Wales, the victorious Mortimer stood with his soldiers, including the soldier who had killed Llewelyn. Sir David was held captive. In addition, Lady Eleanor was in the custody of the English.

Mortimer ordered, “Bind fast the traitor — Sir David — and take him away so that the law may justly pass sentence upon him, and so that he may receive the reward of monstrous treasons and villainy, stain to the name and honor of his noble country!”

He said to the soldier who had killed Llewelyn, “The King shall reward your fortune and chivalry.”

He then said to Lady Eleanor, “Sweet lady, don’t hang your head and so heavenly looks down to the ground. God and the King of England have honor for you in store, and Mortimer’s heart is at your service and at your commandment.”

Lady Eleanor replied, “Thanks, gentle lord; but, alas, who can blame Eleanor for accusing her stars and lamenting her bad fortune, Eleanor who in one hour has lost both honor and happiness?”

Mortimer said, “And in one hour your ladyship may recover both, if you permit yourself to be advised by your friends.”

Friar Hugh ap David, still wearing the noose, which was an acknowledgement that Mortimer had power of life and death over him, entered the scene and knelt before Mortimer.

Mortimer asked, “But what is the Friar doing here, kneeling upon his knee marrowbones?”

Friar Hugh ap David pleaded:

“Oh, potter, potter, the Friar does sue,

“Now his old master is slain and gone, to have a new.”

The Friar wanted to serve King Edward I (thus saving his life) now that Llewelyn was dead.

Lady Eleanor said to herself, "Ah, sweet Llewelyn, how your death I rue!"

"Well said, Friar!" Mortimer said. "Better once than never. Give me your hand."

Mortimer raised the Friar from his kneeling position, thereby showing that he would grant the request.

He then said, "My cunning shall fail me, but we will be fellows yet; and now that Robin Hood is gone, it shall cost me hot water but you shall be King Edward's man."

Mortimer was joking that his being merciful to the Friar might get him in hot water.

He added, "Only I make this restriction on you — come not too near the fire, but, good Friar, be at my hand."

In this culture, "fire" could mean "vagina."

Mortimer was telling Friar Hugh ap David not to come too near Lady Eleanor.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, "Oh, sir; no, sir, it will not be so, sir. He — I — was warned about that very recently. I love none of that flesh."

Mortimer said, "Come on. And for those who have made their submission and given their names, in the King's name I pronounce their pardons; and so God save King Edward I."

CHAPTER 20 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XX —**

At Charing Green, a village west of London, Queen Eleanor and Joan stood. Thunder sounded and lightning flashed.

Queen Eleanor said, “Why, Joan, is this the welcome that the clouds give us? How dare these disturb our thoughts, knowing that I am Edward’s wife and England’s Queen, here thus to threaten me on Charing Green?”

Joan said, “Ah, mother, don’t blaspheme so! Your blaspheming and other wicked deeds have caused our God to terrify your thoughts. And call to mind your sinful deed committed against the Mayoress here of lovely London. A better Mayoress of London was never bred — she was so full of mercy and pity to the poor. Her you have made away with and killed, and so London cries for vengeance on your head.”

Queen Eleanor said, “I did not get rid of her; I did not kill her. By Heaven I swear, those who say I killed the Mayoress are traitors to Edward and to England’s Queen.”

Joan said, “Take heed, sweet lady-mother, don’t swear like that: A field of delicious prized corn will not stop the mouths of those who say you have killed that virtuous woman.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Gape, earth, open up and swallow me, and let my soul sink down to hell, if I were the author of that woman’s tragedy!”

The earth opened up and swallowed her.

As the earth swallowed Queen Eleanor, she cried, “Oh, Joan, help! Joan, your mother sinks!”

Joan cried, “Oh, mother! My help is worthless!

“Oh, she has sunk, and here the earth is newly closed up again.

“Ah, Charing Green, forever change your hue, and may the grass never grow green again, but instead wither and return to stones, because beauteous Eleanor sank on you!

“Well, I will send to the King my father’s grace, and inform him of this strange calamity.”

CHAPTER 21 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XXI —**

A battle was occurring at Montrose, a town on the coast of Scotland. The battle lasted a long time, but King Edward I and his soldiers triumphed. He and his train of attendants and his soldiers now held Baliol captive.

King Edward I said to Baliol, "Now, faithless, treacherous King, what are the fruits of insulting boasts? What end has treason but a sudden fall? Such people as have known your life and bringing up, have praised you for your learning and your knowledge. How comes it, then, that thou forgot your books that schooled you to forget ingratitude? Ingratitude is unnatural and unkind! This hand of mine anointed you and made you a King. This tongue of mine pronounced the decision of the mercy shown to you.

"If thou, in place of my unfeigned love, have levied arms in order to attempt to seize my crown, see now the fruits of your attempt: Your glories are dispersed and dissipated, and like a heifer, since thou have passed your boundaries and made inroads into England, your sturdy neck must stoop to bear this yoke."

Baliol replied, "I learned this lesson, Edward, from my books: To keep a just equality of mind and an even temperament and be content with every fortune — good or bad — as it comes. So thou can threaten me with no more than I expect."

King Edward I said, "So, sir: Your moderation is forced. You are forced to accept whatever happens to you now because you have no other choice. Your goodly glosses — pretty words — cannot make your bad fortune good."

Baliol said, "Then will I keep in silence what I mean, since Edward thinks my meaning is not good."

King Edward I said, "Nay, Baliol, speak forth, if there yet remains in you a little remnant of persuading art."

He was willing to hear what Baliol had to say to him.

Baliol said, "If cunning words may have power to win the King, let those employ them who can flatter him. If honored deed may reconcile the King, it lies in me to give and him to take."

Baliol was rejecting flattering the King in order to save his life, but he was willing to do a deed for the King that would save his life.

King Edward I said, "Why, what remains for Baliol now to give?"

Baliol replied, "Allegiance, as becomes a royal King."

King Edward I said, "What league of faith can there be where league is broken once?"

Baliol had previously sworn allegiance to King Edward I, but Baliol had broken his oath of allegiance. Why then should King Edward trust any oath of allegiance that Baliol made now?

Baliol said, "The greater hope in them who once have fallen."

Having rebelled and had his rebellion broken, a rebel would have learned his lesson.

King Edward I said, "But foolish are those monarchs who yield a conquered realm upon submissive vows."

Baliol said, "There, take my crown, and so redeem my life."

Baliol no longer needed to be King of Scotland, if giving up the kingdom meant that he could save his life.

King Edward I said, "Aye, sir; that was the better choice of the two.

"For whoever quells the pomposity of haughty, proud minds and breaks the staff — the army — on which they build their trust, can be sure that if the rebels lack power, they can do no harm.

"Baliol shall live; but yet within such bounds that, if his wings grow enough for flight, they may be clipped."

Baliol would live, but he would live without power. He would also be watched to ensure that he did not grow ambitious again.

CHAPTER 22 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XXII —**

At Potter's Hive, near Charing Green, where Queen Eleanor sank into the ground, the Potter's Wife and John, her servant, talked together. They were near a quay used by ships that carried goods to London. Thunder sounded and lightning flashed.

The Potter's Wife said, "John, let's go. You move as though you slept. You are a great big knave and yet you are afraid of a little thundering and lightning!"

John replied, "Do you call this a little thundering? I am sure my breeches find it a great deal, for I am sure they are stuffed with thunder."

Well, stuffed with something, anyway.

The Potter's Wife said, "They are stuffed with a fool, aren't they? Will it please you to carry the lantern a little handsomer so we can see better, and not to carry it with your hands in your slops?"

Slops are trousers.

John replied, "Slops, say you! I wish I had tarried at home by the fire, and then I should not have any need to put my hands in my pockets! But I'll bet my life I know the reason for this foul weather."

"Do you know the reason?" the Potter's Wife said. "Please, John, tell me, and let me hear this reason."

John said, "I bet my life some of your gossips that we just came from are cross-legged, but you are 'wise,' mistress, for you come now away, and will not stay a-gossiping in a dry house all night."

Sitting cross-legged was supposed to bring bad luck. Such posture was also thought to be used in sorcery.

The Potter's Wife asked, "Would it please you to walk and leave off your knavery?"

Queen Eleanor slowly rose out of the earth.

“But wait, John,” the Potter’s Wife said. “What’s that which is rising out of the ground? Jesus bless us, John! Look how it rises higher and higher!”

“By my faith, mistress, it is a woman,” John said. “Good Lord, do women grow? I never saw one grow before.”

He was comparing Queen Eleanor to a growing plant.

“Hold your tongue, you foolish knave,” the Potter’s Wife said. “It is the spirit of some woman.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Huh, let me see! Where am I? On Charing Green? Aye, on Charing Green here, nearby Westminster Cathedral, where I was crowned, and Edward there made King.

“Aye, it is true; so it is, and therefore, Edward, don’t kiss me, unless you will immediately perfume your lips and freshen your breath, Edward.”

The Potter’s Wife said, “*Ora pro nobis!*”

The Latin means, “Pray for us!”

She continued, “John, please, fall to your prayers.

“For my life, it is Queen Eleanor who chafes and frets thus — she who sunk this day on Charing Green, and now has risen up on Potter’s Hive; and therefore truly, John, I’ll go to her.”

The Potter’s Wife went to Queen Eleanor.

“Welcome, good woman,” Queen Eleanor said. “What place is this? Sea or land? Please show it to me.”

The Potter’s Wife replied, “Your grace need not fear: You are on firm ground. This place is the Potter’s Hive, and therefore cheer up, your majesty, for I will see you safely conducted to the court, if doing so would please your highness.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Aye, good woman, conduct me to the court so that there I may bewail and lament my sinful life, and call to God to save my wretched soul.”

A cry of “Westward ho!” sounded.

Queen Eleanor asked, “Woman, what noise is this I hear?”

The Potter's Wife said, "If it pleases your grace, the watermen are calling for passengers to go westward now."

Queen Eleanor replied, "That serves my purpose, for I will go immediately with them to King's-town to the court, and there I will rest until the King comes home. And therefore, sweet woman, conceal what thou have seen and lead me to those watermen, for here and now Eleanor droops."

She fainted.

Carrying the unconscious Queen to the quay, John said to her, "Come, come; this is a goodly leading of you, isn't it? First, you must make us afraid, and now I must be troubled with the carrying of you. I wish you were honestly laid in your bed, so that I were not troubled with you."

CHAPTER 23 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE XXIII —

King Edward, Edmund Duke of Lancaster, and some Lords were somewhere on the road to London from Scotland.

A messenger entered the scene and said, “May honor and fortune wait upon the crown of princely Edward, England’s valiant King!”

King Edward I replied, “Thanks, messenger; and if my God grants that winged Honor attend upon my throne, I’ll make her spread her plumes upon the heads of those whose true allegiance confirms, strengthens, and secures the crown.”

He then asked, “What is the news in Wales? How goes our business there?”

The messenger replied, “The false disturber of that wasted soil, Llewelyn, with his adherents, was ambushed, my King. And in assurance he shall rebel no more, breathless he lies, and headless, too, my lords. These lines shall here unfold the details.”

He handed King Edward I a letter.

King Edward I said, “A harmful weed, rooted out by wisdom, can never hurt the true engrafted plant.”

Seeing Sir Thomas Spencer enter the scene, King Edward I said, “But what’s the news Sir Thomas Spencer brings?”

“Wonders, my lord, wrapped up in homely words and letters to inform your majesty,” Sir Thomas Spencer replied.

He gave the King some letters.

Reading the letters, King Edward I said, “Oh, heavens, what may these miracles portend? Nobles, my Queen is sick; but what is more —

“Read, brother Edmund, read about a wondrous occurrence.”

He handed his brother a letter.

Edmund read out loud some lines about Queen Eleanor's sinking into the ground.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "And I have neither heard nor read about so strange a thing before!"

King Edward I said, "Sweet Queen, this sinking is due to an excess of pride, with which your woman's heart did swell, a dangerous malady in the heart to dwell."

He then ordered, "Lords, we march towards London now in haste. I will go see my lovely Eleanor and comfort her after this strange affright. And because she is insistent to have secret conversation and conference with some Friars of France, Mun, you shall go with me, and I will go with you, and we will together take the sweet confession of my Nell. We will have French enough to parle with the Queen."

The King wanted his brother Edmund ("Mun") and himself to disguise themselves as French Friars and hear Queen Eleanor's confession. That way, they would find out what sins she had to repent. Such sins must be great because they had caused her to sink into the earth.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "If I might advise your royal majesty, I would not go for millions of gold.

"Who knows, your grace, if you go disguised, what you may hear, in secrecy revealed, which may appall and discontent your highness?

"A goodly creature is your Eleanor, brought up in niceness and in delicacy. So then don't listen to her confession, lord, and wound your heart with some unkind ideas."

He said to himself, referring to himself, "And as for Lancaster, he may and must not go."

King Edward I replied, "Brother, I am resolved and determined to do this, and I will go, if God gives life, and cheer my dying Queen. Why, Mun, why, man, whatever King Edward hears, it lies in God and him to pardon all.

"I'll have no ghostly — religious — fathers out of France. England has learned clerics and confessors to

comfort and absolve, as men may do, and I'll be a ghostly father for this once."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said to himself, referring to himself:

"Edmund, you must not go, although you die:

"And yet how may you here your King deny?

"Edward is gracious, merciful, meek, and mild,

"But furious when he finds he is beguiled."

King Edward I ordered, "Messenger, hurry back to Shrewsbury, near Wales. Tell Mortimer, your master, to speed fast to London and with his good fortune welcome us to London. I long to see my beauteous lovely Queen."

CHAPTER 24 (EDWARD I)

— SCENE XXIV —

At Shrewsbury, England were Mortimer and his officers (including a sheriff), Friar Hugh ap David, Jack, and Morgan Pigot the harper. Sir David stood on a hurdle (a kind of wooden panel) that would take him to his place of execution. Llewelyn's head was displayed on a spear.

Friar Hugh ap David, Jack the novice, and Morgan Pigot the harper had all been pardoned and were now on the side of the English.

"Keep moving," Friar Hugh ap David said. "Keep moving."

Jack the novice said, "Hold up your torches because they are dripping."

Friar Hugh ap David said, "This is a fair procession.

"Sir David, be of good cheer: You cannot go the wrong way because you have so many guides at hand."

Sir David would have preferred to go the wrong way.

"Be sure of that," Jack the novice said, "for we go on the highway all the way to the gallows, I assure you."

"I go where my star leads me, and die in my country's just cause and quarrel," Sir David said.

The star was the one that influenced his future and his fortune.

Morgan Pigot the harper said, "The star that twinkled at your birth, my good brother, has marred your mirth: An old often-said proverb is 'Earth must return to earth.'"

In other words, "Dust to dust."

He continued:

"Next year there will be a piteous dearth of hemp, I dare lay a penny,

"Because this year are hanged so many."

The ropes that hanged traitors were made of hemp.

Friar Hugh ap David said, "Well said, Morgan Pigot, harper and prophet for the King's own mouth."

Morgan Pigot the harper was now working for King Edward I.

Jack the novice said, “Tum date dite dote dum.”

These were the musical sounds that Morgan Pigot the harper had made while foretelling Llewelyn’s future.

Jack continued, “This is the day, the time is come: Morgan Pigot’s prophecy, and Lord Llewelyn’s tragedy.”

Friar Hugh ap David said:

“Who says the prophet is an ass

“Whose prophecies come so to pass?

“Said he not often, and sung it, too,

“Llewelyn, after much ado,

“Should in spite heave up his chin

“And be the highest of his kin?

“And see, aloft Llewelyn’s head,

“Impaled with a crown of lead!

“My lord, let not this soothsayer lack,

“Who has such cunning in his jack[et].”

Morgan Pigot the harper who had foretold Llewelyn’s future, had said that “you must necessarily be advanced to be the highest position of your kin.”

Now Llewelyn’s head was held high, impaled on the top of a spear.

Morgan Pigot the harper said:

“Friar David, hold still your clack [chatter],

“Lest your heels make your neck crack.”

His neck would crack when he was hanged and his heels stood on air.

Friar Hugh ap David replied, “Gentle prophet, if you love me, don’t speak anything against me: It is the worst luck in the world to stir a witch or anger a wise man.”

He then said, “Master Sheriff, can we go any faster? Best give my horses some more hay.”

CHAPTER 25 (EDWARD I)**— SCENE XXV —**

At the Palace at Kingston-upon-Thames, Queen Eleanor was lying on her death-bed, attended by Joan and other ladies.

Queen Eleanor ordered, “Call forth those renowned Friars who have come from France —”

A lady exited to call the Friars.

She continued, “— and raise me, gentle ladies, higher in my bed, so that until this engine of my speech falters and I cease to utter my concealed guilt, I may confess and so repent my sins.”

Joan asked, “What plague afflicts your royal majesty?”

Queen Eleanor replied, “Ah, Joan, I perish through a double-war!”

Her body was failing, and her conscience was guilty.

She continued:

“The first war is in this painful prison — my body — of my soul. A world of dreadful sins hole up there to fight, and nature, having lost her working power, is yielding up her earthly fortunes to death. Soon I will die, and my worldly affairs will come to a rest.

“Next my soul is oppressed by a second war, in that my conscience, which is loaded with misdeeds, sits seeing my ruin to ensue, without especial favor from above. Unless God forgives my sins, I will be damned.”

Joan said, “Your grace must account it a warrior’s cross, to make a defense where there is no danger.”

Joan was trying to reassure her mother that she was not in danger of damnation. This was a warrior’s cross, like those the Crusaders wore. Crusaders who died fighting in the Holy Land were martyrs who went directly to Paradise. Joan was saying that Queen Eleanor was like a Crusader-martyr and in no danger of damnation.

Joan continued, “Subdue your fever by precious art, and help yourself always through hope of heavenly aid.”

The “precious art” could be the skill of a physician who could cure her fever, or perhaps it could be religious art — religious skill and knowledge — that would bring her spiritual comfort.

Queen Eleanor said, “The worry-free shepherds on the mountain’s tops see the sailor and his ship floating on the surge of waves, and see the threatening winds come springing with the floods to overwhelm and drown his damaged keel. The sailor’s ship-rigging is torn, and the ship’s sails are borne overboard. How pale with fear, like yellow flowers, the Captain stands upon the hatches, waiting for the wave of the sea that will sink his ship. Wringing his hands that ought to work the pump, the Captain may blame his fear for his not laboring to save his life.”

Like the ship Captain, Queen Eleanor was full of fear. To save her soul, she needed to confess her sins, but her body was paralyzed by pain — both physical and spiritual. Joan was like a worry-free shepherd who was safely on land.

Queen Eleanor continued, “So you, poor soul, may tell a servile tale of my sins, and you may counsel me, but I who am experiencing the pain may hear you talk but not repair my harm. But ghastly death already is addressed to glean and collect the final blossom of my life.”

Would she live long enough to confess her sins?

She said, “My spirit fails me. Have these Friars come?”

The lady who had left to get the Friars returned. She brought with her King Edward I and his brother Edmund Duke of Lancaster, both of whom were disguised as French Friars.

The disguised King Edward I said, “*Dominus vobiscum.*”

The Latin means, “May God be with you.”

The disguised Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, “*Et cum spiritu tuo.*”

The Latin means, “And with your soul.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Draw near, grave and revered fathers, and approach my bed.”

She ordered, “Leave our presence, ladies, for a while, and leave us to our private conversation.”

Joan and the ladies exited.

The disguised King Edward I asked, “What reason has caused your royal majesty to call your servants — we two Friars — from their country’s boundaries in order to attend your pleasure here in England’s court?”

Queen Eleanor replied, “Don’t you see, holy Friars, my estate — my weak body — heading toward my grave?”

The disguised Edmund Duke of Lancaster replied, “We see and sorrow for your pain, fair Queen.”

Queen Eleanor said, “By these external signs of my defects, Friars, imagine my internal grief. My soul — ah, my wretched soul! — within this breast, is faint and despairs of trying to mount the heavens with wings of grace. A hundred by-flocking troops of sin accompany me and stop my passage to my wished-for dwelling in Paradise.”

The disguised King Edward I said, “The nearer to Paradise, Eleanor, the greater hope of health eternally.”

He slipped up by calling her “Eleanor.” A Friar would not address a Queen that way.

He continued, “Do think it fit for you to impart your grief and confess your sins to us. We by our prayers and counsel should arm aspiring souls to scale the heavenly grace.”

Queen Eleanor said, “Shame and remorse stop my course of speech.”

The disguised King Edward I said, “Madam, you need not dread our conference. We two, by the order of the holy church, are both anointed to sacred secrecy. We will keep your confession secret.”

Queen Eleanor said, “If I did not think — indeed, if I were not assured — that your wisdoms would be silent in that cause, no fear could make me betray myself. But, gentle fathers, I have thought it good not to rely upon these

Englishmen, but on your truth and integrity, you holy men of France. So then, as you love your life and England's welfare, keep my confession secret from the King. The reason for this is that my story closely concerns him, whose love compared with my loose delights, frightens my heart with many sorrows."

The disguised Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "My heart is filled with apprehension."

The disguised King Edward I said, "Be silent, fellow Friar."

Queen Eleanor said, "In pride of youth, when I was young and beautiful and attractive — in the King of England's sight, the day before that night his highness should possess the pleasure of my wedlock's bed, wretch and accursed monster as I was, his brother Edmund, who was beautiful and young, upon my bridal couch by my consent enjoyed the flower and favor of my love, and I became a traitress to my lord."

Edmund Duke of Lancaster, who was Edward's brother, had slept with her — with her consent — the night before she and King Edward I enjoyed their wedding night together.

King Edward I looked sorrowfully at his brother and said, "*Facinus scelus! Infandum nefas!*"

The Latin means, "A crime committed! An unspeakable sin!"

The Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "Madam, because of your sickness and the weakness of your wits, it would be very good to think before you speak."

He did not want her to reveal such secrets as this, which would make his brother the King angry at him. Kings had the power to execute traitors, and such an act as Edmund's could be construed as treason.

Queen Eleanor said, "Good father, I am not so weak, but that, I know, my heart breaks to think upon the time. But why exclaims this holy Friar so? Oh, pray, then, for my faults, religious man!"

Friars, of course, want dying people to confess ALL their sins so that ALL their sins can be forgiven. Unconfessed sins can lead to damnation.

The disguised King Edward I said, “It is charity in men of my degree to sorrow for our neighbors’ heinous sins. And, madam, although some promise love to you, and some promise zeal to Edmund, brother to the King, I pray to the heavens that you both may soon repent. But might it please your highness to proceed?”

It was Edmund who promised love to Eleanor, and it was Eleanor who promised zeal to Edmund.

Queen Eleanor said, “To this sin a worser does succeed; for Joan of Acre, the supposed child and daughter of my lord the English King, is basely born because her father is not noble. She was begotten by a Friar, at the time that I arrived in France.

“My friends, the King’s only true and lawful son — and he is my hope, his son who should succeed him — is Edward of Carnarvon, who was recently born in Wales.

“Now all the scruples and misgivings of my troubled mind I sighing sound within your reverent ears.

“Oh, pray, for pity! Pray, for I must die. Remit and do not punish, my God, the folly of my youth! My groaning spirit attends your throne — your mercy-seat.

“Fathers, farewell; commend me to my King.

“Commend me to my children and my friends, and close my eyes, for death will have his due.”

Having finished confessing her sins, Queen Eleanor died.

Closing her eyes, King Edward I said, “Blushing, I shut these your enticing lamps, the wanton baits that made me suck my poison.

“Pyropus’ hardened flames have never reflected more hideous flames than from my breast arise.”

Pyropus is an alloy of copper and a small amount of gold. When made into thin sheets of metal, it has a fiery-red color.

Fiery-red was the color of the jealous anger and grief in King Edward's heart.

King Edward I continued, "What sin can be more vile to your dearest lord than these: Our daughter Joan is basely begotten of a priest, and Ned, my brother, is the sex-partner of my love!

"Oh, that those eyes that lightened Caesar's brain,

"Oh, that those looks that mastered Phoebus' brand,

"Or else those looks that stained Medusa's face,

"Should enshrine deceit, desire, and lawless lust!"

The eyes that lightened Caesar's brain and made him giddy were those of Cleopatra. She seduced Mark Antony and both of them committed suicide after being defeated by Octavian, Julius Caesar's adopted son and heir.

The looks that mastered Phoebus Apollo the Sun-god's firebrand were those of Clymene, with whom he fathered Phaëthon, who asked to drive Apollo's Sun-chariot. Phaëthon, doomed youth, was unable to control the stallions, and they ran wildly away with the Sun-chariot, wreaking havoc and destruction upon Humankind and the world. The King of the gods, Jupiter, saved Humankind and the world by throwing a thunderbolt at Phaëthon and killing him.

Medusa was a beautiful maiden with whom the sea-god Poseidon had sex in a temple of the virgin goddess Athena. Disgusted by this act of sacrilege, Athena turned Medusa's hair into snakes; in addition, Athena made Medusa into a monster — a Gorgon — with the result that anyone who looked into Medusa's eyes was turned to stone.

In all three cases, a woman was beautiful, but bad things happened to her and to males who were associated with her. King Edward was comparing Queen Eleanor to all three women. Of course, he was associated with Queen Eleanor and he had just learned of some bad things that had happened to him because of that association.

King Edward I continued, "Unhappy King, dishonored in your family!"

Taking off his Friar's robe and belt, he said, "Hence, feigned garments, but unfeigned is my grief."

The robe and belt were feigned because the King was not a Friar; he was using the garments as a disguise.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster said, "Dread Prince, my brother, if my vows of innocence will persuade you, I call to witness Heaven in my behalf. If zealous prayer might drive you from suspicion of me, I bend my knees and kneel before you, and I humbly beg for this request to be granted to me: that you will drive these alleged sins you have just heard about out of your mind.

"May good never happen in my life, my lord, if once I dreamed upon this damned deed of adultery with the Queen! But my deceased sister-in-law and your Queen, afflicted with incurable maladies and lacking patience because of her pain, grew lunatic and has revealed 'sins' that were never dreamed upon, let alone committed.

"To prove that this is true, let me say that the greatest men of all within their learned books do record that all extremes end in nothing but extremes."

He meant that the Queen's extreme physical pain had led her to other extremes: extreme mental pain and insanity.

Edmund Duke of Lancaster continued, "So then think and believe, oh, King, that her agony in death bereaved her of sense and memory at once, so that she spoke she knew neither how nor what."

King Edward I said, "Sir, sir, your highness would eagerly like to hide your faults by using cunning vows and fawning words to excuse you. And well thou may delude and fool these listening ears, yet thou shall never assuage and make this jealous heart hurt less no matter what cunning vows you make and fawning words you use.

"Traitor, your head shall ransom my disgrace."

He then invoked Nemesis, goddess of retribution. Her father was Erebus, goddess of darkness. King Edward I identified her also with jealous retribution.

“Daughter of darkness, whose accursed bower the poet alleged to lie at Avernus, where Cimmerian darkness obscures the Sun, dreaded Jealousy, afflict me not so sorely!”

Avernus, a volcanic crater near Cumae, Italy, was the location of one of the entrances to the Underworld. In his epic poem *Aeneid*, the poet Virgil placed there the scourges of Humankind.

According to Virgil, the entrance to the Land of the Dead was densely populated with Grief, Cares, Diseases, Old Age, Fear, Hunger, Poverty, Death, Hard Labor, Restless Sleep, Evil Joys, Hallucinations, and War. Here lived the Furies and Discord. A tree grew at the entrance to the Land of the Dead — a tree whose fruit was False Dreams. Also living at the entrance to the Land of the Dead were monsters: Centaurs, Scyllas, Briareus and his hundred hands, the Hydra, the Chimera, Gorgons, Harpies, and Geryon and his three bodies.

King Edward I continued, “Fair Queen Eleanor could never be so false to me —

“Aye, but she vowed these treasons at her death, a time not fit to fashion monstrous lies.”

Deathbed confessions tend to be believed because the dying person would not lie because lying is a sin and could endanger that person’s immortal soul.

King Edward I continued, “Ah, my ungrateful brother as thou art, couldn’t my love — nay, more, couldn’t the law — nay, further, couldn’t the natural affection of family members for each other allure you enough to refrain from this incestuous sin?

“Get out from my sight!”

Edmund Duke of Lancaster exited.

King Edward I ordered his attendants who were outside the chamber, “Call Joan of Acre here.”

He then said to himself, “The lukewarm spring of tears distilling from Edmund’s eyes, his oaths, his vows, his

reasons wrested with remorse from forth his breast — they are poisoned with suspicion.

“I wish that I could deem false those evil things that I find to be too true.”

As he spoke to himself, Joan entered the chamber and said, “I come to know what England’s King commands. I wonder why your highness greets me thus, with strange looks and unacquainted terms.”

The “unacquainted terms” were the words the King had said to himself — she had overheard them as she walked over to her father.

King Edward I said, “Ah, Joan, this wonder necessarily must wound your breast, for it has nearly slain my wretched heart.”

Joan said, “What! Is the Queen, my sovereign mother, dead? I am full of sorrow! Unhappy lady, I am afflicted with sorrow!”

King Edward I said, “The Queen is dead; yet, Joan, don’t lament. Poor soul, you are guiltless of this deceit, you who have more cause to curse than to complain.”

Joan said, “My dreadful soul, assailed with doleful speech, compels me to bow my knees to the ground and kneel, begging your most royal majesty to rid your woeful daughter of suspicion.”

Worried by her father’s words, Joan was afraid that she had been accused of committing some transgression.

King Edward I said, “Aye, daughter, Joan? Poor soul, you are deceived! The King of England is no scorned priest.”

She had knelt before him as if she were going to make a confession to a priest. She was also deceived in thinking that Edward was her father.

Joan asked, “Wasn’t the Lady Eleanor your spouse, and am not I the offspring of your loins?”

She was asking if she were legitimate.

King Edward I replied, “Aye, but when ladies wish to run astray and pleating leave their liege in princes’ laps, the poor supposed father wears the horn.”

Some Queens wish to have affairs and leave their illegitimate offspring, who are either in the line of succession or who are possible Queens when they marry, in the King’s lap. In these cases, the King is a cuckold and wears the invisible horns that cuckolds are supposed to have growing on their heads.

The verb “pleat” means literally to intertwine or interlace three or more strands to form a plait. In the King’s sentence, it means to figuratively intertwine or interlace three people sexually: the King, the Queen, and the Friar.

King Edward I then said, “Joan, thou are the daughter to a lecherous Friar. A Friar was your father, luckless Joan. Your mother in confession, avowed no less, and I, vile wretch that I am, sorrowfully heard no less than this confession.”

Joan said, “What! Am I, then, a Friar’s not nobly-born child? Presumptuous wretch that I am, why do I express warm regard for my King?”

If she were not the King’s daughter and instead were the daughter of a Friar, she ought not to have the warm relationship with the King that she had enjoyed until now.

Joan continued, “How can I look my husband in the face? Why should I live since my reputation is lost?”

Referring to the clothing she was wearing, she said, “Go away, you luxurious clothing!”

She then said, “Leave me now, world’s delight!”

She fell groveling on the ground.

King Edward I said:

“L’orecchie abbassa, come vinto e staneo

“Destrier c’ha in boeca il fren, gli sproni al fianco, —

He was quoting two lines from Canto XX, stanza 131, of the Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, which was written by Lodovico Ariosto.

This is William Stewart Rose's translation:

*"Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,
Hangs down his ears, controlled by spur and bit"*

In these lines, a character named Zembino is compared to an old horse. He had just lost a single combat and as a result he must ride with an old hag.

King Edward I seems to have meant that Joan cannot control her fate.

King Edward I then said:

*"O sommo Dio, come I giudicii umani
Spesso offuscati son da un nembo oscuro!"*

He was quoting two lines from two lines from Canto X, stanza 15, of *Orlando Furioso*.

This is William Stewart Rose's translation:

*"Almighty God, how fallible and vain,
Is human judgment, dimmed by clouds obscure!"*

King Edward I continued, "Hapless and wretched, lift up your heavy, sorrowful head. Curse not so much at this unhappy chance. Inconstant Fortune always will have her course."

Joan replied, "My King, my King, let Fortune have her course: Flee, my soul, and take a better course.

"Woe is me, from royal state I now am fallen!

"You purple springs of blood that wander in my veins, and were once accustomed to feed my heavy, sorrowful heart, now all at once act quickly, and pity me and stop your powers, and change your native course.

"Dissolve your lukewarm bloody streams to air, and cease to be, so that I may be no more."

She wanted her blood to dry up, thus killing her.

She continued, "Your curled locks, draw from this cursed head."

An ancient way of expressing grief was to tear one's hair.

She continued, "Abase her pomp, for Joan is basely born!"

“Abase her pomp” meant to ruin her ostentatious appearance.

She continued, “Ah, Gloucester, thou, poor Gloucester, has the wrong!”

He thought that he had married the daughter of a King, but he had not.

She continued, “Die, wretch! Hurry, death, for Joan has lived too long.”

Joan suddenly died at the feet of the Queen’s bed.

King Edward I said, “Revive, luckless lady. Don’t grieve like this.

“In vain I speak, for she revives no more. Poor luckless soul, your own repeated moans have wrought your sudden and untimely death.”

He called, “Lords, ladies, hurry here!”

The ladies with Gloucester and some lords came running.

King Edward I said, “Ah, Gloucester, have you come? Then I must now present a tragedy to you. Your Joan is dead. Yet don’t grieve her fall: She was too basely born a spouse for such a Prince as you.”

Referring to personified Death, Gloucester said, “Do you conspire, then, with the heavens to work my harms?

“Oh, sweet assuager and reliever of our mortal misfortunes, desired death, deprive me of my life, so that I in death may end my life and love!”

King Edward I said, “Gloucester, your King is a partner and a partaker of your heaviness and sorrows, although neither tongue nor eyes betrays his grief, for I have lost a flower as fair as yours, a love more dear, for Eleanor is dead.

“But since the heavenly divine will decrees that all things change and die in their predetermined time, be content, and bear in your breast your swelling grief, as necessarily I must bear mine.

“Your Joan of Acre and my Queen deceased shall have that honor as is befitting for their state.

“You peers of England, see in royal pomp that these breathless bodies are entombed immediately, with all colorful attire covered with black.

“Let Spanish steeds, as swift as fleeting wind, convey these princes to their funeral. Before them let a hundred mourners ride.

“In every place where the funeral stops for the night, rear up a cross in token of their worth, whereon fair Eleanor’s picture shall be placed.

“Once arrived at London, near our palace-bounds, inter my lovely Eleanor, lately deceased. And, in remembrance of her royalty, erect a rich and stately carved cross, on which her statue shall with glory shine, and henceforth see that you call it Charing Cross because she was the chariest — the dearest — and the choicest Queen, who did always delight my royal eyes.

“There she will dwell in darkness while I die in grief.”

Some messengers entered, and the King said, “But, wait! What tidings do these messengers bring?”

One of the messengers said, “Sir Roger Mortimer, with all success, as previously your grace by a message did command, is here at hand in order to present our highness with signs of his victory in Wales.

“And faithless Baliol, the Scots’ accursed King, with fire and sword threatens Northumberland.”

Baliol had escaped whatever restrictions King Edward I had placed on him and was again making inroads into England.

King Edward I said, “How one affliction calls another affliction over! First death torments me, then I feel disgrace! And false Baliol means to defy me, too. But I will find provision to resist them all. My constancy shall conquer death and shame.”

Everyone except Gloucester exited.

He said to himself:

“Now, Joan of Acre, let me mourn your fall.

“By myself, here alone, now I sit down and sigh.

“Sigh, hapless Gloucester, for your sudden loss: Pale death, alas, has banished all your pride, your wedlock-vows! How often have I beheld your eyes, your looks, your lips, and every part — how nature strove in them to show her art, in shine, in shape, in color, and in comparison!

“But now has death, the enemy of love, stained and deformed the shine, the shape, the red, with pale and dimness, and my love is dead.

“Ah, dead, my love! Vile wretch, why am I living? So wills fate, and I must be contented.

“All pomp in time must fade, and grow to nothing.

“Wept I like Niobe, yet it profits nothing.”

Niobe was proud because she had given birth to six sons and six daughters, and she boasted aloud, “I am more worthy of respect than the goddess Leto, who has given birth to only two children: the twins Apollo and Artemis.” Leto’s children were angry at the disrespect shown to their mother, and in one day they killed all of Niobe’s children, shooting them with arrows. Niobe wept.

Gloucester finished:

“So then cease, my sighs, since I may not regain her,

“And woe to wretched death that thus has slain her!”

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

NOTES (EDWARD I)

Scene 2

Then

*rise up, Robert, and say to Richard, Redde rationem
villacationis tuae.*

(Scene 2.203-205)

Peters Lukacs writes in his edition of the play:

Robert = an unclear reference, uncommented on by any of the editors. Perhaps this should read *Davy*, as the Friar seems to be talking to himself.

In this book, I wrote this:

“Then rise up, Robert, and say to Richard, *Redde rationem villicationis tuae.*”

The Latin means, “Give an account of your stewardship.”

Friar Hugh ap David was talking to Owen ap Rice, who still had his hands on Guenthian. “Richard” was a name that he had given to his walking-stick, and “Robert” may be a name like Tom, Dick, or Harry that he now gave to Owen ap Rice, whose real name he did not know.

“Robert” was challenging “Richard” by seizing the wench. Now “Richard” would have to show that he was a good steward by fighting and defeating “Robert.”

I, however, have to wonder if the names are reversed and the passage should read: “Then rise up, Richard, and say to

Robert, *Redde rationem villicationis tuae.*” Then Richard the walking-stick would rise and challenge Robert (Owen ap Rice) to give an account of his stewardship of Guenthian.

“Richard” is a name that the Friar has given to his walking-stick:

Later, in Peele’s play we read:

*I and Richard my man here,
are here contra omnes gentes*

(Scene 2, 238-239)

The Friar means that he and his walking stick can defend themselves against all the people.

And still later, we read:

*And Richard, my man, sir
(Scene 2. 257)*

The Friar means that in hiring the Friar, Llewelyn is also hiring the Friar’s walking stick.

Just possibly, the Friar’s words to his tormentors could be a reference to a meeting of Robin Hood and King Richard I the Lionheart. Robin Hood was sometimes identified as Robert, Earl of Huntington. “Robin” could be a diminutive of “Robert.”

According to Wikipedia:

In 1598, [Anthony Munday](#) wrote a pair of plays on the Robin Hood legend, [The Downfall of Robert Earl](#)

of Huntington and The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington (published 1601).

Source: “Robin Hood.” Wikipedia. Accessed 15 November 2020 < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Hood>.

In these plays, Robin Hood is Robert Earl of Huntingdon.

Of course, Robin Hood supported Richard the Lionheart, but Richard’s absence from England allowed his brother John to gain much power and rule in England, and so Robin Hood could very well say to Richard, “Give an account of your stewardship/activities.”

Or if the names “Robert” and “Richard” should be reversed, it would be King Richard I asking Robin Hood to give an account of his stewardship/activities.

Scene 6

On Flora’s beds and Napae’s silver down

(Scene 6, line 34)

Peter Lukacs glosses “Napae” in this way, giving the *Oxford English Dictionary* as his source:

38: *Napae* = *napae* are flower nymphs; 1 normally it was swans which were described as having **silver down**.

1. *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* online.

This is from the *Oxford English Dictionary* entry for “Napaea”:

A nymph who inhabits woods; (occasionally also) a mountain or river nymph.

This appeared in *The Hibernian Preceptor, Comprehending A General Introduction to all kinds of Learning. In Two Volumes.* By George Wall. Dublen. Printed by J. Jones. 1812.

The nymphs were of various orders. Over the mountains the Oreades; **over the valleys the Napae**; and over the meads, the Dryades. Naiads were fresh water nymphs, as the Nereids were of the sea.

Source: Page 80.

<https://tinyurl.com/y67souwp>

Bold emphasis added.

Wikipedia has this:

Napaeae

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In [Greek mythology](#), the **Napaeae** (/nəˈpiːiː/; [Ancient Greek](#): ναπαῖαι, from νάπη, “a wooded dell”) were a type of [nymph](#) that lived in wooded [valleys](#), [glens](#) or [grottoes](#).^[1] [Statius](#) invoked them in his *Thebaid*, when the [naiad](#) Ismenis addresses her mortal son Krenaios:

I was held a greater goddess and the Queen of Nymphae. Where alas! is that late crowd of courtiers round thy mother's halls, where are the Napaeae that prayed to serve thee?^[2]

1. *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Antiquities* 1898, s.v. “Napaeae”.
2. [Statius](#), *Thebaid* 9.385; see also *Thebaid* 4.259.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napaeae>

Here Is Some Other Information About Nymphs And The Word “Napaē” That I Found Interesting:

Wikipedia has this:

Auloniad

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The names of different species of [nymphs](#) varied according to their natural abodes. The **Auloniad** (/əˈloʊniæd/; Ἀυλωνιάς from the classical Greek αὐλών “valley, ravine”) was a nymph who could be found in mountain [pastures](#) and [vales](#), often in the company of [Pan](#), the god of nature.

[Eurydice](#), for whom [Orpheus](#) traveled into dark [Hades](#), was an Auloniad, and it was in the valley of the [Thessalian](#) river [Pineios](#) where she met her death, indirectly, at the hands of [Aristaeus](#). Aristaeus, son of the god [Apollo](#) and the nymph [Cyrene](#), desired to ravish Eurydice. Either disgust or fear made the nymph run away from him without looking where she was going. Eurydice trod on a poisonous serpent and died.^[1]

Wikipedia also has this:

Anthousai

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Anthousai ([Ancient Greek](#): Ἀνθούσαι from ἄνθος *ánthos*, meaning “flower, blossom”) are [nymphs](#) of flowers in [Greek mythology](#). They were described as having hair that resembled [hyacinth](#) flowers.^[1] [Liriope](#) the nymph is an example of a flower nymph.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthousai>

Wikipedia also has this:

List of ancient tribes in Thrace and Dacia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Napae](#), Dacianized [Scythian](#) tribe, after whom the city of [Napoca](#) is possibly named^[43]

The below information comes from
<<https://cord.ung.edu/topon.html>>.

NAPAE

A wooded glen in the island of Lesbos, mentioned in Strabo ix. 426. In Peele's [Ed. I](#) vi. 35. Joan speaks of the Thames as "wallowing up and down On Flora's beds and Napae's silver down."

Source: <https://cord.ung.edu/topon.html>

See <https://cord.ung.edu> for *The Compendium of Renaissance Drama*: © 1989-2016 Brian Jay Corrigan.

This a translation of Strabo's *Geography* that contains the word:

It is not worth while to speak of any of the other cities. Of those mentioned by Homer, Calliarus is no longer inhabited, it is now a well-cultivated plain. Bessa, a sort of plain, does not now exist. It has its name from an accidental quality, for it abounds with woods. [χώραν ἔχουσι σκαρφηῖς](#), &c. It ought to be written with a double s, for it has its name from Bessa, a wooded valley, like Napē,¹⁹³ in the plain of Methymna,¹⁹⁴ which Hellanicus, through ignorance of the local circumstances, improperly calls Lapē; but the demus in Attica, from which the burghers are called Besæenses, is written with a single s. [6]

Source:

Strabo, *Geography*

H.C. Hamilton, Esq., W. Falconer, M.A., Ed.

<https://tinyurl.com/y363r8y8>

This is from the article titled “Nymph” in *The Ancient History Encyclopedia*:

A **nymph** (**Greek**: νύμφη, *nymphē*) in Greek and in **Roman mythology** is a young female deity typically identified with natural features such as mountains (*oreads*), trees and flowers (*dryads* and *meliae*), springs, rivers and lakes (*naiads*) or the sea (*nereids*), or as part of the divine retinue of a comparable god such as **Apollo**, **Dionysos** or **Pan**, or goddesses, such as **Artemis**, who was known as the tutelary deity of all nymphs.

Source: <https://www.ancient.eu/nymph/>

This is from the article titled “MELIAI” at www.theoi.com:

THE MELIAI (Meliae) were the **Oread-nymphs** of mountain ash-tree, born of **Gaia** (Gaea, the Earth) when she was impregnated by the blood of the castrated **Ouranos** (Uranus, the Sky).

Source:

<https://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/NymphaiMeliai.html>

Scene 7

And Maddock toll thy passing-bell.

(Scene 7, line 33)

The line is said by Lluellen.

I have to wonder if “Maddock” is a typo for “Mannock.”

Rice ap Meredith would ring the Friar's knell, and the mountain's echo would ring the Friar's passing-bell.

A passing-bell rings to announce a person's death, and a knell is a bell ringing during a funeral. In that case, the two would be much the same — the ringing and its echo — because the Friar has just “died,” and his “funeral” is being held.

An argument against this, however, is that everywhere else the mountain is called “Mannock-deny,” not just “Mannock.”

This is Peter Lukacs' note on this line:

33: Maddock = the quartos print Maddocke; Hook wonders if this is a reference to Madog ap Llywelyn, a Welshman who would go on to lead a third rebellion against Edward in 1294-5; yay or nay, the name does not appear again in the play.

This third Welsh rebellion, led by Madog, actually resulted in an English invasion of Wales that was even larger than Edward's first two attacks of 1277 and 1282. Needless to say, Edward once again was successful in crushing the pesky Welsh rebels.

There was also a rare word maddock, which means maggot or earthworm.1,7

Scene 10

“Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem

Testa diu.”

(Scene 10, lines 368-369)

The Latin means, “A jar will long retain the odor of what it was dipped in when new.”

Mayoress Mary was quoting Horace's *Epistles* (Book 1, Epistle 2, lines 69-70). The translation used in this book is by A.S. Kline (copyright 2005), except I changed the British spelling "odour" to the American spelling "odor." The use of these lines is consistent with Fair Use.

Scene 25

"L'orecchie abbassa, come vinto e staneo

"Destrier c'ha in boeca il fren, gli sproni al fianco, —

(Scene 25, lines 249-250, spoken by King Edward I)

This is William Stewart Rose's translation of the above two lines from Canto XX, stanza 131, of the Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, which was written by Lodovico Ariosto:

"Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,

"Hangs down his ears, controlled by spur and bit"

Source: Rose, William Stewart, trans. *Orlando Furioso*.
London: Henry G. Bohn, 1858.

"O sommo Dio, come I giudicii umani

"Spesso offuscati son da un nembo oscuro!"

(Scene 25, lines 251-252, spoken by King Edward I)

This is William Stewart Rose's translation of the above two lines from Canto X, stanza 15, of the Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, which was written by Lodovico Ariosto:

"Almighty God, how fallible and vain,

"Is human judgment, dimmed by clouds obscure!"

Source: Rose, William Stewart, trans. *Orlando Furioso*.
London: Henry G. Bohn, 1858.

Peter Lukacs, editor of *Edward I*, notes: “We note that the quartos print an epically mangled version of all these Italian lines.”

THE OLD WIVES' TALE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

Contemporary Characters:

Antic. A Servant. An antic person is a ludicrous person.

Frolic. A Servant. A frolicsome person is a merry, playful person.

Fantastic. A Servant. A fantastic person is a fanciful person.

Clunch. A Blacksmith.

Madge. His Wife. She is an old woman whom others call “gammer,” which means “grandmother.”

Fairy Tale Characters:

Sacrapant. An evil Conjuror.

First Brother, named Calypha. A Prince. He is Delia's brother.

Second Brother, named Thelea. A Prince. He is Delia's brother.

Delia. Sister to Calypha and Thelea. She is a Princess.

Eumenides. A Wandering Knight. In love with Delia.

Huanebango. A Braggart Knight.

Booby. A Clown. Huanebango's companion.

Erestus. A benevolent old man who keeps (dwells at) the cross. The cross in an intersection that is marked by a cross.

Venelia. Betrothed to Erestus, the benevolent old man.

Lampriscus. Neighbor to Erestus.

Zantippa. Daughter to Lampriscus by his first wife. She is pretty, but she is also shrewish and argumentative.

Celanta. Daughter to Lampriscus by his second wife. She is an ugly wench, but she is not shrewish.

Wiggen. Friend to Jack.

Corebus. Friend to Jack.

Ghost of Jack. A deceased person.

Churchwarden, named Steven Loach. The word “loach” means “idiot.” A churchwarden makes sure the church buildings and grounds are taken care of.

Sexton. A sexton digs graves and looks after church grounds.

Hostess. Worker at an inn.

Minor Characters:

Friar, Harvestmen and Harvestwomen, two Furies, Fiddlers, etc.

NOTES:

Characters in early Elizabethan plays often refer to themselves in the third person.

The original play was published without scene divisions. Different editors divide the play into different numbers of scenes.

In this culture, a person of higher rank would use words such as “thee,” “thy,” “thine,” and “thou” to refer to a servant. However, two close friends or a husband and wife could

properly use “thee,” “thy,” “thine,” and “thou” to refer to each other.

Some editions call Booby the Clown by the name “Booby” before switching to the name “Corebus.” Another character is named “Corebus” — this seems to be a different Corebus than Booby, so this book uses the name “Booby” consistently for the Clown.

The word “Eumenides” — the name of the good wandering knight — means “The Kindly Ones.” In Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, the Furies are spirits of vengeance, but in the third play of the trilogy, they become spirits who protect justice and are renamed the Eumenides.

The word “wench” need not necessarily have a negative connotation. In this book, it is often used affectionately.

Zantippa is a shrewish woman. The ancient philosopher Socrates’ wife, Xantippe, was reputed to be shrewish.

CHAPTER 1 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 1 —

Antic, Frolic, and Fantastic, all of whom were young male servants to a lovesick master, were lost in the woods of England at night.

“How are you now, fellow Frolic!” Antic said. “All downcast and dejected? Does this sadness become thy madcapness? So what if we have lost our way in the woods? Don’t hang your head as though thou have no hope to live until tomorrow, for Fantastic and I will guarantee thy life tonight for twenty in the hundred.”

Antic was saying that he and Fantastic would offer 5-to-1 odds that Frolic would not die this night.

“Antic and Fantastic, as I am a frolicsome, merry, gay fellow, never in all my life was I slain so dead — I am practically already frightened to death and exhausted!” Frolic replied. “To lose our way in the wood, without either fire or candle, and to be so uncomfortable! Oh, *coelum*! Oh, *terra*! Oh, *maria*! Oh, Neptune!

The Latin words meant “Oh, heaven! Oh, land! Oh, seas!”

“Oh, Maria!” can also mean “Oh, Mary!” Mary is the Virgin Mary.

Neptune is the Roman name of the god of the sea.

“Why are thou acting so strange and carrying on like that, seeing Cupid has led our young master to the fair lady, and she is the only saint whom he has sworn to serve?” Fantastic said. “Our young master is in love with the beautiful lady.”

“What is left for us to do, then, but to entrust him to his wench, and each of us climb and take his stand up in a tree, and sing out our bad luck to the popular tune of ‘Oh, Man in Desperation?’” Frolic asked.

Frolic used the word “wench” affectionately.

“Desperately spoken, fellow Frolic, in the dark,” Antic said, “but seeing that things turned out this way, let us recite the old proverb:

“Three merry men, and three merry men,

“And three merry men be we:

“I in the wood, and thou on the ground,

“And Jack sleeps in the tree.”

A dog barked.

“Hush!” Fantastic said. “A dog in the wood, or a wooden dog!”

He was punning: the word “wood” could mean “insane” or “rabid” or “ferocious,” and the word “wooden” could mean “stupid.”

“Oh, what a comfortable thing to hear!” he continued, “But I had just as soon that the chamberlain of the White Horse Inn had called me up to bed.”

In this society, a chamberlain was the person in charge of the bedrooms at an inn.

Frolic said, “Either this trotting cur — this ambling dog — has gone out of his circuit, or else we are near some village, which should not be far off, for I perceive the glimmering of a firefly, a candle, or a cat’s eye, I bet my life against a halfpenny!”

Clunch, a blacksmith carrying a lantern and candle, arrived.

“In the name of my own father, even if you are an ox or ass that appear, tell us who thou are,” Frolic said.

“Who am I? Why, I am Clunch the blacksmith. Who are you? What do you make in my territories at this time of the night?”

In this society, “What do you make?” meant “What are you doing?”

“What do we make, do thou ask?” Antic asked. “Why, we make faces out of fear; they are such that, if thy mortal eyes could behold them, would make thee pee down the long sides of thy trousers, blacksmith.”

“And, truly, sir, unless your hospitality relieves us, we are likely to continue to wander, with a sorrowful sigh — heigh-ho — among the owlets and hobgoblins of the forest,” Frolic said. “Good Vulcan, for Cupid’s sake who has tricked us all, befriend us as thou may; and command us howsoever, wheresoever, whensoever, in whatsoever, for ever and ever. We will be in your debt for ever and ever.”

Vulcan is the Roman name of the blacksmith god and is therefore a good nickname to call Clunch the blacksmith.

Cupid is the god of love and the son of Venus. Frolic and his fellow servants are lost because of events following their master’s falling in love, and so it is appropriate for Frolic to blame Cupid for their plight.

“Well, sirs, it seems to me you have lost your way in the wood,” Clunch said, “in consideration whereof, if you will go with Clunch to his cottage, you shall have houseroom and a good fire to sit by, although we have no bedding to put you in.”

Antic, Frolic, and Fantastic cried together, “Oh, blessed blacksmith! Oh, generous Clunch!”

“For your further entertainment, it shall be as it may be, and so on,” Clunch said. “Things must be as they shall be.”

They walked until they reached Clunch’s home, where they heard a dog bark.

“Listen!” Clunch said. “This is Ball, my dog, that bids you all welcome in his own language. Come, when you go inside, be careful not to stumble on the threshold — that’s bad luck.”

He called, “Open the door, Madge; we have guests.”

His old wife, Madge, opened the door.

“Welcome, Clunch, and good fellows all, who come with my goodman,” Madge said. “For my goodman’s sake, come on, sit down. Here is a piece of cheese, and a pudding of my own making.”

A pudding is either a sausage or a sweet dish.

In this society, the word “goodman” meant “head of the household”; in this case, it also meant “husband.”

“Thanks, gammer,” Antic said. “You are a good example for the wives of our town.”

In this society, the word “gammer,” which meant “grandmother,” was used as a nickname for an old woman.

“Gammer, thou and thy goodman sit lovingly together,” Frolic said. “We come to chat, and not to eat.”

Frolic was polite and did not want to put their hosts to any trouble. And since the blacksmith and his wife were not expecting guests, chances are there was not really enough food to go around.

“Well, sirs, if you will eat nothing, let’s clear the table,” Clunch said.

He was polite and did not want to eat in front of them.

Clunch then asked, “Come, what will we do to pass away the time?”

He said to his wife, “Lay a crabapple in the fire to roast for lamb’s-wool.”

Lamb’s-wool was a drink made of ale, the pulp of roasted apples, sugar, and spices.

He then asked his guests, “Shall we have a game at trump or ruff to drive away and pass the time? What do you say?”

Trump and ruff are card games.

“This blacksmith leads a life as merry as a king with Madge, his wife,” Fantastic said. “Sirrah Frolic, I am sure thou are not without some round or other. I have no doubt that Clunch can bear his part.”

In this case, “sirrah” was an affectionate form of address, one friend to another. Neither friend ranked high socially.

A round is a song in which different singers sing various parts, one singer at a time.

“Else you think that I am badly brought up, start the song when you will,” Frolic said. “I will sing my part.”

They sang:

“When the rye reach to the chin,

*“And chopcherry, chopcherry ripe within,
 “Strawberries swimming in the cream,
 “And schoolboys playing in the stream;
 “Then, O, then, O, then, O, my true-love said,
 “Till that time come again
 “She could not live [as] a maid.”*

“Chopcherry” is a game in which the player tried to catch in his or her mouth a cherry suspended on a string.

“Maids” are maidens: unmarried women, virgins.

“This entertainment is good,” Antic said, “but I think, gammer, that a merry winter’s tale would drive away the time trimly and well. Come, I am sure you are not without a score of such merry tales to while away a winter’s evening.”

“Indeed, gammer,” Fantastic said. “A tale of an hour long is as good as an hour’s sleep.”

“Look, gammer, I am sure you know such tales as that of the giant and the king’s daughter, and I know not what else,” Frolic said. “I have seen the day, when I was a little one, I would have followed a moving storyteller for a mile so I could hear such a tale.”

“Well, since you are so insistent, my goodman shall fill the pot with ale and get him to bed,” Madge said. “They who ply their work must keep good hours. One of you, go lie with him.”

Her husband had already heard her winter’s tales, so it made sense for him to rest so he could work hard the next day.

In this society, it was considered proper for individuals of the same sex to share beds. In winter, sharing a bed helped keep both people warm.

Madge said, “He is a clean-skinned man, I tell you, without either spavin or windgall.”

She meant that her husband the blacksmith was healthy and free of disease. His skin was free of sores, and he did not suffer from either spavin or windgall — which are horse diseases!

“Do that, and I am happy to drive away the time with an old wives’ winter’s tale,” she said.

“There’s no better hay in Devonshire; on my word, gammer,” Fantastic said. “I’ll be one of your audience.”

A “hay” is a dance. Fantastic was saying that there was no better entertainment in Devonshire than an old wives’ winter’s tale.

“And I will be another,” Frolic said. “That’s settled.”

“Then I must go to bed with the goodman,” Antic said. “*Bona nox*, gammer. God night, Frolic.”

“*Bona nox*” is Latin for “good night.”

“God night” means “May God give you a good night.”

“Come on, my lad,” Clunch said. “Thou shall take thy unnatural rest with me.”

The rest was unnatural because normally the blacksmith shared the bed with his wife, but the blacksmith was also gently joking that it was unnatural because a mature man and a young man were sharing the same bed.

Antic and the blacksmith exited.

“Yet we shall have this advantage over them in the morning,” Frolic said. “We will be ready at the sight of the dawn to leave extempore — no preparation needed because we will have our shoes on.”

“Now this agreement, my masters, I must make with you,” Madge said. “You will say ‘hum’ and ‘ha’ to my tale, so I shall know you are awake.”

“Agreed, gammer,” Frolic and Fantastic said. “We will do that.”

Madge began telling her old wives’ winter’s tale:

“Once upon a time, there was a king, or a lord, or a duke, who had a beautiful daughter, the most beautiful who ever was; she was as white as snow and as red as blood, and once upon a time his daughter was stolen away, and he sent all his men to seek out his daughter, and he sent so many for so long, that he sent all his men out of his land.”

“Who prepared his dinner, then?” Frolic asked.

“Either hear my tale, or kiss my tail,” Madge said.

“Well said!” Fantastic said. “On with your tale, gammer.”

Madge continued her tale:

“Oh, Lord, I quite forgot! There was a sorcerer, and this sorcerer could do anything, and he turned himself into a great dragon, and carried the king’s daughter away in his mouth to a castle that he made of stone; and there he kept her I know not how long, until at last all the king’s men went out so long that her two brothers went to seek her.

“Oh, I forget! She — I mean, he, the sorcerer — turned a handsome young man into a bear in the night, and into a man” — she meant an *old* man — “in the day, and he, the man, lived by a cross that marked a three-way intersection, and he, the sorcerer, made the enchanted handsome young man’s sweetheart run mad.”

She looked up and said, “By God’s bones, who is coming here?”

CHAPTER 2 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 2 —

Two brothers came to a cross that marked a three-way intersection.

“Be quiet, gammer,” Frolic said. “Here some come to tell your tale for you.”

“Let them alone,” Fantastic said. “Let us hear what they will say.”

“Upon these chalky cliffs of Albion — Great Britain’s white cliffs of Dover — we are arrived now with tedious toil,” the first brother said. “We are traveling the wide world round about, to seek our sister, fair Delia, wherever she is, yet we cannot so much as hear of her.”

“Oh, cruel and unkind Lady Fortune!” the second brother said. “Unkind in that we cannot find our sister — our sister who is unfortunate in her very bad luck. But wait! Who have we here?”

He saw Erestus, an old man who was by the cross, stooping to gather plants for his food.

“Now, father, God be your speed!” the first brother said. “Good luck to you! What do you gather there?”

In this society, people called an old man “father” even when the old man was a stranger to them.

“Hips and haws, and sticks and straws, and things that I gather on the ground, my son,” Erestus said.

Hips are rosehips, and haws are hawthorn berries. They are fruits.

“Hips and haws, and sticks and straws!” the first brother said. “Why, is that all your food, father?”

“Yes, son,” Erestus replied.

“Father, here is an alms-penny for prayers for me,” the second brother said, “and if I succeed in the project I am traveling for, I will give thee as good a gown of grey as ever thou did wear.”

Religious pilgrims wore grey gowns.

“And, father, here is another alms-penny for me,” the first brother said, “and if I succeed in my journey, I will give thee a palmer’s staff of ivory, and a scallop shell of beaten gold.”

A palmer is a religious pilgrim. Pilgrims who traveled to Jerusalem brought back a palm leaf, while pilgrims who traveled to the Shrine of St. James of Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain brought back a scallop shell because it was a symbol of the saint.

Erestus, the old man, had the power of prophecy. He knew that they were seeking a woman.

“Was she fair?” Erestus asked. “Was she beautiful?”

“Yes, the fairest for white, and the purest for red, as the blood of the deer, or the driven snow,” the second brother said.

“Then hark well, and mark well, my old spell,” Erestus said.

In other words, listen carefully and pay attention to my old prophecy.

He continued:

“Be not afraid of every stranger.

“Don’t shy away from every danger.

“Things that seem are not the same.

“Blow a blast of breath at every flame.

“For when one flame of fire goes out,

“Then come your wishes well about:

“If any ask who told you this good,

“Say, the White Bear of England’s wood.”

The first brother said, “Brother, did you hear what the old man said?

“Be not afraid of every stranger.

“Don’t shy away from every danger.

“Things that seem are not the same.

“Blow a blast of breath at every flame.

“For when one flame of fire goes out,

“Then come your wishes well about:

*“If any ask who told you this good,
“Say, the White Bear of England’s wood.”*

The second brother said, “Well, if this should do us any good, then may the White Bear of England’s wood fare well!”

The two brothers exited.

Talking to himself, Erestus said, “Now sit thee here, and tell a heavy, distressing tale, sad and serious in thy mood, and sober in thy cheer.”

“Sober in thy cheer” meant 1) serious in your demeanor, and 2) frugal in your consumption of food. He was eating as he talked.

He continued, “Here sit thee now, and to thyself relate the hard misfortune of thy most wretched state. In Thessaly, land of witches and poisons, I lived in sweet happiness, until Lady Fortune worked my ruin, for there I was wedded to a dame who lived in honor, virtue, love, and fame. But Sacrapant, that cursed sorcerer, being besotted with my beauteous love, my dearest love, my true betrothed wife, sought the means to rid me of my life. But worse than this, he with his chanting and enchanting spells turned me immediately into an ugly bear, and when the sun settles in the west, then I begin to don my ugly hide, and all the day I sit, as now you see, and speak in hard-to-understand riddles, all inspired with prophetic ‘rage’ — inspiration. I seem to be an old and miserable man, and yet I am in the April of my age — I am actually a young man.”

Venelia — his lady — appeared. Anyone observing her could tell she was insane.

“See where Venelia, my betrothed love, runs maddened and frenzied, all enraged, about the woods, all because of the sorcerer’s cursed and enchanting spells,” Erestus said.

Erestus had said he was “wedded” to Venelia, and he had called her “my true betrothed wife.” Apparently, they were engaged to be married, which in this society was a legally

binding contract, but the marriage ceremony had not yet occurred.

Venelia exited, and a man entered the scene.

Erestus said, “But here comes Lampriscus, my discontented neighbor.”

Lampriscus, a beggar, was carrying a pot of honey.

“How are you now, neighbor?” Erestus said. “You look toward the ground as well as I. You are musing on — thinking about — something.”

“Neighbor, I muse on nothing but on the matter I have so often talked to you about,” Lampriscus said. “If you do anything for charity, help me. If you do anything for neighborhood or brotherhood, help me. Never was anyone so encumbered and burdened and troubled as is poor Lampriscus; and to begin, I ask you to please accept this pot of honey to improve your dietary fare.”

“Thanks, neighbor, set it down; honey is always welcome to the Bear,” Erestus said. “And now, neighbor, let me hear the cause of your coming.”

“I am, as you know, neighbor, a man unmarried, and I lived so unquietly with my two wives that every year I keep holy both the days wherein I buried them,” Lampriscus said. “My first wife was buried on Saint Andrew’s day, the other on Saint Luke’s.”

Saint Andrew’s day is November 30; Saint Luke’s day is October 18.

Saint Andrew brought good luck to lovers.

October 18 was a day on which folklore said that young people could dream about their future spouse.

October 18 was also the day of the Horn Fair, leading to jokes about cuckolds: Men with unfaithful wives were said to grow invisible horns on their forehead.

“And now, neighbor, as you of this country — England — say, your custom is out — all the service you owed to your wives is paid,” Erestus said. “But go on with your tale, neighbor.”

“By my first wife, whose tongue wearied me when she was alive, and sounded in my ears like the clapper of a great bell, whose talk was a continual torment to all who dwelt by her or lived near her, you have heard me say I had an attractive daughter.”

“True, neighbor,” Erestus said.

“She it is who afflicts me with her continual clamors, and hangs on me like a burr,” Lampriscus said. “Poor she is, and proud she is; she is as poor as a sheep newly shorn, and as proud of her hopes as a peacock is proud of her well-grown tail.”

“Well said, Lampriscus!” Erestus said. “You speak it like an Englishman.”

Lampriscus continued, “She is as quarrelsome and bad tempered as a wasp, and as stubborn and uncooperative as a child newly taken from the mother’s teat; she is to my age as is smoke to the eyes, or as vinegar is to the teeth — she is very disagreeable.”

Proverbs 10:26 states, “*As vinegar is to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the slothful to them that send him*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

“Holily praised, neighbor,” Erestus said, recognizing the allusion to the Bible. “Do as much for the next daughter.”

“By my other wife, I had a daughter so hard-favored, so foul and ugly and ill-faced, that I think a grove full of golden trees, and the leaves of rubies and diamonds, would not be a dowry answerable to her deformity,” Lampriscus said. “She is so ugly that even the dowry of a wealthy person would not get her married.”

“Well, neighbor, now that you have spoken, hear me speak,” Erestus said.

He prophesied:

“*Send them to the well for the water of life;*

“*There shall they find their fortunes unlooked for.*”

Revelation 21:6 states, “*And he said unto me, It is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will*

give to him that is athirst, of the well of the water of life freely” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Revelation 22:1 states, *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb” (1599 Geneva Bible).*

Jesus speaks of the water of life to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well in John 4:10: *“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest that gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee water of life” (1599 Geneva Bible).*

In Christianity, the “water of life” is “living water” or “the Holy Spirit.”

Erestus then said, “Neighbor, farewell.”

“Farewell, and a thousand times farewell,” Lampriscus said. “May you fare well indeed.”

Erestus exited.

“And now goes poor Lampriscus to put in execution this excellent advice.”

CHAPTER 3 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 3 —

Frolic said, "Why, this goes round even without the musical accompaniment of a fiddling-stick."

"This goes round" means "This story is going well," but Frolic was punning on "round" as meaning a kind of song or dance. He also was saying that this story was as good an entertainment as a song or a dance.

He added, "But, listen, gammer, was this old man the man who was a bear in the night and a man in the day?"

"Yes, this is he!" Madge said. "And this man — Lampriscus — who came to him was a beggar, and dwelt upon a green.

"But be quiet! Who is coming here?"

"Oh, these are the harvestmen — the reapers. Ten to one they sing a song of mowing — a song about cutting the grain with a scythe during harvest."

She would have lost her bet; the harvestmen sang a song of sowing, not mowing.

The harvestmen sang this song:

"All ye that lovely lovers be,

"Pray you for me.

"Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,

"And sow sweet fruits of love;

"In your sweet hearts well may it prove!"

Pleased with their song, they sang it again:

"All ye that lovely lovers be,

"Pray you for me.

"Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,

"And sow sweet fruits of love;

"In your sweet hearts well may it prove!"

The harvestmen exited.

CHAPTER 4 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 4 —

Huanebango and Booby the Clown arrived at the cross marking the crossroads. Huanebango was a braggart knight who carried a two-hand sword: It was long and heavy and required two hands to wield it, and it was old-fashioned.

“Gammer, who is he?” Fantastic asked.

“Oh, this is one who is going to the conjurer,” Madge said. “Let him alone. Hear what he says.”

Huanebango said, “Now, by Mars and Mercury, Jupiter and Janus, Sol and Saturn, Venus and Vesta, Pallas and Proserpina, and by the honor of my house — that is, my family, which is named Polimackeroeplacydus — it is a wonder to see what this love will make silly fellows risk, even in the wane of their wits and the infancy of their discretion — the decline of their intelligence and the immaturity of their judgment.”

Mars is the god of war, and Mercury is the messenger god.

Jupiter is the King of the gods, and Janus is the two-faced god of doorways.

Sol is the Sun-god, and Saturn is the father of Jupiter and other Olympian gods.

Venus is the goddess of beauty, and Vesta is the goddess of the hearth.

Pallas is Minerva, aka Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, and Proserpina is the goddess of vegetation.

Speaking to himself, and calling himself “friend,” Huanebango continued, “Alas, my friend! What fortune calls thee forth to seek thy fortune among brass gates, enchanted towers, fire and brimstone, thunder and lightning? Beauty, I tell thee, is peerless and without equal, and she whom thou loves is precious. Do off and doff and do away with these desires, good countryman. Good friend, run away from thyself; and, as soon as thou can, forget her — that woman

whom none must inherit but he who can tame monsters, achieve great deeds, solve riddles, loose and release people from enchantments, murder magic, and kill conjuring — and that is the great and mighty Huanebango!”

“Listen, sir, listen,” Booby the Clown said. “First know I have here in my hat the flurting — flaunting — feather, and I have given the parish the start for the long stock.”

He had run away from the parish where he had probably been an apprentice in order to follow Huanebango, who carried a long stock — a long sword.

Booby continued, “Now, sir, if it be no more but running through a little lightning and thunder, and ‘riddle me, riddle me, what’s this?’ then I’ll rescue the wench from the conjurer, even if he were ten conjurers.”

“I have abandoned the court and honorable company, to do my devoir — duty — against this sore — troublesome — sorcerer and mighty magician,” Huanebango said. “If this lady is as fair as she is said to be, she is mine, she is mine — *meus, mea, meum, in contemptum omnium grammaticorum.*”

The Latin means “mine (masculine), mine (feminine), mine (neuter), in contempt of all grammar.” Latin nouns have endings that indicate whether the noun is masculine, feminine, or neuter. *Femina* is Latin for woman; it is a feminine noun.

Booby said, “*O falsum Latinum!*”

The Latin means, “Oh, this is false — bad — Latin!”

He continued, “The fair maid is *minum, cum apurtinantibus gibletis* and all.”

He was engaging in his own false Latin. By “minum,” he may have meant “minus,” which means “less” — he may have been calling the beautiful maiden a very small person. Or possibly, he meant “mine-um,” meaning “mine.” Giblets are guts. “*Cum apurtinantibus gibletis*” means “with her appertaining guts.”

Huanebango said, "If she should be mine, as I assure myself the heavens will do something to reward my worthiness, she shall be allied to none of the meanest, least important gods, but be invested in the most famous stock and family of Huanebango Polimackeroeplacydus, my grandfather; my father, Pergopolineo; and my mother, Dionora de Sardinia, famously descended."

"Hear me, sir," Booby the Clown said. "Didn't you have a cousin who was called Gusteceridis?"

"Indeed, I had a cousin who sometimes followed the court unfortunately and without luck, and his name was Bustegusteceridis."

"Oh, lord, I know him well!" Booby the Clown said. "He is the knight of the neat's-feet."

A neat's-foot is the back of the heel of a cow or an ox. Bustegusteceridis is a notable knight of the table — he likes to eat.

"Oh, he loved no capon — a castrated cock (rooster) — better than a neat's-foot!" Huanebango said. "He has often cheated his boy-servant out of his dinner; that was his weakness, good Bustegusteceridis."

"Come, shall we go along on our way?" Booby the Clown asked.

He saw Erestus and said, "Wait! Here is an old man at the cross. Let us ask him the way there — the way to the castle of the evil sorcerer."

He called, "Ho, you gaffer! Please tell me where the wise man — the conjurer — dwells."

A gaffer is an old man — a grandfather.

In this society, a "wise man" or a "wise woman" was someone with knowledge of the occult.

Huanebango requested, "Please tell us where that earthly goddess — the commander of my thoughts, and the fair mistress of my heart — keeps her abode."

"Fair enough, and far enough from thy fingering, son," Erestus said.

To “finger” something means to “seize” something. It can also mean a certain kind of sexual act.

“I will follow my fortune after my own fancy, and act according to my own discretion,” Huanebango said.

“Yet give something to an old man before you go,” Erestus requested.

“Father, I think a piece of this cake might serve your need,” Huanebango said.

“Yes, it would, son,” Erestus said.

“Huanebango gives no cakes for alms,” Huanebango said, referring to himself in the third person. “Ask those who give gifts for poor beggars.”

He then pretended to speak to Delia: “Fair lady, if thou were once enshrined in this bosom, I would buckler — defend and shield — thee!”

He then imitated the sound of a military trumpet: “Haratantara.”

He exited.

Booby the Clown said to Erestus, “Father, do you see this man — Huanebango? You wouldn’t think he’ll run a mile or two for such a cake, or care for a pudding. I tell you, father, he has kept up such a begging of me for a piece of this cake! Whoop! He comes upon me with ‘a superfantial substance, and the foison — plenty — of the earth,’ that I don’t know what he means.”

What did Booby the Clown mean? Probably the meaning was nonsensical. “Superfantial” could be a mistake for “superstantial,” a philosophical term that means “formally existent, but not physically existent.” A substance is physically existent, and so a superstantial substance is a contradiction in terms.

Booby the Clown said, “If he came to me thus, and said, ‘my friend Booby,’ or some such, why, I could spare him a piece with all my heart; but when he tells me how God has enriched me above other fellows with a cake, why, he makes

me blind and deaf at once. Yet, father, here is a piece of cake for you, for the world is hard.”

He gave Erestus some cake.

Erestus said, “Thanks, son, but listen to me:

“He shall be deaf when thou shall not see.

“Farewell, my son:

“Things may so hit,

“Thou may have wealth to mend thy wit.”

In other words:

“Things may so happen that

“Thou may have wealth to make up for your lack of intelligence.”

“Farewell, father, farewell,” Booby the Clown said, “for I must make haste after my two-hand sword — Huanebango — who has gone ahead.”

He exited.

CHAPTER 5 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)**— Scene 5 —**

Sacrapant the Conjuror, alone in a room in his castle, said to himself, "The day is clear, the sky bright and gray. The lark is merry and sings her notes. Each thing rejoices underneath the sky, except for me, whom Heaven has in hate, wretched and miserable Sacrapant.

"In Thessaly I was born and brought up. My mother was named Meroe, she was a famous witch, and by her cunning knowledge I from her did learn to change and alter shapes of mortal men. There in Thessaly I turned myself into a dragon and stole away and kidnapped the daughter to the king, fair Delia, the mistress of my heart — the woman I love — and I brought her here to revive the man — me who seems in appearance to be young and pleasant to behold and yet in reality is aged, crooked, weak, and numb. Thus by enchanting spells I deceive those who behold and look upon my face. But I may as well bid youthful years adieu because she does not reciprocate my love.

"See where the woman comes from whom my sorrows grow!"

Delia, carrying a pot in her hand, entered the room.

"How are you now, fair Delia?" Sacrapant the Conjuror asked. "Where have you been?"

"At the foot of the rock for running water, and gathering roots for your dinner, sir," Delia said.

"Ah, Delia, thou art more beautiful than the running water. Yet thou art far harder than steel or adamant!"

Adamant is a legendary mineral noted for its hardness.

"Will it please you to sit down, sir?" Delia asked.

"Yes, Delia," Sacrapant the Conjuror said. "Sit and ask me for whatever thou want. Thou shalt have it brought into thy lap."

"Then, I ask you, sir, please let me have the best food from the King of England's table, and the best wine in all

France, brought in by the greatest scoundrel in all of Spain,” Delia said.

“Delia, I am glad to see that you are so pleasant and joking,” Sacrapant the Conjuror said. “Well, sit thee down.”

He cast this spell:

“Spread, table, spread;

“Meat, drink, and bread,

“Ever [Always] may I have

“What I ever crave,

[“Whatever I crave,]

“When I am spread:

“With meat for my black cock,

“And meat for my red.”

Witches often had black cocks (roosters) and black cats as their familiar attending spirits.

The blood of a red cock (rooster) was sometimes used for medicinal purposes.

A friar entered with a joint of beef and a pot of wine.

“Here, Delia, will you fall to and eat?” Sacrapant the Conjuror asked.

“Is this the best meat in England?”

“Yes.”

“What is it?”

“A joint of English beef, meat for a king and a king’s followers.”

“Is this the best wine in France?”

“Yes.”

“What wine is it?”

“A cup of neat — undiluted — wine of Orleans, which has never come near the brewers in England,” Sacrapant the Conjuror said.

Brewers in England diluted wine before they sold it.

“Is this the greatest knave in all Spain?” Delia asked.

“Yes.”

“What is he? A friar?”

“Yes, a friar indefinite — of no particular order — and a knave infinite,” Sacrapant the Conjuror said.

Delia said, “Then, I ask you, Sir Friar, tell me before you go: Who is the very greediest Englishman?”

“The miserable and most covetous usurious moneylender,” the friar answered.

In this society, moneylenders were Jews.

“Hold thee there, friar,” Sacrapant the Conjuror said. “Keep that opinion.”

The friar exited.

“But, quiet! Who have we here? Who is coming?” Sacrapant the Conjuror said. “Delia, away, be gone!”

Delia’s two brothers entered the grounds of the castle. Sacrapant saw them through a window, and they saw Delia.

Sacrapant the Conjuror said, “Delia, leave! For we are beset by two men.”

He said to himself, “But Heaven — or Hell — shall rescue her for me.”

Delia and Sacrapant the Conjuror exited.

“Brother, wasn’t that Delia who did appear, or was it only her shadow — her ghost — that was here?” the first brother asked.

“Sister, where are thou?” the second brother called. “Delia, come again! He — that is, me — calls, who grieves because of thy absence.”

He then said to Calypha, his brother, “Call out, Calypha, so that she may hear and cry aloud, for Delia is near.”

An echo repeated the last word: “Near.”

“Near!” the first brother said, “Oh, where? Have thou any news — any tidings?”

An echo repeated the last word: “Tidings.”

“Which way is Delia, then?” the second brother asked. “Is it that way, or this?”

An echo repeated the last word: “This.”

“And may we safely come where Delia is?” the first brother asked.

The echo did not repeat the last word but said, "Yes."

The "echo" was not an echo: The echo was the sorcerer Sacrapant, who was laying a trap for the two brothers.

The second brother asked the first brother, "Brother, do you remember the White Bear of England's wood? He prophesied:

"Start not aside for every danger.

"Be not afraid of every stranger.

"Things that seem are not the same."

The first brother replied, "Brother, why don't we, then, courageously enter?"

"Then, brother, draw thy sword and follow me," the second brother said.

Sacrapant the Conjuror revealed himself. Lightning flashed and thunder sounded. The second brother fell down.

"What, brother, do thou fall?" the first brother asked.

"Yes, and thou, too, Calypha," Sacrapant the Conjuror said.

As a Thessalian sorcerer, he knew the brothers' names.

The first brother fell down.

Sacrapant the Conjuror ordered, "*Adestes, daemones!*"

The Latin means, "Come, demons!"

Two Furies — avenging spirits — arrived from out of Hell.

Sacrapant the Conjuror ordered, "Away with them! Go carry them straight to Sacrapant's cell, there in despair and torture to dwell."

A cell is a room or an apartment.

The two Furies exited with the two brothers.

The two brothers had followed the White Bear's prophecy. So far, the results seemed bad, but more events would follow.

Sacrapant the Conjuror said, "These are the sons of Thenores from Thessaly; they have come to seek Delia, their sister."

He had been born and raised in Thessaly, had fallen in love with Delia, who was the sister of the two brothers, and so had recognized the two brothers.

He continued, “But, with a potion I have given to her, my magic arts have made her forget who she is.”

Sacrapant the Conjuror removed a section of turf and showed a light enclosed in a glass container.

He said, “See here the thing that prolongs my life. With this enchantment I can do anything. And until this light fades and dies, my magical skill shall always endure.”

He prophesied:

“And never shall anyone break this little glass.

“Except she who’s neither wife, nor widow, nor maid.

“So then cheer thyself; this is thy destiny:

“Never to die — but by a dead man’s hand.”

CHAPTER 6 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 6 —

Eumenides, a knight errant, aka wandering knight, arrived at the cross.

He said to himself, “Tell me, Time. Tell me, just Time:
“When shall I see Delia?

“When shall I see the loadstar — the guiding star — of
my life?

“When shall my wandering course end with her sight,
“Or I but view my hope, my heart’s delight?”

Seeing Erestus at the cross, he said, “Father, Godspeed!
My best wishes to you! If you tell fortunes, please, good
father, tell me mine.”

Erestus gave the wandering knight advice and
prophecies:

“Son, I do see in thy face

“Thy blessed fortune is coming apace.

“I do perceive that thou have intelligence and wit.

“Ask thy fate to govern it,

*“For wisdom governed by good thinking and good
advice,*

“Makes many fortunate and wise.

“Bestow thy alms, give more than all —”

Erestus wanted Eumenides to give alms to the poor —
and to give more than all.

Erestus continued his prophecy:

“Till dead men’s bones come at thy call.

“Farewell, my son: dream of no rest,

“Till thou repent that which thou did best.”

Erestus exited.

Eumenides said, “This man has left me in a labyrinth of
perplexity:

“He tells me to give more than all,

“Till dead men’s bones come at my call;

“He tells me to dream of no rest,

“Till I repent that which I do best.”

Despite the admonition to “dream of no rest,” he immediately lay down and slept.

Wiggen, Corebus, the churchwarden, and the sexton arrived. Wiggen’s and Corebus’ friend Jack had died, and they wanted him buried quickly. The churchwarden and the sexton wanted money to pay for the burial.

“You may be ashamed, you whoreson, vile, contemptible scabby sexton and churchwarden, if you had any shame in those shameless faces of yours, to let a poor man lie so long above ground unburied,” Wiggen said. “A rot on you all, you who have no more compassion for a good fellow when he is gone!”

“Would you have us bury him, and pay the costs ourselves to the parish treasury?” the churchwarden asked.

“Parish me no parishes,” the sexton said. “Pay me my fees, and let the rest run on in the quarter’s financial accounts, and put it down for one of your church’s good deeds, in God’s name! For I am not one who fastidiously stands upon the merits of the case.”

The sexton wanted to make sure he got the money that was due to him, and he was OK with the parish bearing the rest of the cost of the funeral.

“You whoreson, sodden-headed sheep’s face,” Corebus said. “Shall a good fellow do less service and more honor to the parish, and yet you won’t, when he is dead, let him have Christmas burial?”

Corebus sometimes made malapropisms. Instead of “less service,” he meant “more service.” Instead of “Christmas burial,” he meant “Christian burial.”

He, however, was gifted at invective. A person with a sodden head is one whose head is soaked with water — or alcohol. He was also saying that the sexton’s head resembled that of a stupid sheep.

“Peace, Corebus! Quiet!” Wiggen said. “As sure as Jack was Jack, the most frolicsome franion — the merriest fellow

— among you, and as sure as I, Wiggen, was his sweet sworn brother, Jack shall have his funeral rites, or some of them shall lie on God's dear earth for it, that's settled once and for all — that's for sure."

"Wiggen, I hope thou will do no more than thou dare to be held accountable for," the churchwarden said.

"Sir, sir, dare or dare not, more or less, answer or not answer, do this, or have this," Wiggen said.

Wiggen hit the churchwarden with a pike-staff. A pike-staff is a walking stick with a metal tip on one end.

The sexton cried, "Help, help, help! Wiggen sets upon the parish with a pike-staff."

The "parish" was the churchwarden, who was a parish official and the representative of the parish.

Eumenides the wandering knight woke up and came over to them.

"Hold thy hands, good fellow," he said to Wiggen. "Stop fighting."

Corebus said, "Can you blame him, sir, for taking Jack's side against this shake-rotten and corrupt parish who will not bury Jack?"

"Why, who was that Jack?" Eumenides asked.

"Who was Jack, sir?" Corebus said. "Who, our Jack, sir? Why, he was as good a fellow as ever trod upon neat's-leather."

Neat's leather is shoe leather. A neat is a cow or ox.

"Look, sir," Wiggen said to Eumenides. "He gave fourscore and nineteen — ninety-nine — mourning gowns to the parish when he died, and because he would not make the number of gowns a full hundred, they would not bury him."

According to Wiggen, Jack had given the church ninety-nine mourning gowns for the impoverished to wear at his funeral. This kind of thing is done for an aristocrat's funeral.

Wiggen asked sarcastically, "Isn't this good dealing?"

If Wiggen was correct about the gift, the good dealing was on Jack's part, not on the church's.

"Oh, Lord, sir, how he lies!" the churchwarden said. "Jack was not worth a halfpenny, and he drunk every penny, and now his fellows, his drunken companions, would have us bury him at the expense of the parish. If we make many such 'bargains,' we may as well pull down the steeple, sell the roof and bells, and use cheap thatch as the roof for the chancel. Jack shall lie above ground until he dances a lively galliard about the churchyard, as far as I, Steven Loach, am concerned."

The chancel is the part of the church near the altar.

"*Sic argumentaris, Domine* Loach," Wiggen said.

The Latin means, "Thus you argue, Master Loach."

Wiggen added, "You say, 'If we make many such 'bargains,' we may as well pull down the steeple, sell the bells, and use cheap thatch as the roof for the chancel — in good time, sir, and hang yourself in the bell ropes, when you have done. *Domine, opponens praepono tibi hanc quaestionem* —"

The Latin means, "Master, in opposition, I put before you this question."

He continued, "— will you have the ground broken to bury Jack or your heads broken first? For one of them shall be done at once, and to begin acting my preference, I'll seal it upon your coxcomb."

He meant that he would begin beating their heads.

Jesters, aka Fools, wore hats that resembled the coxcomb of a cock.

"Hold thy hands, please, good fellow," Eumenides said. "Don't be too hasty."

Corebus said, "You capon's face — you who have the face of a castrated cock — we shall have you turned out of the parish one of these days, with not even a tatter of clothing to cover your arse; then you will be in a worse condition than Jack."

Perhaps he was talking to the churchwarden.

“Indeed, and his condition is bad enough,” Eumenides said.

He then said to the churchwarden, “This fellow is just doing the part of a friend: He seeks to bury his friend. How much money will it take to bury him?”

“Indeed, about some fifteen or sixteen shillings will bury him respectably,” Wiggen said.

“Aye, or even thereabouts, sir,” the sexton said. “Therabouts” could have referred to the “fifteen or sixteen shillings” or to the adjective “respectably.”

“Here, take it, then,” Eumenides said.

As he counted out the money, he said to himself, “And I have left for me only one poor three half-pence. Now I remember the words the old man spoke at the cross:

“*Bestow all thou have*’ — and this is all —

“*till dead men’s bones come at thy call.*”

Eumenides then said, “Here, take it, and so farewell.”

He gave the money to the churchwarden.

Wiggen said, “May God, and all good, be with you, sir!”

Eumenides exited.

Wiggen then said to the churchwarden and the sexton, “You cormorants, I’ll bestow one peal of the church bell for Jack at my own proper costs and charges.”

Cormorants are greedy seabirds.

Corebus said to the churchwarden and the sexton, “You may thank God the long staff and the bilbo-blade didn’t cross your coxcomb. You’re lucky we didn’t beat you.”

A bilbo-blade is a sword, so called because good swords were made in Bilboa, Spain.

He then said to Wiggen, “Well, we’ll go to the church-stile and have a pot of ale.”

He imitated the sound of drinking: “Trill-lill.”

Often, an alehouse was located at the stile at the entrance of a churchyard. A stile allowed people but not herding

animals to cross a fence. Alehouses and churches were the main places of social interaction in villages.

Corebus and Wiggen exited.

The churchwarden said to the sexton, "Come, let's go."

They exited in a different direction from that of Corebus and Wiggen.

CHAPTER 7 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 7 —

Fantastic said, "But listen, gammer, I think that this Jack had a great influence in the parish."

"Oh, this Jack was a marvelous fellow!" Madge said. "He was just a poor man, but very well beloved. You shall see soon what this Jack will come to."

The harvestmen arrived, holding hands with the harvestwomen.

"Quiet!" Frolic said. "Who do we have here? Our amorous harvesters."

"Aye, aye, let us sit still, and let them alone," Fantastic said.

The harvestmen sang this song:

"Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping,

"To reap our harvest-fruit!

"And thus we pass the year so long,

"And never be we mute."

Pleased with their song, they sang it again:

"Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping,

"To reap our harvest-fruit!

"And thus we pass the year so long,

"And never be we mute."

CHAPTER 8 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 8 —

Huanebango stood outside Sacrapant's Castle.

"Quiet!" Frolic said. "Who have we here?"

"Oh, this is an ill-tempered gentleman!" Madge said. "All you who love your lives, keep out of the smell — the range — of his two-hand sword. Now he goes to see the conjurer."

"I think the conjurer should put the fool into a conjuring-box," Fantastic said.

Some kinds of conjuring-boxes are used to make people disappear.

Huanebango recited these lines:

"Fee, fa, fum, here is the Englishman,

'Conquer him who can,

"Come for his lady bright.

"To prove himself a knight,

"And win her love in fight."

Booby the Clown arrived. Not seeing Huanebango, he said, "Who-haw, Master Bango, are you here?"

Seeing Huanebango, Booby said, "Listen, you had best sit down here, and beg for an alms with me."

The alms would be entrance into the castle.

Huanebango replied, "Hence, base cullion!"

Literally, a "cullion" is a testicle. Figuratively, it is a rascal.

He continued, "Here is a man — me — who commands his ingress and egress — his entering and exiting — with his weapon, and will enter at his own voluntary wish and free will, no matter whosoever says no."

A voice said, "No."

A flame of fire shot upward, and Huanebango fell down, clanging his sword on a rock.

"So with that they — Huanebango and the ground — kissed, and spoiled the edge of as good a two-hand sword as

ever God put life in,” Madge said. “Now goes Booby in, in spite of the conjurer.”

Sacrapant, whose voice had said, “No,” and two Furies entered the scene.

“Take him away into the open fields, to be a ravening prey to crows and kites,” Sacrapant said.

Actually, the crows and kites — birds of prey — were ravening: They were ravenous. Sacrapant may have deliberately used the oxymoron to describe a moron.

The two Furies carried out Huanebango.

Sacrapant added, “And as for this villain, let him wander up and down in nothing but darkness and eternal night.”

He struck Booby blind.

Using a nickname for Huanebango, Booby the Clown said, “Here have thou slain Huan, a slashing, spirited knight, and robbed poor Booby of his sight.”

A slashing knight is a swashbuckler, which literally means a person who noisily hits another person’s buckler, aka shield.

“Go away from here, villain, go away!” Sacrapant ordered.

Booby exited.

“Now I have given a potion of forgetfulness to Delia,” Sacrapant said, “so that, when she comes, she shall not know her brothers. Look, where they labor, like rural slaves; with spade and mattock, they dig and loosen this enchanted ground!”

A mattock is a kind of pickaxe.

He continued, “Now I will call her by another name, for *never shall she know herself again until Sacrapant has breathed his last.*”

He looked up and said, “See where she comes.”

Delia entered the scene.

“Come here, Delia, take this goad for prodding cattle,” Sacrapant said. “Here hard at hand two slaves work and dig

for gold. Gore — wound — them with this, and thou shall have enough.”

He handed her a goad.

“Good sir, I don’t know what you mean,” Delia said.

“She has forgotten to be Delia, but she has not forgotten as much as she should forget,” Sacrapant said to himself.

She was talking to him using formal words such as “sir” and “you.” Sacrapant wanted her to like him and use the informal, familiar words “thou” and “thee” when talking to him.

Sacrapant said to himself, “But I will change her name.”

He then said to Delia, using her new name, “Fair Berecynthia, for so this country calls you, go spur these strangers, wench; they dig for gold.”

The goddess Cybele, protector of castles, was worshipped on a mountain named Berecynthia.

Sacrapant exited.

“Oh, heavens, how I am beholden to this handsome young man!” Delia said about Sacrapant.

Because of his sorcery, he appeared to her to be a handsome young man.

She then said, “But I must spur these strangers to do their work. See where they come.”

Her two brothers, in their undershirts, were digging with spades.

“Oh, brother, see where Delia is!” the first brother said.

“Oh, Delia, we are happy to see thee here!” the second brother said.

“Why are you telling me about Delia, you prating, chattering country workers?” Delia said. “I know no Delia, nor do I know what you mean. Apply yourselves to your work, or else you’re likely to smart when I prod you with my goad.”

“Why, Delia, don’t thou know thy brothers here?” the first brother asked. “We have come from Thessaly to seek thee, and thou deceive thyself, for thou are Delia.”

“Yet more of Delia?” she said. “Then take this, and smart.”

She pricked them with the goad and then said, “Do you devise tricks to defer your labor? Work, villains, work; it is for gold you dig.”

“Be quiet, brother, be calm,” the second brother said. “This vile enchanter has completely stolen away Delia’s senses, and she forgets that she is Delia.”

“Cease, cruel thou, thou who hurt the miserable,” the first brother said to Delia.

He then said to the second brother, “Dig, brother, dig, for she is hard as steel. “

They dug, and they saw a light in a glass under a little hill.

“Stop, brother,” the second brother said. “What have thou revealed?”

“Go away, and don’t touch it,” Delia said. “It is something that my lord has hidden there.”

After she covered it again, Sacrapant returned.

“Well done!” he said to her. “Thou drive these diggers well.”

He then ordered the two brothers, “Go get you inside, you laboring slaves.”

The two brothers exited.

Sacrapant said to Delia, “Come, Berecynthia, let us go inside likewise, and hear the nightingale sing her notes.”

CHAPTER 9 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 9 —

Zantippa, the ill-tempered daughter, walked to the Well of Life with a pitcher in her hand.

“Now for a husband, house, and home,” she said to herself, “May God send me a good husband or none, I pray to God! My father has sent me to the well for the water of life, and he tells me that if I speak fair, flattering words, I shall have a husband. But here comes Celanta, my sweet sister. I’ll stand nearby and hear what she says.”

Celanta, the ugly wench, walked to the well for water with a pitcher in her hand.

“My father has sent me to the well for water, and he tells me that if I speak fair, flattering words, I shall have a husband, and none of the worst,” she said to herself. “Well, though I am black, I am sure all the world will not forsake me; and, as the old proverb is, though I am black, I am not the devil.”

The word “black” meant “with a dark complexion.” In this society, the devil was said to be black. This culture valued light complexions; it regarded dark complexions as ugly.

Zantippa came forward and said, “Marry-gup with a murren.”

This was an oath meaning “A pox on you!”

She continued, “I know why thou spoke that, but go thy ways home as wise as thou came, or I’ll send thee home with a wanion — a vengeance.”

She struck her pitcher against her sister’s pitcher, broke them both, and then exited.

“I think that she is the curstest quean — most ill-tempered hussy — in the world,” Celanta said. “You see what she is, a little pretty, but as proud as the devil, and the veriest vixen — the greatest shrew — who lives upon God’s earth. Well, I’ll let her alone, and go home, and get another

pitcher, and, for all this, get myself to the well again for water.”

She exited.

The two Furies carried Huanebango out of Sacrapant’s living chamber and lay him by the Well of Life, and then they exited.

Carrying a pitcher, Zantippa, the pretty but ill-tempered daughter, returned to the well.

She said to herself, “Once again I am here for a husband; and, indeed, Celanta, I have got the head start on you; perhaps husbands grow by the well-side.

“Now my father says I must control my tongue. Why, alas, what am I, then? A woman without a tongue is like a soldier without his weapon, but I’ll have my water, and then be gone.”

A proverb stated, “A woman’s weapon is her tongue.”

Zantippa dipped her pitcher in the well.

A Voice came out of the well and said this:

“Gently dip, but not too deep,

“For fear you make the golden beard to weep.

A Head came up out of the Well of Life with ears of corn dangling from its hair and said this:

“Fair maiden, white and red,

“Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,

“And thou shall have some cockell-bread.”

Cockell-bread was the name of a bawdy game played by maidens in which they pretended to knead bread dough with their buttocks while singing a song. According to folklore, if a maiden kneaded the dough in this way, baked the bread, and gave it to a young man to eat, it would act as a love charm. The Head meant that Zantippa would find a husband.

Such bawdiness may be appropriate. Zantippa had gone to the Well of Life for a husband and the water of life, and the impregnating fluid of life is semen.

Zantippa said, “What is this?”

“Fair maiden, white and red,

*“Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
“And thou shall have some cockell-bread”?*

“‘Cockell,’ do thou call it, boy? Indeed, I’ll give you cockell-bread.”

Angered by the bawdiness implicit in “cockell-bread,” she broke her pitcher upon the Head. Thunder sounded and lightning flashed.

Huanebango, whom Sacrapant had made deaf, rose.

He said, “Philida, phileridos, pamphilida, florida, flortos.”

This is nonsense that sounds like Spanish.

He then said, “Dub dub-a-dub, bounce, said the guns, with a sulphurous huff-snuff.”

“Dub dub-a-dub” is an imitation of drumming. “Bounce” means “bang.” “A sulphurous huff-snuff” is the smell coming from a fired gun or cannon.

He then said, “Waked by a wench, pretty peat, pretty love, and my sweet pretty pigsnie.”

“Pretty peat” means “pretty girl.” “Pigsnie” literally means “pig’s eye,” but it figuratively means “sweetheart.”

He then said, “Just by thy side shall sit me, who is surnamed great Huanebango. Safe in my arms will I keep thee, no matter whether Mars threatens, or Olympus thunders.”

He put his arms around her.

Zantippa said to herself, “Ugh, what greasy groom — greasy man — have we here? He looks as though he crept out of the backside of the well, and he speaks like a drum whose skin has split at the west end.”

Huanebango said, “Oh, that I might — but I may not, woe to my destiny therefore! — kiss what I clasp! But I cannot. Tell me, my destiny, why?”

Apparently, Sacrapant’s spell had made Huanebango both deaf and unable to kiss Zantippa.

Also, perhaps, Huanebango’s destiny had changed. In his short speech, he mentioned “destiny” twice. His first

“destiny” was to rescue Delia from Sacrapant the Conjuror, but now he believed his “destiny” was to marry Zantippa.

“Whoop!” Zantippa said to herself. “Now I have my dream — I have my husband. Did you ever hear so great a wonder as this: three blue beans in a blue bladder — rattle, bladder, rattle?”

To her, Huanebango’s babbling was like the sound of beans in a baby’s rattle.

Huanebango said to himself, “I’ll now set my countenance, and speak to her in prose. It may be that this rim-ram-ruff is too rude an encounter.”

His babbling — his rim-ram-ruff — had been an attempt at poetic flirting, an attempt that had failed.

He said, “Let me, fair lady, if you are at leisure, revel with your sweetness, and rant about that cowardly conjurer who has cast me, or congealed — frozen — me rather, into an unkind sleep, and polluted my carcass — he has violated my body.”

“Laugh, laugh, Zantippa,” she said to herself. “Thou have thy fortune: a fool and a husband under one.”

She intended to be the boss of the two.

“Truly, sweetheart, I am as I seem to be, about some twenty years old, in the very April of my age,” Huanebango said.

“Why, what a chattering ass is this!” Zantippa said to herself.

Huanebango began to speak love poetry:

“Her coral lips, her crimson chin,

“Her silver teeth so white within,

“Her golden locks, her rolling eye,

“Her pretty parts, let them without comment go by,

“Heigh-ho, have wounded me,

“That I must die this day to see!”

The “pretty parts” may be those underneath clothing. “Heigh-ho” is a sigh. In this culture, “to die” meant “to have an orgasm.”

“By Gogs-bones, thou are a flouting, mocking knave,” Zantippa said. “‘Her coral lips, her crimson chin!’ he says, wilshaw!”

“By Gogs-bones” is an oath meaning “By God’s bones.”

Zantippa was playing with words. “Wil” comes from a now obsolete Welsh word meaning “tricky.” (Think of “wily.”) Huanebango’s flouting, mocking words (he would call them poetic words) were tricky. She was saying “wilshaw” rather than “p-shaw.” “Wil-shaw” combines the meanings of “tricky” and “pshaw.”

“True, my own, and my own because mine, and mine because mine, ha, ha!” Huanebango said. “Above a thousand pounds in possibility, and things fitting thy desire in possession.”

Huanebango was detailing his income: His lands provided him up to a thousand pounds annually.

Zantippa said to herself, “The sot thinks I ask about his lands. Lob be your comfort, and cuckold be your destiny!”

“Lob” means “clown” or “lout.” “Lob’s pound” is a slang term for “prison,” and Huanebango’s new “comfort” as a hen-pecked husband could be similar to being in prison.

His new destiny is to be a cuckold: a man with an unfaithful wife.

Zantippa said to him, “Listen, sir; if you will have us, you had best say so in good time — you had best propose to me right away.”

In referring to herself as “us,” she was using the majestic plural.

“True, sweetheart, and I will royalize thy progeny — children — with my pedigree,” he replied.

This may be a happy marriage. Huanebango, being deaf, will not know that Zantippa is a shrew. His deafness will also help her hide her unfaithfulness. Huanebango takes pride in his ancestry, and Zantippa is a proud woman. Being married to a person with important ancestors is something to brag about.

Earlier, Erestus had prophesied to Booby the Clown, "*He shall be deaf when thou shall not see.*"

The prophecy had come true.

Booby the Clown, while Huanebango was blind.

CHAPTER 10 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 10 —

Eumenides stood on a nearby road.

He said to himself, “Wretched Eumenides, still unfortunate, hated by fortune and forlorn by fate, here waste away and die, wretched Eumenides. Die in the spring, the April of my age! Here sit thee down, repent what thou have done: I wish to God that it were never begun!”

He was repenting that which he had done best: resolve to rescue the princess from the evil sorcerer. Earlier, Ereustus had told him this:

*“Farewell, my son: dream of no rest,
“Till thou repent that which thou did best.”*

The Ghost of Jack came up from behind him and said, “You are well overtaken, sir.”

A polite traveler would customarily say that to another traveler he had caught up to.

“Who’s that?” Eumenides asked.

“You are heartily well met, sir,” the Ghost of Jack, invisible, said, giving him a playful pinch.

“Stop it, I say,” Eumenides said. “Who is that who pinches me?”

In this culture, ghosts often pinched people, sometimes maliciously.

The Ghost of Jack now materialized behind Eumenides and then stood where Eumenides could see him.

The Ghost of Jack said, “Trusting in God, good Master Eumenides, that you are in so good health as all your friends were at the making hereof, may God give you a good morning, sir!”

The Ghost of Jack was assuming that Eumenides’ friends had toasted his health, and God had responded by actually making Eumenides healthy. In this culture, some letters began with this kind of salutation. Travellers also often greeted each other by wishing that God would give the other

a good morning. The Ghost of Jack was being very respectful to Eumenides.

The Ghost of Jack then asked, “Don’t you need a neat, competent, handsome, and clean young lad, about the age of fifteen or sixteen years, who can run by your horse, and, when needed, make your mastership’s shoes as black as ink?”

Footmen literally ran by their master’s horse.

The Ghost of Jack then asked, “How do you answer me, sir?”

Eumenides, who apparently did not know that this was a ghost, said, “Alas, pretty lad, I don’t know how I will provide for myself, much less a servant, my pretty boy, because my state of finances is so bad.”

“Be content,” the Ghost of Jack said, “You shall not be so ill a master but I’ll be as bad a servant. Tut, sir, I know you, though you don’t know me. Aren’t you the man, sir — deny it if you can, sir — who came from a strange place in the land of Catita, where a jackanapes flies with his tail in his mouth. Didn’t you come here to seek out a lady as white as snow and as red as blood?”

The Ghost of Jack continued to be playful. Catita is a fairy-tale land with fairytale creatures such as a jackanapes (which is usually a monkey), but it is true that Eumenides came from a faraway land — perhaps even Catita — and that he came here to seek and find a lady.

“Ha, ha!” the Ghost of Jack said. “Have I now said something that touches you closely?”

“I think this boy is a spirit,” Eumenides said to himself, beginning to catch on to the truth. “Someone who knows such private matters must be a ghost.”

He then asked, “How do thou know all this?”

The Ghost of Jack said, “Tut, aren’t you the man, sir — deny it if you can, sir — who gave all the money you had to the burying of a poor man, and had only one three-half-pence

coin left in your purse? Be satisfied, sir, that I'll serve you, that is certain."

"Well, my lad, since thou are so insistent, I am happy to entertain — employ — thee, not as a servant, but as a copartner in my journey," Eumenides said. "But to where shall we go? For I have not any money more than one bare three-half-pence coin."

"Well, master, be content," the Ghost of Jack said, "for unless my divination is wrong, that shall be spent at the next inn or alehouse we come to; for, master, I know you are exceedingly hungry. Therefore, I'll go ahead of you and provide dinner for when you come; no doubt but you'll come fair and softly — that is, at your own leisure — after me."

"Aye, go before me; I'll follow thee."

"But listen, master? Do you know my name?"

"No, I promise thee, not yet."

"Why, I am Jack."

"Jack!" Eumenides said.

Realizing that he was talking to a ghost, he said, "Why, so be it, then."

CHAPTER 11 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 11 —

At an inn, the hostess and the Ghost of Jack set food on the table and fiddlers came to play. Eumenides walked up and down, and he would eat no food.

“What do you say, sir?” the hostess asked him. “Do you please to sit down?”

“Hostess, I thank you,” Eumenides said. “I have no great appetite.”

“Please, sir, what is the reason your master is so strange?” the hostess asked the Ghost of Jack. “Doesn’t this food please him?”

“Yes, it does please him, hostess, but it is my master’s custom to pay before he eats; therefore, give us the bill, good hostess.”

“Indeed, you shall have it, sir, quickly,” the hostess replied.

She exited.

“Why, Jack, what do thou mean?” Eumenides said. “Thou know I haven’t any money; therefore, sweet Jack, tell me what shall I do?”

“Well, master, look in your purse,” the Ghost of Jack replied.

“Why, indeed, it is foolish to do that, for I have no money.”

“Why, look, master,” the Ghost of Jack said. “Do that much for me.”

“Looking into his purse, Eumenides said, “Alas, Jack, my purse is full of money!”

Why “alas”? Is it necessarily a good idea to take money from a ghost?

“You say ‘alas,’ master!” the Ghost of Jack said. “Is that word appropriate to this situation? Why, I think I should have seen you cast away your cloak, and in a bravado make a show of joy as you danced a lively galliard-dance round

about the room. Why, master, your manservant can teach you more intelligence than this.”

The hostess returned.

The Ghost of Jack said, “Come, hostess, cheer up my master.”

“You are heartily welcome,” the hostess said to Eumenides, “and may it please you to eat a fat capon — a fairer bird, a finer bird, a sweeter bird, a crisper bird, a more skillfully prepared bird — that your worship has never eaten the like of before.”

“Thanks, my fine, eloquent hostess,” Eumenides said.

“But listen, master, to one word by the way,” the Ghost of Jack said. “Are you content that I shall get halves and share equally in all you get in your journey?”

“I am, Jack,” Eumenides said. “Here is my hand.”

They shook hands.

Eumenides now trusted the Ghost of Jack.

“Enough, master, I ask no more,” the Ghost of Jack said.

“Come, hostess, receive your money, and I thank you for my good entertainment,” Eumenides said.

He gave her money.

“You are heartily welcome, sir,” she replied.

“Come, Jack, to where shall we go now?” Eumenides asked.

“Indeed, master, let’s go to the conjurer’s immediately.”

“I am happy to do that, Jack,” Eumenides said.

He then said, “Hostess, farewell.”

Eumenides and the Ghost of Jack exited.

Oddly, Eumenides seems to have left without eating. He may have taken the food with him because he wanted to hurry to the conjurer’s castle.

CHAPTER 12 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 12 —

Booby the Clown and Celanta, the ugly wench, went to the Well of Life for water.

Booby, who was blind, said, "Come, my duck, come. I have now got a wife. Thou are fair, aren't thou?"

Celanta, the ugly wench, said, "My Booby, I am the fairest and most beautiful wench alive; have no doubt about that."

"Come, wench, are we almost at the well?" Booby asked.

"Aye, Booby, we are almost at the well now," Celanta replied. "I'll go fetch some water. Sit down while I dip my pitcher in."

A Voice came out of the well and said this:

"Gently dip, but not too deep,

"For fear you make the golden beard to weep.

Celanta gently dipped her pitcher in the well.

A Head came up out of the Well of Life with ears of corn dangling from its hair and said this:

"Fair maiden, white and red,

"Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,

"And thou shall have some cockell-bread."

Celanta combed — raked with her fingers — the ears of corn onto her lap. The corn silk resembled a golden beard.

Another Voice came out of the well and said this:

"Gently dip, but not too deep,

"For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.

Celanta gently dipped her pitcher in the well.

A Second Head came up out of the Well of Life with ingots of gold dangling from its hair and said this:

"Fair maiden, white and red,

"Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,

"And every hair a sheaf shall be,

"And every sheaf a golden tree."

Celanta combed — raked with her fingers — the gold onto her lap. The gold dangled from the Second Head and resembled a golden beard. By being kind to the First Head, Celanta had reaped a golden beard of corn. Because she had been kind to the First Head, she was given the chance to be kind to the Second Head and reap a golden beard of gold. Her kindness had made both Heads call her a “fair maiden.”

“Oh, see, Booby, I have combed a great deal of gold onto my lap, and a great deal of corn!” Celanta said.

“Well done, wench!” Booby the Clown said. “Now we shall have toast enough. May God send us coiners — makers of coins — to coin our gold. But come, shall we go home, sweetheart?”

He wanted the ears of corn to be made into toasted cornbread, and the gold to be made into gold coins.

“Come, Booby, I will lead you.”

Talking to himself, Booby said, “So, Booby, the prophecy has come true:

“Things have well hit;

“Thou have gotten wealth to mend thy wit.”

“Well hit” means “ended well.”

This may be a happy marriage. Booby, being blind, will think that Celanta is beautiful. Indeed, her kindness makes her beautiful.

CHAPTER 13 (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 13 —

The Ghost of Jack and Eumenides stood outside Sacrapant's Castle.

"Come away, master, come," the Ghost of Jack said.

"Go along, Jack, I'll follow thee," Eumenides replied. "Jack, they say it is good to go cross-legged and say one's prayers backwards. What do you think?"

Actually, saying prayers backwards is usually associated with black magic; however, some authorities say that reciting spells backwards can be used to reverse spells. Eumenides may have been misspeaking out of nervousness about meeting the sorcerer. Fortunately, the Ghost of Jack, as a spirit, knew what to do.

"Tut, never fear, master; leave it to me," the Ghost of Jack said. "Here sit you still; speak not a word, and so that you shall not be enticed with Sacrapant's enchanting speeches, I'll stop your ears with this wool I am holding."

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus stopped the ears of his men with wax so that they would not hear the enticing, enchanting songs of the Sirens. Odysseus heard the songs, but he had first taken the precaution of having his men tie him to the mast of the ship they were on so that he would not jump overboard and swim to the Sirens.

The Ghost of Jack put wool in Eumenides' ears and then said, "And so, master, sit still, for I must go to the conjurer."

He exited.

Sacrapant the Conjuror entered the scene, saw Eumenides, and said, "What is this! What man are thou, who sit so sad? Why do thou gaze upon these stately trees without the permission and wish of Sacrapant?"

Following Jack the Ghost's orders, Eumenides did not speak to Sacrapant.

Sacrapant the Conjuror waited a moment and then said, "What, not a word, but mum? Then, Sacrapant, thou are betrayed."

He realized that someone had known to put wool in this person's ears. Someone of the spirit world must be acting against Sacrapant. He also realized his magic was failing because he did not know who this person was.

The Ghost of Jack returned, invisible to Sacrapant, and took Sacrapant's wreath from his head and his sword out of his hand.

Sacrapant the Conjuror said, "What hand invades the head of Sacrapant? What hateful Fury does maliciously envy my happy state? Then, Sacrapant, these are thy last moments alive. Alas, my veins are numbed, and my muscles shrink. My blood is pierced, my breath fleeting away. And now my timeless date — what I hoped would be my eternal life — has come to an end! He — me — in whose life has committed so foul deeds, now with his death his soul descends to Hell."

He died, and the two Furies entered the scene and dragged his body away.

"Oh, sir, have you gone?" the Ghost of Jack said. "Now I hope we shall have some other trouble."

More actions remained to be performed. People would have to take time and make an effort to perform them.

"Now, master, how do you like this?" the Ghost of Jack asked Eumenides. "The conjurer is dead, and he vows never to trouble us more. Now get you to your fair lady, and see what you can do with her."

Eumenides did not reply.

The Ghost of Jack said, "Alas, he did not hear me all this while! But I will help with that."

He pulled the wool out of Eumenides' ears.

"Hello, Jack," Eumenides said. "What news do you have?"

“Here, master, take this sword, and dig with it at the foot of this hill,” the Ghost of Jack said.

Jack gave Eumenides the sword, Eumenides dug at the foot of the little hill, and he found a light in a glass.

“Hey, Jack! What is this?”

“Master, without this the conjurer could do nothing; and so long as this light lasts, so long does his magical art endure, and once this light is out, then his magical art decays.”

“Why, then, Jack, I will soon put out this light.”

“I see, master,” the Ghost of Jack said. “How?”

“Why, with a stone I’ll break the glass, and then blow it out.”

“No, master, you may as soon break the blacksmith’s anvil as this little vial,” the Ghost of Jack said. “Nor can the biggest blast that ever Boreas, the north wind, blew blow out this little light; but she who is not maiden, nor wife, nor widow can blow it out with her breath. Master, blow this horn, and see what will happen.”

He gave Eumenides the horn.

Eumenides blew the horn. Venelia, the betrothed of Erestus, entered, broke the glass, blew out the light, and then exited.

Sacrapant’s prophecy had come true. Earlier, he had said this:

“And never shall anyone break this little glass.

“Except she who’s neither wife, nor widow, nor maiden.

“So then cheer thyself; this is thy destiny:

“Never to die — but by a dead man’s hand.”

Erestus had called Venelia his betrothed wife, but he meant that they were engaged to be married. In this society, this was a legally binding agreement.

The marriage ceremony had not yet happened, so she was not yet a wife.

Of course, she was not a widow.

As to not being a maiden, this may mean 1) she was not an old maiden, and/or 2) she was not unattached and so was

not a maiden, and/or 3) Erestus and she had had sex, something not uncommon after the betrothal.

“So, master, how do you like this?” the Ghost of Jack said. “This is the woman who ran mad in the woods, the betrothed love of the man who keeps the cross; and now, this light being out, all are restored to their former liberty and freedom from Sacrapant’s spells, and now, master, go to the lady whom you have so long looked for.”

The Ghost of Jack opened a door leading into the castle and then drew a curtain, revealing Delia sitting in a chair, asleep.

Eumenides recited a magic chant:

“God speed, fair maiden, sitting alone – there is once.

“God speed, fair maiden, sitting alone – there is twice.

“God speed, fair maiden, sitting alone – that is thrice.”

Delia woke up during Eumenides’ reciting of the spell and said, “I am not sitting alone, good sir, for you are nearby.”

“That is enough, master, she has spoken,” the Ghost of Jack said. “Now I will leave her with you.”

Eumenides said to Delia, “Thou fairest flower of these western parts, whose beauty so reflects in my sight as does a crystal mirror in the sun, for thy sweet sake I have crossed the frozen Rhine. Leaving the fair Po, I sailed up the Danube, as far as the land of Saba; the Danube’s rising waters cut between the Tartars and the Russians: These have I crossed for thee, fair Delia.”

The Rhine, Po, and Danube are all rivers.

Eumenides then said, “So then grant me that which I have sought for so long.”

“Thou gentle knight, whose fortune is so good to find me out and set my brothers free, my faith, my heart, my hand I give to thee,” Delia said.

“Thanks, gentle madam,” Eumenides said, “but here comes Jack; thank him, for he is the best friend whom we have.”

The Ghost of Jack, carrying Sacrapant's head in his hand, entered the scene.

"Hello, Jack!" Eumenides said. "What have thou there?"

"Indeed, master, the head of the conjurer."

"Why, Jack, that is impossible," Eumenides said. "He was a young man."

Jack was carrying the head of an old man.

"Ah, master, he deceived all who beheld him!" the Ghost of Jack said. "But he was a miserable, old, and crooked man, though to each man's eye he seemed young and fresh, because, master, this conjurer took the shape of the 'old' man who kept the cross, and that 'old' man was in the likeness of the conjurer. But now, master, blow your horn."

Eumenides blew his horn.

Venelia (Erestus' betrothed), Delia's two brothers (who were named Thelea and Calypha), and the 'old' man who kept the cross (Erestus) entered the scene. Now that Sacrapant's spells had been broken, Erestus had resumed his real appearance as a young man and Venelia was no longer insane.

"Welcome, Erestus!" Eumenides said. "Welcome, fair Venelia! Welcome, Thelea and Calypha both! Now I have her whom I have sought so long — so says fair Delia, if we have your — her brothers' — consent."

The first brother said, "Valiant Eumenides, thou well deserve to have our favor, so let us rejoice that by thy means we are at liberty. Here may we rejoice in each other's sight, and may this fair lady have her wandering knight."

"So, master, now you think you have accomplished your mission, but I must say something to you," the Ghost of Jack said. "You know that you and I were partners, and I am to have half in all you have gotten."

"Why, so thou shall, Jack," Eumenides said.

"Why, then, master, draw your sword, divide your lady into two halves, and let me have half of her immediately," the Ghost of Jack said.

“Why, I hope, Jack, thou are only jesting,” Eumenides said. “I promised thee half of what I got, but not half my lady.”

“But what else, master?” the Ghost of Jack said. “Have you not gotten her? Therefore, divide her right away, for I will have half; there is no remedy — you must do it.”

“Well, before I will go back on my word to my friend, take all of her,” Eumenides said. “Here, Jack, I’ll give her to thee.”

“Nay, neither more nor less, master,” the Ghost of Jack said, “but exactly just half.”

Eumenides remembered Erestus’ prophecy:

“Bestow thy alms, give more than all”

“Till dead men’s bones come at thy call.”

Eumenides had bestowed alms and had given almost all of his money to bury Jack, but he had not given more than all he had. But now he was being asked to give more than all the money he had had. The Ghost of Jack said that he wanted half of Delia.

But if Eumenides gave more than all he had, then dead men’s bones — that is, the Ghost of Jack — would come at thy — his — call. Why would Eumenides call dead men’s bones? To do good, not evil. In other words, things would work out to a good conclusion.

“Before I will falsify my faith and break my word to my friend, I will divide her,” Eumenides said. “Jack, thou shall have half of Delia.”

“Be not so cruel to our sister, gentle knight,” the first brother said.

“Oh, spare fair Delia!” the second brother said. “She deserves no death.”

“Be calm,” Eumenides said. “I gave my word to him.”

He then said, “Therefore prepare thyself, Delia, for thou must die.”

“Then farewell, world!” Delia said. “Adieu, Eumenides!”

Delia did not run away. Her two brothers did not rush to save her. Erestus and Venelia stayed silent. Eumenides raised his sword to cleave Delia into equal halves.

Why?

They already knew there would be a happy ending. The Ghost of Jack had proven himself to be a benevolent ghost. All had been raised in a society filled with old wives who told old wives' tales. One common feature in such tales was the friendship test. The friend would be tested by being asked to live up to a promise, which turned out to involve performing a horrible task. If he was willing to perform it, he had proven that he was a man of his word and a true friend. But because the other person was also a friend, he would stop the first person from doing the horrible act.

Delia and all others present knew she was in no danger.

Eumenides raised his sword and prepared to strike Delia — and the Ghost of Jack stopped him.

He said, "Stop, master; that I have tested your faithfulness to your word is sufficient. Do you now remember when you paid for the burying of a poor fellow?"

"Aye, very well, Jack."

"Then, master, thank that good deed for this good turn, and so God be with you all!"

The Ghost of Jack leapt down into the ground.

"Jack, what, are thou gone?" Eumenides said. "Then farewell, Jack!"

He then said, "Come, brothers, and my beauteous Delia, Erestus, and thy dear Venelia. We will go to Thessaly with joyful hearts."

"Agreed," the others said. "We will follow thee and Delia."

Everyone except Frolic, Fantastic, and Madge exited.

"What, gammer, asleep?" Fantastic asked.

"By the mass, son, it is almost day; and my windows — my eyes — are shut at the cock's-crow!" Madge said. "My eyes should have been open!"

“Do you hear me, gammer?” Frolic said. “I think this Jack bore a great influence among them.”

“Oh, man, this was the ghost of the poor man over whom they had such a quarrel about burying, and that caused him to help the wandering knight so much,” Madge said. “But come, let us go in. We will have a cup of ale and a toast to use as a sop in it this morning, and then we will part.”

“Then you have made an end of your tale, gammer?” Fantastic asked.

“Yes, indeed,” Madge said. “When this was done, I took a piece of bread and cheese, and came my way; and so shall you, too, before you go, have gone to your breakfast.”

Madge has told and witnessed this story many times before, and her custom, after finishing the tale, is to eat breakfast with those to whom she had told the story, and so she has invited her audience to have breakfast with her.

NOTES (THE OLD WIVES' TALE)

— Scene 4 —

Who! he comes upon me with 'a superfantial substance, and the foison of the earth', that I know not what he means.

(lines 309-310 in New Mermaids edition)

(lines 338-339 in The Revels Plays edition)

Charles Whitworth wrote this:

It is just possible, however, that Peele wrote 'superstantial'; a compositor might have misread a manuscript 'st' as 'f' (especially with so many other 's's', and 'st's' and 'f's' in the immediate vicinity). Two medieval Latin philosophical terms, superstantia and supersubstantia, meant, respectively, 'formally (but not physically) existent' and 'transcending substance'. Thus 'supersubstantial substance' would be clever nonsense: it would be literally self-contradictory. It would thus also continue the Latin wordplay of [lines] 272-5, and it sounds as if it means 'super-abundance', i.e. 'foison'.

Source: Peele, George. *The Old Wife's Tale*. Ed. Charles Whitworth. New Mermaids. London: A & C Black. New York: W W Norton. 1996. P. 20.

— Scene 6 —

[...] he gave fourscore and nineteen mourning gowns to the parish when he died [...]

(lines 470-471 in New Mermaids edition)

(lines 507-508 in The Revels Plays edition)

Patricia Binnie wrote this:

No previous editor has annotated the phrase [“mourning gowns”], and I am indebted to the General Editor for finding this information: ‘In 1575 Sir Thomas Gresham directed in his will that black gowns of cloth at 6s. 8d. the yard were to be given to a hundred poor men and a hundred poor women to bring him to his grave; and at Christopher Hatton’s funeral in 1592 the bier was preceded by one hundred poor people whose gowns and caps were given them.’ (Shakespeare’s England (1916), II, p. 149)

Source: Peele, George. *The Old Wives Tale*. Ed. Patricia Binnie. The Revels Plays. Manchester, England, and Baltimore, Maryland: Manchester University Press and The Johns Hopkins Press, 1980. P. 65.

— Scene 9 —

[...] *ka, wilshaw!* [...]

(line 569 in New Mermaids edition)

(line 707 in The Revels Plays edition)

“Ka” means “quotha” or “he said.”

Some ideas:

1) Possibly, “Wilshaw” is a name, or it is a play on “pshaw.”

Some names are used as insults. For example, Urban Dictionary defines “Poindexter” in this way.

one who looks and acts like a nerd but does not possess [sic] the super-natural intelligence of a nerd.

Source: “poindexter.” Urban Dictionary. Accessed 13 January 2019 <<https://tinyurl.com/ydde8629>>.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “shaw” as a noun as “A thicket, a small wood, copse or grove” and as a verb as “To fence or border (a field) with a shaw.” “Wil” may be

derived from the obsolete Welsh word “*gwil*” meaning “tricky” or “capricious,” as described below.

For what it’s worth, here is some information about the name “Wilshaw” from <surname**db.com**> (Surname Database):

This interesting and long-established surname, with variant spellings Wilsher, Wilcher, Wilshire, Wiltsh(e)a(r) and Wilshaw, is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and is a regional name from the county of Wiltshire in south western England. Recorded as “Wiltunscir” in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, dated 870, and as “Wiltescire” in the Domesday Book of 1086, the name derives from Wilton, once the principal town of the county, and the Olde English pre 7th Century “scir”, a district or administrative division. Wilton, itself is named from the Olde English “tun”, a settlement, and “Wil”, a shorter form of the river-name “Wyllye”, believed to derive from the obsolete Welsh “gwil”, meaning “tricky” or “capricious”; hence, “settlement on the river Wyllye”. The surname was first recorded in the mid 12th Century, and other early recordings include: Nicholas de Wiltesir, who appeared in the 1207 Curia Regis Rolls of Wiltshire, and Thomas Wylshere, who was recorded as a witness in the 1483 Fine Court Rolls of Cambridgeshire. On July 22nd 1543, Elizabeth Wilsher and Richard Smyth were married in Twickenham, London. A Coat of Arms granted to the family is described thus: “Per chevron blue and gold, in chief six crosses crosslet of the second. Crest - A lion rampant red maned proper.” The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Hunfr’ de Wilechier, which was dated 1157, in the “Pipe Rolls of Sussex”, during the reign of King Henry II, known as “The Builder of Churches”, 1154 - 1189. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to “develop” often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling.

Source: “Last Name: Wilshaw.” The Surname Internet Database. Accessed 9 January 2019.

<<https://tinyurl.com/y7dx5umk>>.

In my opinion, “wilshaw” may be a name but it is very likely a play on words, as I say in my retelling of the play. Instead of saying “pshaw,” Zantippa says “wilshaw,” which combines the meanings of “pshaw” and of “tricky” or “*gwil*.”

2) Another possibility is that “wilshaw” is the dialectical “wilta-shalta,” meaning “willy-nilly.” The meaning is that Huanebango chooses his words willy-nilly. The editors of *Elizabethan Plays* write in a note that “ka, wilshaw!” means this:

“*Quotha wilta-shalta, i.e., quoth he willy-nilly.*”

Source: *Elizabethan Plays*. Edited by Arthur H. Nethercot, Charles R. Baskervill, and Virgil B. Heltzel. Revised by Arthur H. Nethercot. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. P. 255.

The definition for “wilta-shalta” as “willy-nilly” can be found in this book:

English Dialect Dictionary, Being Complete Vocabulary All Dialect Words Still Use, Or Known Have Been Use During Last Two Hundred Years: T-Z. Supplement. Bibliography. Grammar. Edited by Joseph Wright. Published by Henry Frowde, Amen Corner. E.C., London. 1905.

<<https://tinyurl.com/y9ddyk72>>.

— Scene 9 —

Stroke me smooth, and comb my head,

And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

(lines 620-621 in New Mermaids edition)

(lines 671-672 in The Revels Plays edition)

The passage has a bawdy meaning:

If the Head is a reference to the head — and more — of a penis, then the meaning of the words “stroke me smooth” is obvious.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one meaning of “comb” as a noun is a “deep hollow or valley.”

Also according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one meaning of “comb” as a verb is to “beat, thrash, give a ‘dressing’ to.”

Wikipedia says this about “The ‘moulding’ of cocklebread” in its entry on “Cockle bread”:

In the 17th century a sexual connotation is attached not to the bread itself but to “a dance that involved revealing the buttocks and simulating sexual activity” which was known as “moulding” cockle bread.[3]

John Aubrey writes of “young wenches” indulging in a “wanton sport” called “moulding of Cocklebread” where they would “get upon a Tableboard, and as they gather-up their knees and their Coates with their hands as high as they can, and then they wabble to and fro with the Buttocks as if they were kneading of Dough with their Arses”.[1] While doing this, the young women would sing the rhyme:

My dame is sick, and gone to bed.

And I’ll go mould my cocklebread!

Up with my heels and down with my head,

And this is the way to mould cockle-bread.[4]

Aubrey compares this, writing “I did imagine nothing to have been in this but mere wantonness of youth ... but I find in Buchardus’s book Methodus Confitendi ... one of the articles of interrogating a young woman is, if she did ever subjugere panem clunibus, and then bake it, and give it to the one she loved to eat”. [2] From this he decides “I find it to be a relic of natural magic, an unlawful philtrum” (i.e. aphrodisiac or love charm). [5][2]

Writing in A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature, Gordon Williams sees Aubrey’s “wanton sport” in a 1641 mention of moulding cocklebread, a “sexual sense” in a prayer mentioning the practice from 1683, and considers it “transparent” in the 1683 Fifteen Real Comforts Of Matrimony which “tells how ‘Mrs. Betty has been Moulding of Cockle-bread, and her mother discovers it’; the consequence is a ‘By-blow in her belly’”. [6]

Footnotes:

2) Hazlitt, William Carew (1905). *Faith and Folklore: a dictionary of national beliefs, superstitions and popular customs, past and current, with their classical and foreign analogues, described and illustrated*. London: Reeves and Turner. pp. 331–332. Retrieved 2014-09-19.

3) Richard Brome (25 June 2014). *A Jovial Crew*. A&C Black. p. 122. ISBN 978-1-4081-4013-0.

4) Brand, John (1854). *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar and Provincial Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions*. H. G. Bohn. p. 414.

5) A. McLaren, *Reproductive Rituals* (1984), p. 37.

6) Gordon Williams (13 September 2001). *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart*

Literature: Three Volume Set Volume I A-F Volume II G-P Volume III Q-Z. A. & C. Black. pp. 264–265. ISBN 978-0-485-11393-8.

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— Scene 10 —

are not you the man, sir, deny it if you can, sir, that came from a strange place in the land of Catita, where a Jack-an-apes flies with his tail in his mouth, to seek out a lady as white as snow and as red as blood?

(Lines 689-692 in New Mermaids edition)

(Lines 741-745 in Revels editions)

“Catita” may be a made-up word to represent a fairy-tale land, but it does have some definitions, some or all of which may be contemporary rather than Elizabethan.

In Portuguese, “*catita*” (male) means “elegant person.”

In Portuguese, “*catita*” (female) means “house mouse, small sail.”

Source of two definitions above:

<https://en.bab.la/dictionary/portuguese-english/catita>

In Latin American Spanish, “*catita*” means “parrot.”

Source of above definition:

<http://www.spanishdict.com/translate/catita>

According to Wiktionary, “*catita*” is Portuguese (Portugal and Brazil) and can mean these things:

- 1) short-tailed opossum (as a noun)
- 2) pretty (nice-looking) (as an adjective)

Source: <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/catita>

BONUS: THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE

**Chapter 1: The Jests of George Peele with Four of his
Companions at Brainford. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE
PEELE)**

George and some of his friends were merry together at the tavern, having a greater store of money than usual, although they were as regardless of their silver coins as a garden whore is of her honesty [chastity], yet they intended for a season to become good managers of their wealth, if they knew how to be sparing of the money that their pockets were then furnished with.

Five pounds they had among them, and they knew that a plot must be cast so that they might be merry with extraordinary cheer for three or four days, and yet keep their five pounds whole in stock.

George Peele was the man who must do it, or none, and all together they conjured him by their loves, his own credit, and his reputation that he would use his wit and intelligence in coming up with a plot, and they promised that they would help him carry out the plot as much as in them lay.

George, who was as easy as they were earnest for him to be won to such an exploit, consented, and they gathered their money together and gave it all to George, who would be their purse-bearer, and the other four would seem to be servants to George Peele. The better to carry out this plot, they would go and exchange their cloaks and make the one as like the other as they could possibly could, which they might quickly do at the shops of Beelzebub's brothers, the brokers.

This was soon accomplished, and George was furnished with his black satin suit, and a pair of boots that were as familiar to his legs as the pillory is to a baker's or collier's neck, and he sufficiently possessed his friends with the whole scope of his intent, as, gentle reader, the sequel will show.

Instantly they took a pair of oars, also known as rowers or watermen or ferrymen, whose arms were to make a false gallop [a cantor] no further than Brainford, where their fare was paid them so liberally that each of them, the next tide to London, purchased two new waistcoats.

Yet, should these good benefactors come to their usual places of trade, and if they spy a better fare than their own, and they think that perhaps the gentleman (the better fare) has more mind to go (and thus is willing to pay more money than their own fare), they will not only fall out with him (the rower, or ferryman) who is of their own sweet transporters, as they are, but they will also verbally abuse the fare with foul speeches, such as “a Pox go with you” or “the Devil go with you,” as their Godfather Charon the Ferryman of Hell has taught them.

I speak not this of all ferrymen, but of some who are brought up in the East, some in the West, some in the North, but the most part are brought up in the South. As for the rest, they are honest complete men.

Let’s leave the ferrymen and come back to honest George, who is now merry with sack [white wine] and sugar at the Three Pigeons in Brainford.

No wine was lacking, the musicians were playing, the host was drinking, and the hostess was dancing with the worshipful justice, for so then George was termed, and he had left his mansion house in Kent and come there with the purpose to be merry with his men because he could not be merry so conveniently near home, by reason of a shrewish wife he had.

[At least, that is the story George told the host and hostess.]

The gentle hostess gave him all the entertainment her house could afford, for Master Peele had paid royally, and his five pounds were reduced to ten groats.

Now George Peele's wit and intelligence labored to bring in that five pounds that he had spent there, and soon he hatched a plot.

Sitting down at dinner, George said, "My host, how falls the tide out for London?"

"Not until the evening," said the host. "Have you any business in London, sir?"

"Yes, by the Virgin Mary," said George. "But I intend not to go home for two days. Therefore, my host, saddle a horse for my man-servant to ride to London, if you are so well furnished with horses, for I must send him for another bag of money. Ten pounds has seen no sun these six months."

"I am badly furnished if I cannot furnish you with that," said the host, and he immediately saddled for him a good horse, and away rode one of George's "men-servants" to London, where he waited for the good hour of Master Peele's return to London.

In the meantime George ordered great cheer — very good food and drink — for supper, saying that he expected some of his friends from London.

Now you must imagine there was not a penny owing in the house to the host and hostess, for he had paid in cash as liberally as Caesar, as far as Caesar's wealth went. Indeed, most of the money he had spent was one Caesar's, an honest man yet living in London.

But to the catastrophe. [A catastrophe is the final part of a play.]

All the day before, one of the other "serving-men" of George Peele had been a great solicitor to the hostess, asking that she would beg his master [George] to give him permission to go and see a maiden, a sweetheart of his so far away as

Kingstone, and he said that before his master went to bed, he would return again. He also said that he was sure that she might command it at his master's hands and so persuade George to give him permission to do that.

The kind hostess was willing to please the young fellow, knowing in her time what belonged to such love matters, and she went to Master Peele, and tried to persuade him to let his manservant leave for a time, but he angrily refused. But she was so earnest in it that she swore that George would not deny her when she protested that the man-servant was going only to see an uncle of his some five miles away.

"Marie, I thank you," said George. "But, my good hostess, would you so discredit me, or has the knave no more wit and intelligence than at this time to go, knowing I have no horse here — would the base cullion [rascal] go on foot?"

"No, good sir," said the Hostess. "Don't be angry. It is not his intention to go on foot, for he shall have my mare, and I will assure you, sir, upon my word he shall be here again on time to help you go to bed."

"Well," said George, "Hostess, I'll take you at your word. Let him go: His negligence shall alight upon you."

"So be it," said the hostess. So she went down, and sent away civil Thomas, for so she called him, on the back of her mare to visit his sweetheart.

Thomas, however, instead of riding to Kingstone, took London in his way, where meeting with the other horseman whom George had sent to London, awaited the arrival of George Peele, which was not long after.

The two "man-servants" were at London, and George was in his chamber at Brainford, accompanied by no one except one Anthony Nit, a barber, who dined with him continually, from whom George had borrowed a lute to pass away the

melancholy afternoon, although George could play as well as Banks' horse.

The barber very modestly took his leave, and George obsequiously bid him to supper, requesting that the barber (God willing) would not fail to eat with him.

George, being left alone with his two remaining supposed serving-men, told them how to escape the inn.

Walking in the court, George found fault with the weather, saying it was rawish and cold. The kind hostess, hearing him complain, fetched her husband's holiday gown, which George thankfully put on him and then called for a cup of sack, saying that after drinking the wine he would walk into the meadows and practice upon his lute.

"Good for your worship to do so," said the hostess.

George walked directly to Sion, where having the advantage of a pair of rowers at hand, he made his journey for London.

His two friends left behind had the plot in their heads by George's instructions for their escape, for they knew he was gone.

The hostess was in the market buying provisions for supper, the host was working at tables, and the two masterless (because their master was not present) men (friends of George) requested the maids to excuse them if their master came, for, said they, "We will go drink two pots with Smug Smith's wife at old Brainford."

"We will do so," said the maids. So away went the two men to the Smiths at old Brainford, and from thence they went to London, where they all met, and sold the horse and the mare, the gown and the lute, and the money they received was as badly spent as it was lewdly got.

How the host and the hostess looked when they saw the event of this, go to the Three Pigeons at Brainford, and you shall know.

NOTES:

A purse is a moneybag.

Apparently, George's friends obtained cloaks that were very similar and so would appear to be George's livery — distinctive clothing that showed which master the servants served.

Apparently, the brokers were buyers and sellers of clothing. Since the anonymous author of *The Jestes of George Peele* calls them Beelzebub's 'brother'[s], he may not have held a high opinion of them.

Charon is a mythological ferryman who transports souls into the Land of the Dead. He appears as a character in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Dante's *Inferno*, among other works.

A groat is a coin of small value.

A cullion is a rascal.

Banks' horse was a trained horse that could perform tricks, although playing a lute was not one of them.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a gown is "A loose flowing upper garment worn as an article of ordinary attire."

This sentence puzzles me: "Ten pounds has seen no sun these six months." I guess it means that the money was out of sight in a cupboard or other place.

Chapter 2: The Jests of George and the Barber. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was not as merry at London with his capons and claret, as poor Anthony the barber was sorrowful at Brainford for the loss of his lute, and the barber therefore determined to come to London to seek out George Peele.

Anthony Nit the Barber had in London a kinsman whose name was Cuts or Feats. He was a fellow who had good skill in tricks on the cards, and he was well acquainted with the place where George's usual abode was. For kindred's sake he directed the barber where he should find George, which was at a blind alehouse in Sea-coal lane.

There he found George in a green jacket and a Spanish-fashioned hat, all alone eating a serving of oysters. The barber's heart danced within him for joy he had so happily found him, and he gave him the time of the day. George was not a little abashed at the sight of the barber, yet he did not reveal it openly. George, who at all times had a quick invention, was not now behindhand to entertain the barber, and George knew why the barber had come to him.

George thus saluted him, "My honest barber, welcome to London. I partly know your business: You have come for your lute, haven't you?"

"Indeed, sir," said the barber, "that is the reason for my coming."

"And believe me," said George, "you shall not lose your labor; please stand to and eat an oyster, and I'll go with you presently. For a gentleman of great worship in the city of London borrowed it from me for the use of his daughter, who plays exceedingly well and had a great desire to have the use of the lute. But, sir, if you will go along with me to the gentleman's house, you shall have your lute with great satisfaction, for had you not come to London, I assure you

that I would have sent it to you, for you must understand that all that was done at Brainford among us mad gentlemen, was only a jest, and no otherwise.”

“Sir, I don’t think otherwise,” said the barber, “but I would request your worship that as you had it of me in love, so you would help me to it again in kindness.”

“Oh, God, what else?” said George. “I’ll go with thee presently, even as I am, for I came from hunting this morning, and if I were to go up to certain gentlemen above, I should hardly get away.”

[In other words, he would not go upstairs to dress in better clothing because people upstairs would detain him, perhaps in conversation. So said George.]

“I thank you, sir,” said the barber.

Wearing his green jacket and holding a very pretty walking stick in his hand, George went with the barber, until he came almost at the alderman’s house.

He suddenly stopped and said, “Before God, I must beg your pardon at this instant, for I have just thought that if I should go to the alderman dressed as I am, it would be imagined that I had had some of my lord’s hounds out this morning; therefore, I’ll take my leave of you, and meet you wherever you want about one o’clock.”

“Nay, good sir,” said the barber. “Go with me now, for I intend, God willing, to be at Brainford tonight.”

“Do you say so?” said George. “Why, then I’ll tell you what you shall do. You are here a stranger, and altogether unknown, so lend me your cloak and your hat, and you put on my green jacket, and I’ll go along with you directly.”

The barber was wearing better clothing (a new cloak and a fair hat) than George (who was wearing an old hat and a

green jacket), and George was saying that he (George) needed to be better dressed to meet the alderman. Since the barber was unknown in London and would be returning quickly to Brainford, his wearing less good clothing at a gentleman's house for a while would not affect him much. But George's wearing old clothing might be regarded as an affront to the alderman.

The barber, who was loath to leave George until he had his lute, yielded to the exchange of clothing. So when they came to the gentleman's porch, the barber put on George's green jacket and his Spanish hat, and George put on the barber's new cloak and his fair hat. Both of them being thus fitted, George knocked at the door, and the porter heartily bid him welcome, for George was well known because at that time he had all the oversight of the pageants.

George asked the porter to bid the barber welcome because, George said, "My friend is a good fellow and a keeper, M. Porter, and he is one who at his pleasure can bestow a haunch of venison on you."

"By the Virgin Mary, that can I," said the barber.

"I thank you, sir," answered the porter. "M. Peele, my master is in the hall. Will it please you to walk in?"

"With all my heart," said George, "and in the meantime let my friend keep you company."

"That he shall, M. Peele," said the porter, "and if it would please him, he shall eat a simple dinner with me."

The barber gave the porter hearty thanks. He did not have any misgivings about M. Peele after seeing him so well-known at the gentleman's house, and seeing himself so welcome, and so he began to chat with the porter.

George Peele went directly to the alderman, who now had come into the court in the eye of the barber. In the court, George, after making many complaints, drew a black [blank?] paper out of his bosom, pointed to the barber, and then read [said?] this to the alderman:

“I humbly desire your worship to be my friend in a slight matter. Yonder hard-favored knave, who sits by your worship’s porter, has dogged me to arrest me, and I had no other means but to take to your worship’s house for shelter. The occasion is but trivial; it is only for stealing a piece of flesh. In doing this, I myself consorted with three or four gentlemen of good fashion, who would not willingly have our names come in question. Therefore, this is the boon I ask: that your worship would have one of your servants let me out at the garden door. If you do this, I shall think myself much indebted to your worship.”

The kind gentleman, little dreaming of George Peele’s deceit, took him into the parlor, gave him a pair of angels [gold coins], and caused one of his servants to let George out at the garden door. The door was no sooner opened, but George went on his way so the barber would not see him anymore, and all the way he went he could not choose but laugh at his knavish trick, how he had gulled the simple barber, who sat all this while with the porter and blew on his nails.

The fellow who had opened the garden door and let out George went to the barber and said, “You whoreson keeperly rascal,” said the fellow, “do you come to arrest any honest gentleman in my master’s house?”

“Not I, so God help me,” said the barber. “Please, sir, where is the gentleman — M. Peele — who came along with me?”

“He is far enough away,” said the fellow, “to avoid your coming near him, for he has gone out at the garden door.”

“Garden door?” said the barber. “Why, do you have any more doors than one?”

“We have, sir, and get you hence or I’ll set you going, goodman keeper.”

“Alas,” said the barber. “Sir, I am no keeper [jailor]. I am quite ruined. I am a barber dwelling at Brainford.”

With weeping tears, the barber up and told him how George had treated him. The servant went in and told his master. When the alderman heard the barber’s story, he could not help laughing at him. Yet in pity of the poor barber, he gave him twenty shillings towards his loss. Sighing, the barber took it, and he went towards his home in Brainford, and whereas he had come from thence in a new cloak and a fair hat, he went home weeping in an old hat and a green jacket.

NOTES:

A blind inn may be an inn that is not lighted, or is hidden away, or has blinds.

A keeper is a jailor or a warden. A keeper can be a gamekeeper, which may be what the porter thinks when George says that the barber is a keeper. (The barber may thought that George called him a keeper because he kept (possessed) a lute.

Barbers often had lutes that their customers could use to entertain themselves.

Pageants are medieval mystery plays or plays with religious themes. The anonymous author of *The Jestes of George Peele* may be punning, however, because a pageant, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is also “A performance intended to deceive; a trick.”

George hardly seems to have had time to write anything on a piece of paper, so perhaps “black” [blacke] is a misprint of “blank.”

Or perhaps the paper had a black border, indicating bad news, such as being accused of stealing venison.

“To blow (on) one’s nails” means “to wait; to mark time,” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

“Nails” are fingernails.

An angel is a gold coin that is worth 10 shillings, aka half-a-pound.

Chapter 3: How George Peele Became a Physician. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was once happily furnished both with a horse and with money, although the horse he hired, and the money he borrowed, but no matter how he was possessed of them, towards Oxford he rode to make merry with his friends and fellow students.

During his journey he stopped at Wickham, where he sojourned that night. While he was at supper, accompanied by his hostess, among other table-talk, they fell to talking about doctoring, of which the hostess was a simple professor.

George Peele, observing the humor [character] of the she-doctor, upheld her in and approved of all the strange cures she talked of, and he praised her womanly endeavor, telling her that he loved her so much the better for it because it was a thing that he professed, both medicine and doctoring. George had a dictionary of physical [medical] words that he used so that it might set a better gloss upon that which he seemingly professed: a knowledge of medicine.

He also told his good hostess that at his return he would teach her something that should do her no hurt, for he said, “At this instant I am going about a great cure as far as Warwickshire, to a gentleman of great wealth, one who has been in a consumption this half-year, and I hope to do him good.”

“Oh, God,” said the hostess, “there is a gentleman not a quarter of a mile off who has been a long time sick of the same disease. Believe me, sir, if it would please your worship before your departure in the morning, just to visit the gentleman and give your medical opinion of him and his health, I don’t doubt that the gentlewoman — his wife — will be very thankful to you.”

“Indeed,” said George, “perhaps at my return I may visit him, but at this time my haste is such that I cannot, and so good night, hostess.”

So away went George to bed, and the giddy hostess, who had the nature of most women, thought that night as long as ten, until she decided what to do with that burden of news that she had received from the new doctor (for so George called himself).

Morning having come, at the break of the day the hostess trudged to this gentleman’s house and told his wife what an excellent man the hostess had at her house. She protested that he was the best seen in medicine, and that he had done the strangest cures that she ever heard of, and she said that if the gentlewoman would just send for him, there was no question he would do her husband good.

Glad to hear of anything that might procure the health of her husband, the gentlewoman immediately sent one of her serving-men to request that the doctor come and visit her husband. When George heard this message, he wondered at it, for he had no more skill in medicine than in music, and they were both as distant from him as heaven is distant from hell.

But George put on a bold face, and away he went to the sick gentleman. After he arrived there, after giving some compliments to the gentlewoman, he was brought to the chamber where the ancient gentleman lay wonderfully sick, for all the doctors had given up on him.

George felt his pulse and his temples, and said that the old gentleman was very far spent, yet, said he, “Under God, I will do him some good, if Nature is not quite extinct.”

He then asked whether they had a garden.

“That I have,” said the gentlewoman.

“I ask you to direct me there,” said George.

When he came to the garden, he cut a handful of every flower, herb and blossom, and whatever else was in the garden, and collected them and carried them in the lap of his cloak. He boiled them in ale, strained them, boiled them again, and when he had all the juice out of them, he used it to make some bottles of drink, and he caused the sick gentleman to drink off a maudlin cupful, and told his wife to give him that same drink at morning, noon, and night, protesting that if anything in this world did her husband good, it must be that drink.

He also directed the gentlewoman to keep her husband wonderfully warm, “and at my return,” said George, “some ten days hence, I will return and see how he fares, for by that time something will be done, and so I will take my leave.”

“Not so,” said the gentlewoman, “your worship must stay and eat a simple dinner with me today.”

“Indeed,” said George, “I cannot now stay; my haste is such that I must immediately get on my horse and leave.”

You may suppose that George was in haste until he was out of the gentlewoman’s house, for he didn’t know whether or not he had poisoned the gentleman, which made him so eager to be gone out of the gentleman’s house.

The gentlewoman, seeing she could by no means get him to stay, gave him two pairs of angels [gold coins], which never shined long in his purse because he spent them so quickly, and she desired him at his return to come back to her house.

George promised to return, and with seeming niceness [reluctance] took the gold, and towards Oxford he went, forty shillings heavier than he had been, and he splendidly partied while his money lasted.

But see the strange result of this: Whether it was the virtue of some herb that he had gathered, or the high opinion the gentleman had of George Peele and his doctoring [the placebo effect], but it so pleased God that the gentleman recovered, and in eight days he walked around, and that fortunate potion that George had made at random, did him more good than many pounds that he had spent in half a year before in real doctors' medicine.

George's money being spent, he made his return towards London, and when he came within a mile of the gentleman's house, he inquired of a country fellow how the gentleman was doing.

The fellow told him, "God be praised, my good landlord is well recovered by the efforts of a virtuous gentleman who had come this way by chance."

"Are you sure of it?" asked George.

"Yes, believe me," said the fellow. "I saw the old gentleman in the fields just this morning."

This was no simple news to George. He immediately set spurs to his horse, and whereas he had thought to shun the town, he went directly to his inn.

At his arrival, the hostess clapped her hands, the hostler laughed, the tapster leapt, and the chamberlain ran to the gentleman's house, and told him the doctor had returned.

How joyful the old gentleman was, let them imagine who have any after-healths. George Peele was sent for, and after a million of thanks from the old gentleman, and his friends, George Peele had twenty pounds delivered to him.

How long it took him to spend the money, let the taverns in London witness.

NOTES:

A chirurgian is a surgeon, or doctor.

In this culture, consumption is a wasting disease.

A hostler takes care of horses.

A tapster is a bartender.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a chamberlain is the “ person in charge of the bedrooms at an inn.”

A health is a toast in which one wishes for the welfare of a person.

Just guessing through context, but an after-health may be the return of health after an illness.

Chapter 4: How George Helped His Friend to a Supper. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was invited one night by certain of his friends to supper at the White Horse in Friday Street. That evening as he was going there, he met an old friend of his, who was so ill at the stomach, hearing George tell him of the good cheer — food and drink — that George went to, while the friend lacked both food and money, that the friend swore he had rather have gone a mile out of his way than to have met George at that instant.

“Believe me,” said George, “I am heartily sorry that I cannot take you along with me, since I myself am just an invited guest; besides, you lack the proper clothes, and so you are unfit for such a company. By the Virgin Mary, however, I’ll do this: If you will follow my advice, I’ll help you get your supper.”

“I’ll do anything,” the friend said to George. “Just come up with a plan, and I’ll execute it.”

George immediately told him what he should do, and they parted.

George was well entertained, with an extraordinary welcome, and he was seated at the upper end of the table when the supper was being brought up. His friend had been watching, and when he saw that the food was carried up, he went to the table.

When George saw him, George said, “You whoreson rascal! What are you doing here?”

“Sir,” said the friend, “I have come from a party whom you know of.”

“You rogue,” George said, “didn’t I warn you about this?”

“Please, sir,” said the friend. “Let me tell you why I have come.”

“Do you prate, you slave?” said George, and he took a rabbit out of the serving dish, and threw it at him.

His friend said, “You treat me very badly.”

“You dunghill,” said George, “do you defy me?”

He took another rabbit out of the serving dish and threw it at his friend’s head and after that he threw a loaf of bread at him.

George then drew his dagger and acted as if he were going to throw it at his friend, but the other gentlemen at the table stopped him.

Meanwhile his friend took the loaf of bread and the two rabbits, and away he went. When George saw that he was gone, after a little fretting, he sat quietly.

So by that honest trick he helped his friend to his supper, and he was never suspected for it by the company.

NOTES:

The upper end of the table was the best seating. Spices such as salt were placed at the upper end of the table.

George’s friend had the initials H. M.

Being called “whoreson” (the son of a whore) is, of course, an insult.

Chapter 5: How George Peele was Shaven, and the Revenge He Took. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

A gentleman dwelled in the West Country, but he had stayed in London a term longer than he intended, by reason of a book he owned that he wanted George to translate out of Greek into English.

When he wanted money, George got it from the gentleman, but the more the gentleman supplied George with money, the further off George was from finishing his translation of the book, and the gentleman could not get George to finish the translation, whether by fair means, or entreaty, or double payment, for George was of the poetical disposition, and he never wrote as long as his money lasted. Only about a quarter of the book was done.

Therefore, the gentleman plotted a means to take such an order with George the next time he came to him for money, so that George would finish translating the book and give it to the gentleman.

It was not long before the gentleman had George's company; the purpose of his visit was to get more money. The gentleman bid him welcome and caused him to stay for dinner, where falling into conversation about his book, he found that it was as nearly finished as it was two months ago.

The gentleman, meaning to be gulled and tricked no longer, caused two of his men to bind George hand and foot in a chair. George asked them what they meant by it but received no verbal answer. The gentleman sent for a barber. George had a well-grown beard of an indifferent size, and the gentleman made the barber shave him beard and head, leaving George as bare of hair as he was of money. The barber was well contented for his pains because he left George looking like an old woman wearing a man's clothes,

and George's voice became it well, for his voice was more like that of a woman than a man.

"George," said the gentleman, "I have always treated you like a friend, and my purse has been open to you. You have a book of mine to translate, and you know it is a thing I highly esteem, but you have been slow to translate it, and therefore I have treated you in this fashion so that I might have the translation of my book finished, which shall be as much for your profit as my pleasure."

So then the gentleman commanded his serving-men to unbind George, and putting his hand into his pocket, he gave George two pairs of angels, saying, "M. Peele, drink this, and by the time you have finished translating my book, your beard will be grown. Until your beard grows again, I know that you will be ashamed to walk abroad."

George patiently took the gold, said little, and when it was dark night so that no one could see him, he took his leave of the gentleman, and went directly home.

I omit the wonder his wife made when she saw him, but imagine those who shall behold their husbands in such a situation. George went to bed, and before morning he had plotted sufficiently how to cry *quid pro quo* with his politic [scheming] gentleman.

NOTE:

Quid pro quo means "this for that." The gentleman had played a trick on George, and George was going to return the favor.

Chapter 6: How the Gentleman was Gulled for Shaving of George. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George had a daughter of the age of ten years, a girl of a pretty form and an excellent wit. All parts of her were like her father, save her middle, and she had so tutored George all night, that although he himself was the author of the scheme to get revenge on the gentleman, yet if he had been transformed into his daughter's shape, he could not have done it with more conceit [intelligence]. [In other words, although this was George's idea originally, she was able to greatly improve on it.]

George at that time dwelt at the Bank-side, from whence comes this she-sinew early in the morning with her hair disheveled, wringing her hands, and making such a pitiful moan with shrieks and tears, and beating of her breast, that the people were all amazed. Some marveled at the child, others tried to make her tell them what was wrong; but none could stop her by any means. She kept her journey, crying, "Oh, my father, my good father, my dear father, over the bridge!" through Cheapside, and so to the Old Bailey, where the gentleman sojourned.

Sitting herself down there, with a hundred people staring at her, she began to cry out, "Woe to that place, that my father ever saw it! I am a castaway! My mother is ruined!"

Hearing the noise, one of the gentleman's serving-men came down, looked at her, and knew her to be George Peele's daughter. He immediately ran up and told his master, who commanded his serving-man to bring her up.

The gentleman was in a cold sweat, fearing that George had, as a result of the wrong the gentleman did him the day before, in some way destroyed himself. When the girl came up, he demanded to know the reason why she so lamented and called upon her father.

George's flesh and blood, after a million sighs, cried out at him that he had made her father, her good father, drown himself.

These words once uttered, she fell into a counterfeit swoon, but the gentleman soon restored her. This news went to his heart, and he being a man of a very mild temperament, cheered up the girl, made his serving-men go and buy her new clothes from top to toe, said he would be a father to her, gave her five pounds, and told her to go home and carry it to her mother, and in the evening he would visit her.

At this, by little and little she began to be quiet and requested him to come and see her mother. He told her that he would not fail to visit her mother, and he told her to go home quietly.

So downstairs she went pertly, and the wondering people who had stayed at the door in order to hear the reason for her grief, received from her nothing but knavish answers, and home she went directly.

The gentleman was so crossed in mind, and disturbed in his thought at this unhappy occurrence that his soul could not be quiet until he had visited this woeful widow, as he thought George's wife to be, and immediately he went to Black Friars, hired a pair of rowers, and went directly to George Peele's house, where he found George's wife plucking the feathers of larks, the crying crocodile (George's daughter) turning the spit, and George pinned up in a blanket to keep warm as he worked at his translation.

The gentleman, more gladdened by the unlooked-for life of George than saddened by the loss of his money, took part of the good cheer [food and drink] George had for supper, marveled at the cunning of the wench [George's daughter], and a few days later had a finished translation of his book.

NOTES:

At this time, the word “wench” could be used affectionately.

A sinew can be a rib in a leaf. George’s daughter is also a daughter of Eve.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “sinew” can also mean “Strength, energy, force.”

“Pertly” means fearlessly or boldly.

Chapter 7: The Jest of George Peele at Bristow. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was at Bristow, and because he stayed in an inn there somewhat longer than his money would last him, his bill had grown so large that he could not get out of the stable the palfrey that should carry him to London.

It so fortune'd at that instant that certain actors came to the town, and they stayed at that inn where George Peele was. To the actors, George was well known, being in that time an excellent poet and playwright. As such, he had the acquaintance of most of the best actors in England. To the trivial sort of actors, he was but so-so in his acquaintance of them. These actors were of the trivial sort. They knew George only by his reputation and not otherwise.

No more than three actors of the company came with the carriage. The rest of the company were behind, by reason of a long journey they had, so they could not act that night.

Hearing that, George had soon a stratagem in his head to get his horse free out of the stable and money in his purse to bear his expenses as he made his way up to London.

And this is the stratagem:

George went directly to the mayor and told him that he was a scholar and a gentleman and that he had a certain *History of the Knight of Rhodes*; and in addition, he had a piece about how Bristow was first founded and by whom, and a brief of all those who were mayor before him in that worshipful city. George requested that the mayor with his presence, and the rest of his brethren, would grace his labors.

The mayor gave George permission to produce the performance, and he also appointed him a place for the production, but as for himself, he could not be there because it was in the evening, but the mayor told him to make the

best use he could of the city, and very liberally gave him an angel, which George thankfully received.

George then went about the business. He got his stage made, his *History* advertised, and he rented the actors' costumes to flourish out his show, promising to pay them liberally. He also requested that they would favor him so much as to gather him his money at the door. (He did this because he thought it his best course to employ them, lest they should spy out his knavery, for they have perilous — dangerous — heads.)

They willingly agreed to do him any kindness that lay in them. In brief, they carried their costumes to the hall and placed themselves at the door. George in the meantime with the ten shillings he had been given by the mayor, delivered his horse out of Purgatory, and took him to the town's end, and there placed him, so the horse would be ready at his coming.

By this time the audience had come, and so forty shillings were gathered, which money George put in his purse, and putting on one of the actor's silk robes, after the trumpet had sounded three times, out on the stage he came, bowed low, and went forward with his Prologue, which was thus:

A trifling Toy, a Jest of no account, pardie [by God].

The Knight, perhaps you think for to be I:

Think on so still; for why [because] you know that thought is free,

Sit still a while, I'll send the actors to ye [you].

After saying the Prologue, he threw some fireworks that he had made out among the audience, and downstairs he went, got to his horse, and so with forty shillings he rode his horse

to London, leaving the actors to deal with the angry audience.

When George's jest was known, the actors' innocence excused them because they were as well gulled as the mayor and the audience.

NOTES:

A palfrey is a horse that is used for ordinary riding.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "thought is free" means "people are at liberty to think as they like."

A jest is a notable deed.

To be gulled is to be cheated and/or fooled.

**Chapter 8: How George Gulled a Punk, Otherwise
Called a Croshabell [Prostitute]. (THE JESTS OF
GEORGE PEELE)**

Coming to London, George fell in company with a cockatrice [prostitute] who pleased his eye so well that George drew close to her, and offered her wine, which the croshabell willingly accepted. To the tavern they went, where after a little idle talk, George fell to the question about the thing you know of. [In other words, he propositioned her.]

The she-hobby [prostitute] was very dainty, which made George far more eager to bed her, and the lecherous animal offered much to obtain his desire. To conclude, nothing she would grant to except ready money, which was forty shillings, not a farthing less. If he would meet her price, she would tell him where he should meet her the next night.

George saw how the game went — she was more for lucre than for love — and thus he cunningly answered her:

“Gentlewoman, howsoever you speak, I do not think your heart agrees with your tongue; the money you demand is but to test me, and indeed it is only a trifle to me, but because it shall not be said I bought that item of you I prize so highly, I’ll give you a token — a gift — tomorrow that shall be more worth than your demand, if you please to accept it.”

“Sir,” said she, “it contents me well, and so, if it pleases you, at this time we’ll part, and tomorrow in the evening I will meet you where you shall appoint.”

The place of meeting was determined, and they kissed and parted. She went home, and George went into Saint Thomas Apostles, to a friend of his, from whom he knew he could get a petticoat on credit. (The first letter of his friend’s name begins with G.) He got a petticoat from his friend, at the price of five shillings, which money is still owed this day.

The next night being come, George and the croshabell met at the place appointed, which was a tavern. There they were to dine. That ended, George was to go home with her, to end his yeoman's plea in her common case.

But Master Peele had another drift in his head, for he so plied her with wine that in a small time she spun such a thread that she reeled homewards, and George was delighted to be her supporter. When to her house she came, with nothing so much painting in the inside, as her face had on the outside [her face had makeup, but her house had little paint inside] with much ado her maid got her to bed. The croshabell was no sooner put in bed than she fell fast asleep. Seeing that, George sent the maid for milk and a quart of sack [white wine] to make a medicinal drink.

But before the maid's return, George made so bold as to take up his own new petticoat, a fair gown that belonged to the croshabell, two gold rings that lay in the window, and away he went.

The gown and the gold rings he sold, and the petticoat he gave to his honest wife, one of the best deeds he ever did for her.

How the croshabell looked when she awoke and saw this, I was never there to know.

NOTES:

Words used for "prostitute" in this story: "punk," "croshabell," "cockatrice," "she-hobby."

"Croshabell" comes from *crouse*, which means "lively" and "bold" and *belle*, which means "attractive woman."

A cockatrice is a mythological monster: a two-legged dragon with the head of a rooster, aka cock.

A hobby-horse is a prostitute, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

To be gulled is to cheated and/or fooled.

A case is a vagina. The prostitute had a common case; in other words, she engaged in public relations.

A yeoman is a servant. One Elizabethan meaning of “servant” is lover. George is supposed to end his yeoman’s plea in the prostitute’s common case; this puns both on a law case and on sex.

Chapter 9: How George Read a Playbook to a Gentleman. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

There was a gentleman whom God had endowed with a good living (income) to maintain his small wit and intelligence. He was not an absolute fool, and in this world he did have good fortune, and he was in a manner a friend to George, a friend who took great delight to have the first hearing of any work that George had done. The fool himself was a writer, and had a poetical invention of his own, which when he had with great labor finished writing his pages, their fatal end was for privy purposes. [That is, they were used as toilet paper.]

George had invited this self-conceited brock [proud stinking man] to hear him read out loud a score of sheets of paper. George's Christianly pen had written Finis to the famous play of *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek*. Hyrin was in Italian called a courtesan; in Spain, a margarite; in French, a curtain; and in England, among the barbarous, a whore; but among the gentlefolk, their usual associates, a punk. Now, however, there is the latest refined word for them. The authority for the new word was brought from a climate as yet unconquered, the fruitful County of Kent, where they call each of them a croshabell, which is a word but recently used, and fitting with their trade, being of a lovely and courteous condition.

This fantastic — this odd man — whose brain was made of nothing but cork and sponge, wore his black satin suit, a gown with a collar furred with coney [rabbit skin], and his slippers. Being in the evening, he thought to hear George's book, and then to return to his inn. (This was not of the wisest, being of S. Bernard's.)

George bid him welcome and told him he would gladly have his opinion of his book. The fool willingly condescended, and George began to read, and between every scene he

would make pauses, and demand his opinion, asking how he liked the carriage [execution] of it.

The fool said that he liked “wondrously well, the conveyance [execution of it].”

“Oh,” said George, “but the end is far better,” for he meant to carry out another kind of conveyance — a theft — before the two departed.

George was very tedious and slow in reading, and the night grew old.

“I protest,” said the gentleman, “that I have stayed overlong, and I fear I shall hardly get into my inn.”

“If you fear that,” said George, “we will have a clean pair of sheets, and you will enjoy a simple lodging here.”

“Here” was the room in the inn where George was staying.

This house-gull willingly embraced it, and to bed they went, where George in the middle of the night spied his time and put on the dormouse’s clothes (which were better than George’s), desired God to keep him in good rest, and honestly took his leave of him and the inn, which he owed four nobles.

When the drone awaked, and found himself so left, he had not the wit to be angry, but swore scurvily at his misfortune, and said, “I thought he would not have treated me this way.” And although it so pleased the Fates that he had another suit to put on [George’s old suit of clothing], yet he could not get away from thence until he had paid the money George owed to the inn, which for his credit he did, and when he came to his own lodging, in anger he made a poem of it:

Peele is no Poet, but a gull and a clown,

To take away my clothes and gown:

I vow by Jove, if I can see him wear it,
I'll give him a glyg [gleek, jibe], and patiently bear it.

NOTES:

I changed “invented to half a score sheets of paper” to “invited to hear him read out loud a score of sheets of paper.”

Some words for “fool” are “house-gull” and “dormouse” and “drone.”

A noble is a unit of money.

George Peele’s play *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek* has been lost, assuming it ever existed.

Jove is Jupiter, King of the gods.

In this culture, it was not unusual for two people of the same sex to sleep in one bed.

Chapter 10: How George Peele Served Half a Score Citizens. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George once had invited half a score of his friends to a great supper, where they were surpassingly merry, no cheer wanting, wine enough, and music playing.

The night growing on, and being ready to depart, his friends called for a reckoning of the bill.

George swore that there was not a penny for them to pay. They, being men of good fashion, by no means would yield to that, but every man threw down money — some ten shillings, some five, some more — and protested that they would pay something.

“Well,” said George, taking up all the money, “seeing you will be so willful, you shall see what shall follow.”

He commanded the music to play, and while they were skipping and dancing, George got his cloak, sent up two bottles of hypocras wine, and left them. He also left them the reckoning to pay.

They, wondering at how long George was away, meant to be gone, but they were stopped by the way, and before they left, they were forced to pay the reckoning anew.

This showed a mind in George: He didn’t care whom he deceived as long as he profited for the present.

NOTES:

In this context, “to serve” means “to treat,” usually in an unpleasant manner.

Hypocras is a spiced, sugared wine.

Chapter 11: A Jest of George Going to Oxford. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

Some half-dozen citizens who had often been solicitors with George, who was a Master of Art at the University of Oxford, requested that he would ride with them to the commencement, which was being held at midsummer.

George, willing to please the gentlemen, who were his friends, rode along with them. When they had ridden the better part of the way, they stopped at a village called Stoken, five miles from Wickham. Good cheer — food and drink — was ordered for dinner, and all the company was frolicsome, except for George, who could not be in that pleasant vein that ordinarily possessed him because he was without money. But he had not paced forty turns about the chamber before his brain had created a plan to get money for himself in a way that would bring him good reputation and yet would glean the money from someone in the company of his friends.

There was among them one excellent ass, a fellow who did nothing but briskly walk up and down the chamber, so that his money might be heard to clink in his pocket. George observed this fellow and secretly conveyed this fellow's gilt rapier and dagger into another chamber, and there secretly hid it. That done, he called up the bartender, and pawning his cloak to him borrowed five shillings for an hour or so, until his serving-man came (as he could enjoy himself well enough with five shillings). So much money George had, and then who was merrier than George?

The food was brought up, and they set themselves down to eat their dinner, all full of mirth, especially my little fool, who drank not of the conclusion of their feast. Dinner ended, much prattling conversation had passed, and every man began to buckle on his weapons. At this time this Hitchcock discovered that his rapier was missing. Hearing this, all the

company were amazed. The fool was besides his wits, for he had borrowed it from a special friend of his, and he swore he would rather spend 20 nobles than lose that rapier.

“It is strange,” said George, “that it should be gone in this fashion. None are here but ourselves, and the fellows of the house.”

The fellows of the house were examined, but no rapier could be heard of. All the company of friends were much grieved, but George pretended to be particularly bothered and swore that it would cost him forty shillings, but he would know what had become of the rapier, if skill and knowledge could do it, and with that he made the hostler saddle his horse, for George would ride to a scholar, a friend of his, who had skill in such matters.

“Oh, good M. Peele,” said the fellow, “lack no money. Here are forty shillings, see what you can do, and if you please, I’ll ride along with you.”

“Not so,” said George, taking his forty shillings, “I’ll ride alone, and you be as merry as you can until my return.”

So George left them, and rode directly to Oxford. There he acquainted a friend of his with all the circumstances of the disappearance of the rapier. This friend immediately got on horseback and rode along with him to laugh at the jest.

When they came back, George told the company of friends that he had brought one of the rarest and most splendid men in England. They with much compliment bid the newcomer welcome. He, after putting on a distracted countenance and saying strange words, took this bullfinch by the wrist, and led him into the privy, and there willed him to put in his head, until he (the “scholar”) had written his name and counted to forty. The fool willingly did so. When that was done, the scholar asked him what he had seen?

“By my faith, sir, I smelt a villainous scent, but I saw nothing,” the fool said.

“Then I have the answer,” said the “scholar,” and with that he told him where his rapier was, saying, “It is just North-East, enclosed in wood near the earth.”

All of them made a diligent search for the rapier until George, who had hid it under a bench, found it, to the comfort of the fellow, the joy of the company, and the eternal credit of his friend, who was entertained with wine and sugar.

Having money in his pocket, George redeemed his cloak and rode merrily to Oxford, where this loach [fool] did not spare any expense because of the good fortune he had in the happy finding of his rapier.

NOTES:

The Elizabethans had no paper money; all coins were silver or gold.

The fool “drank not of the conclusion of their feast” may mean that the fool did not want the dinner to end.

Words meaning fool: “ass” and “Hitchcock” and “bullfinch” and “loach.”

A loach is a small European fish.

Chapter 12: How George Served His Hostess. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was staying at an old widow's house, and he ran up so large a bill that his credit would stretch no farther because the widow had made a vow not to part with drink or food without receiving ready money.

Seeing the fury of his perverse hostess, George in grief stayed in his chamber, and he called to his hostess and told her, "You should understand that I am not without money, however poor I appear to you, and that my diet shall testify, but in the meantime, good hostess, send for this friend of mine."

She did, and his friend came. To this friend George imparted his mind, the effect of which was this: to pawn his cloak, hose, and doublet, unknown to his hostess.

George said, "For the next seven nights, I intend to keep my bed."

(Truly he spoke, for his intention was that the bed should not keep him any longer.)

Away the friend went to pawn George's apparel. George ordered good cheer for supper. This food was no shamle-butchers stuff, but according to the place. Because George's chamber was remote from the house, at the end of the garden, and because his apparel was gone, it appeared to him as the counter [prison], and therefore to comfort himself, he dealt in poultry.

His friend brought the money and supped with him, and George very liberally paid his hostess, but he caviled with her at her unkindness, vowing that while he lay there, none should attend and wait on him but his friend.

The hostess replied, "In God's name, I am well contented with that arrangement," meaning that she was happy to let George's friend and not her wait on George.

George was also happy with that arrangement, for none knew better than himself what he intended to do.

In brief, this is how he treated his kind hostess:

After his clothing and money were gone, he took the feather-bed he lay on and gave it to his friend to slyly convey it away. This friend had as villainous a wolf in his belly as George, though the wolf was not altogether as wise as George, for that feather-bed they devoured in two days, feathers and all.

The feather-bed was no sooner digested, but away went the coverlet, sheets, and the blanket, and at the last dinner, when George's good friend perceived that nothing was left but the bed-cords, as the Devil would have it, straight came in the friend's mind the fashion of a halter [a noose around his neck as he was hung for theft].

Thinking of the noose, the foolish knave pretended to go to fetch a quart of sack [white wine] for his friend George. This sack to this day never saw a vintner's cellar because it never existed as the friend used it merely as an excuse to leave George's chamber. And so he left George in a cold chamber, a thin shirt, and a ravished bed, with no comfort left him except the bare bones of deceased capons.

In this distress George thought about what he might do because nothing was left to him. His eye wandered up and down the empty chamber, and by chance he spied an old suit of armor, at which sight George was the most joyful man in Christendom, for the armor of Achilles, which Ulysses and Ajax strove for, was not more precious to them than this old suit of armor was to him. He immediately clapped it upon his back, held the halberd [weapon that combined a spear-point and a battle-axe] in his hand, put the morion [helmet]

on his head, and so got out the back way and marched from Shoreditch to Clarkenwell, to the no small wonder of those spectators who beheld him.

After George arrived at the wished-for haven he sought, an old acquaintance of his furnished him with an old suit of clothing and an old cloak in exchange for his old armor.

How the hostess looked when she saw that metamorphosis in her chamber, judge those bomborts [people who serve liquor] who live by bartending, between the ages of fifty and sixty. [Bartenders of that age have experienced such things for themselves.]

NOTES:

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a doublet is a “close-fitting body-garment” worn by men.

George “dealt in poultry” may mean he hired a prostitute to comfort himself. At the time, the word “chick” could be used as a term of endearment for a woman. This bawdy interpretation, however, very well could be wrong. Once one knows how bawdy the Elizabethan playwrights were, one can find bawdiness where it is not intended. Possibly, the passage simply means he ate chicken rather than beef. (The capon bones that appear later in the story are chicken bones.) Often, however, the Elizabethan playwrights would have both an innocent meaning and a bawdy meaning in the same passage.

After the death of Achilles, the Greeks decided to award his armor to the best of the Greeks. The main contenders were Great Ajax and Odysseus. The Greeks awarded the armor to Odysseus. Great Ajax then went mad and committed suicide.

Regarding the last paragraph of the story:

I worked construction after graduating from a U.S.A. high school. My fellow workers would go to a certain bar and cash their checks. This bar had a pool table in an adjoining room, and my fellow workers, who were drinking, of course, held a spitting contest using the pool table as the field of contention. For the next few days, that room was closed.

Chapter 13: How He Served a Tapster [Bartender]. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George was making merry with three or four of his friends in Pie Corner, where the bartender of the house was much given to poetry, for he had engrossed *The Knight of the Sun* and *Venus and Adonis*, and other pamphlets that the stripling had collected together, and knowing George to be a poet, he took great delight in his company, and out of his bounty would bestow a pair of cans [containers] of spirits on him.

George, observing the temperament of the bartender, meant soon to work upon him and take advantage of him.

“What will you say,” said George to his friends, “if out of this spirit of the cellar, I fetch a good angel [a gold coin] that shall invite us all to supper?”

“We would gladly see that,” said his friends.

“Content yourself,” said George. “You will be satisfied.”

The bartender ascended from the cellar with his two cans of spirits. He delivered one to M. Peele and the other to George’s friends, and he gave them kind welcome, but George, instead of giving him thanks, told the bartender not to trouble him, and then he said to his friends, “I protest, gentlemen, that I wonder you will urge me so much. I swear I don’t have it on me.”

“What is the matter?” said the bartender. “Has anyone angered you?”

“No, indeed,” said George. “I’ll tell you — it is this: There is a friend of ours in Newgate [a prison], for nothing but only the command of the justices, and he being now to be released, sent a message to me to bring him an angel. I love the man dearly well, and if he wants ten angels, he shall have them, for I know him to be sure to repay them, but here’s the

misery — either I must go home, or I must be forced to pawn this, an old Harry groat out of my pocket.”

The bartender looked at the old Harry groat and said, “Why, if it pleases you, sir, this is only a groat.”

A groat was a coin that was worth only four pence.

“No, sir,” said George. “I know it is only a groat, but this groat I will not lose for forty pounds because I received this from my mother as a testimony of a lease of a house I am to possess after her decease, and if I should lose this groat, I would be in a fair situation, and either I must pawn this groat, or there the fellow must lie still.”

A “fair situation” is ambiguous. The bartender thought that it meant a very bad situation, but George thought that if he could get an angel — a gold coin worth enough to buy a good meal and drinks for himself and his friends — for a mere groat, then that would be a fair, aka good, situation indeed.

The bartender said, “If it pleases you, I will lend you an angel on the security of the groat, and I will assure you that it shall be safe.”

“Will you?” said George. “As you are an honest man, lock it up in your chest, and let me have it whenever I call for it.”

“As I am an honest man, you shall,” said the bartender.

George delivered him his groat, and the bartender gave him ten shillings. To another tavern George and his friends went with the money, and there they merrily spent the money.

It turned out that a short time afterward, the bartender, making many of these missteps, fell to decay, and indeed was turned out of service, losing his job and having no more money in the world than this groat, and in this misery he met George, who was as poor as himself.

“Oh, sir,” said the bartender, “you are happily met. I have kept your groat safe, although since I saw you last, I have undergone great extremity; and I protest, except for that groat, I have not one penny in the world. Therefore I ask you, sir, to help me to my money and take back your pawn.”

“Not for the world,” said George. “You say that you have only that groat in the world. My bargain was that you should keep that groat until I demanded it from you, and I do not ask it from you. I will do you more good than that because you are an honest fellow: Keep that groat still, until I call for it. As long as you keep it, the proudest Jack in England cannot justly say that you are not worth a groat. If I were to take the groat from you, then they might justly say that, and so, honest Michael, farewell.”

So George left the poor bartender picking his fingers, with his head full of proclamations of what he might do.

At last, sighing, the bartender ended with this proverb:

For the price of a barrel of beer,
I have bought a groat’s worth of wit,
Is that not dear?

NOTES:

A groat is a coin worth four pence. A Harry groat is a groat that was coined by King Henry VIII.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an old Harry groat is a groat that “bears the king’s head with a long face and long hair.”

Chapter 14: How George Served a Gentlewoman. (THE JESTS OF GEORGE PEELE)

George used to often go to a certain inn in this town, where a kinswoman of the good wives in the house, held a great pride and vain opinion of her own mother-wit. Her tongue was continually wagging like a pendulum, and because she had heard that George was a scholar, she thought she would find a time to give him notice that she had as much in her head, as was ever in her grandfather's. Yet in some things she differed from the women of those days: For their natural complexion was their beauty, but the beauty that Nature scanted her, this titmouse replenished by art, as her boxes of red and white makeup daily can testify.

At this time, putting on makeup was calling painting.

George arrived at the inn among other gallants, threw his cloak upon the table, greeted the gentlemen, and soon called for a cup of Canary wine. George had a pair of hose on, that for some offence dared not be seen in that hue they were first dyed in, but from the hose's first color being a youthful green, the hose's long age turned the green into a mournful black, and the hose's antiquity was in print: Its great age could be easily read. Perceiving that, this busy-body woman thought about how to give it to him to the quick, and drawing near M. Peele, looked upon his breeches.

"Indeed, sir," said she, "these are exceedingly well printed with great old age."

At which words, George being a little angered in his mind that his old hose were called in question, answered, "And by my faith, Mistress, your face is most damnably ill painted."

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked.

"By the Virgin Mary, I mean this, Mistress," said George, "That if it were not for printing and painting, my arse and

your face would grow out of reparations [would be in very bad shape].”

Hearing this, she bit her lip, and in an apparent fury went down the stairs.

The gentlemen laughed at the sudden answer of George, and being seated at dinner, the gentlemen would necessarily have the company of this witty gentlewoman to dine with them. She with little denying came, hoping to cry quittance and get even with George.

When she was ascended, the gentlemen would necessarily place her by M. Peele. Because the two darted insults one at another, the gentlemen thought it suitable, for their own safety, that the witty gentlewoman and George should be placed nearest together.

George kindly entertained her, and being seated, he asked her to pass him the capon that was placed by her, and he would be so bold as to carve for his money.

And as she put out her arm to take the capon, George, who was sitting by her, let out a huge fart, which amazed all the company, so that each one looked upon the other, yet they knew from which direction it came.

“Peace,” said George, and jogged the witty gentlewoman on the elbow. “I will say it was I who farted.”

Hearing this, all the company of gentlemen fell into a huge laughter, but the witty gentlewoman fell into a fretting fury, vowing that she should never sleep quietly until she had gotten revenge on George for the wrong he had done to her, and so in a great anger she left their company.

NOTES:

In this context, “to serve” means “to treat,” usually in an unpleasant manner.

Canary wine is a sweet white wine that comes from the Canary Islands, which are located off the coast of northwestern Africa.

The Jack of a clock is a figurine on top of some clocks that strikes the bell and announces the passage of time.

A mistress is a female head of household.

In this culture, makeup was called paint.

A capon is a castrated rooster that has been fattened for eating.

According to “A Fashionable Vocabulary: Clothing and Fabrics”:

“When a fabric is described as *printed*, the design has been stamped with hot irons.”

Accessed 14 January 2021.

<<http://elizabethan.org/compendium/36.html>>.

I, of course, think that the gentlewoman was punning. The hose’s old age was “printed” in that anyone could “read” the hose’s old age by looking at the hose.

FINIS

APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

APPENDIX B: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Arden of Faversham: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Arraignment, or Poetaster: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Epicene: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: *A Retelling*

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: *Retellings*

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: *Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: *A Retelling*

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: *A Retelling*

- Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling*
- Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings*
- Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*
- The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling*
- From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*
- George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's Eastward Ho! A Retelling*
- George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling*
- George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling*
- George Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling*
- George Peele's Edward I: A Retelling*
- George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling*
- George-a-Greene: A Retelling*
- The History of King Leir: A Retelling*
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