

A POSSIBLE SHAKESPEAREAN SEQUENCE IN *THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD THE THIRD*

Date and Authorship:

Published in Quarto in 1596 (registered December 1595), with no playwright's name. Perhaps performed by Pembroke's Men in 1592. Almost certainly predates a ballad based on the Countess scenes, which was published in spring 1593. Shakespeare's authorship of the Countess scenes was first proposed in the eighteenth century (Edward Capell, 1760), though the play had been ascribed to him in an unreliable booksellers' catalogue of 1656. Scholars debate as to the point at which he took up the writing of Scene 2 (from the entrance of Edward III? Or not until Lodowick's soliloquy?). Some scholars claim to have detected Shakespeare's hand in one or two later scenes; a tiny minority argue for his fuller involvement. Stylometric tests do not resolve the question.

Plot of the whole play (with possible Shakespearean sequence emboldened):

King Edward is discussing with Artois his claim to the French throne through his descent from Queen Isobel. Artois informs him that his claim is good, although through the female line. A messenger arrives demanding fealty to King John of France, to which Edward returns a challenge. War is virtually declared. In the meantime, however, Edward has to deal with a threat from the Scots on his northern border.

The Scots have captured the Countess of Salisbury in her castle at Roxborough. As the Scottish king vows to attack England, English forces arrive to rescue the Countess, whose husband is away in France. Edward is attracted to the Countess and is persuaded to stay with her. He protests his love for her but she reminds him of the sacredness of marriage. The King commands Warwick, her father, to woo her for him. Appalled, he agrees but when he broaches the subject to his daughter, she refuses. Both agree to deny the king.

Derby and Audley have succeeded in mustering armies. The King, however, is lovesick and distracted. The sight of his son reminds him of his wife and his duty to her but then the Countess summons him. She offers to submit to him if he will have both her husband and his wife killed. Once he has agreed to this, she reveals that she was merely testing him and makes him swear to give up his suit. He does so, and stirs himself to organise the French wars.

The French and their allies are awaiting the arrival of the English forces. The English fleet is sighted and the battle at sea begins. Soon word is brought that the French navy has been defeated. Prince Edward ('The Black Prince') brings his father news of more English victories. Those French who surrendered have been dealt with leniently, but any who resisted have met with harsh treatment. King John of France, withdrawing to Crecy, confronts King Edward and taunts him by offering booty. Refusing to give up his crown, even at the risk of the slaughter that must follow, John exhorts the French to follow him as their rightful king. Edward ceremonially arms his son and they prepare for battle.

With the French in retreat, King Edward hears that his son is surrounded and in great danger. However, he refuses to send him help, intending this as a test of battle which the Prince has to pass unaided. The Prince does, emerging with the body of the King of Bohemia, whom he has killed, and is

knighted by his father. The Prince and others pursue the fleeing French king, while Edward marches on to besiege Calais.

Salisbury releases his prisoner Villiers on the understanding that he will go to the French king and obtain Salisbury a passport (safe conduct) to Calais, and then return.

In Calais, King Edward deals mercifully with six poor citizens evicted from the town. News comes that the Scottish rebellion has been put down and the Queen is on her way to France. Having waited in vain for relief from King John, Calais is ready to surrender but Edward now withdraws his former offer of clemency. He demands that six of the wealthiest merchants should be given up to him as a ransom. Prince Charles at first refuses Villiers' request for the passport for Salisbury but is so impressed by Villier's sense of honour in planning to return to be a prisoner that he gives in. Charles tells his father of a prophecy given to him by a hermit at Crecy: although it is ambiguous, John takes it as optimistic and expects to win the day. News comes that Prince Edward is trapped by surrounding forces. He refuses offers of surrender or flight from the French commanders and makes a defiant speech. Suddenly word comes to King John that his soldiers have been cowed by mysterious fog and a flight of ravens, fulfilling a prophecy. At the same time Salisbury is brought in: under the terms of the passport, Charles defies his father and allows him to pass. King John tells Salisbury that the Black Prince is by now surrounded and tells him to tell King Edward of his son's fate. However, the French, in chaos, are turning on each other and the Black Prince enters in triumph, bringing in all the French, captured. They march on toward Calais to rejoin the king.

The six wealthy citizens of Calais appear before Edward, who agrees to spare the town but intends to execute them. The Queen, however, pleads for them and wins mercy. the Queen is angry that the squire who captured the Scottish king will not yield her his prisoner but when he appears and pleads his own sense of honour, he is pardoned and knighted by the King.

Salisbury returns to the King bringing news of victory and, as he thinks, the fate of the Black Prince. Fearing his son dead, Edward swears revenge on the French. At that moment, however, the Prince himself arrives, leading the French King and Dauphin prisoner. Hearing that he is to be taken to England as a prisoner, the French King realises how he had misconstrued the prophecy. The Black Prince declares that his fame will be a warning to all future nations who set themselves up against England's power. They prepare to set sail for England.

A full text of the play, in original spelling, is available on the Internet Shakespeare Edition:

<http://ise.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/Edw/>

Parts in the possible Shakespearean scenes:

COUNTESS of Salisbury

KING DAVID of Scotland

Sir William DOUGLAS, supporter of King David

Duke of LORRAINE, emissary from the French

Two Scottish MESSENGERS

Sir William MONTAGUE, nephew to the Earl and Countess of Salisbury
KING EDWARD the Third of England
Earl of WARWICK, the Countess' father
Robert, Count of ARTOIS and Earl of Richmond, supporter of the English
LODOWICK, King Edward's secretary
AUDLEY } English
Earl of DERBY } lords
PRINCE EDWARD, son of the king (Prince of Wales, became known as the Black
Prince)

POSSIBLE SHAKESPEAREAN SCENES

[Scene 2]

Enter the Countess [of Salisbury, above]

COUNTESS Alas, how much in vain my poor eyes gaze

For succour that my sovereign should send!

Ah, cousin Montague, I fear, thou want'st

The lively spirit sharply to solicit

5 With vehement suit the king in my behalf:

Thou dost not tell him what a grief it is

To be the scornful captive to a Scot,

Either to be wooed with broad untuned oaths,

Or forced by rough insulting barbarism:

10 Thou dost not tell him, if he here prevail,

How much they will deride us in the north,

And, in their vile uncivil skipping jigs,

Bray forth their conquest and our overthrow,

Even in the barren, bleak and fruitless air.

Enter [below, King] David and Douglas [meeting] Lorraine [with soldiers]

15 I must withdraw: the everlasting foe
Comes to the wall: I'll closely step aside,
And list their babble, blunt and full of pride. \$Countess withdraws\$

KING DAVID My Lord of Lorraine, to our brother of France
Commend us, as the man in Christendom
20 Whom we most reverence and entirely love.
Touching your embassy, return and say
That we with England will not enter parley,
Nor never make fair weather or take truce,
But burn their neighbour towns, and so persist
25 With eager roadsⁱ beyond their city, York:
And never shall our bonny riders rest,
Nor rusting canker have the time to eat
Their light-borne snaffles nor their nimble spurs,
Nor lay aside their jacks of gimmaled mail,
30 Nor hang their staves of grainèd Scottish ash
In peaceful wise upon their city walls,
Nor from their buttoned tawny leathern belts
Dismiss their biting whinyards, till your king
Cry out, 'Enough, spare England now for pity!'
35 Farewell, and tell him that you leave us here
Before this castle: say you came from us
Even when we had that yielded to our hands.

LORRAINE I take my leave, and fairly will return
Your acceptable greeting to my king. *Exit*

40 **KING DAVID** Now, Douglas, to our former task again
For the division of this certain spoil.

DOUGLAS My liege, I crave the lady, and no more.

KING DAVID Nay, soft ye, sir: first I must make my choice,

And first I do bespeak her for myself.

45 **DOUGLAS** Why, then, my liege, let me enjoy her jewels.

KING DAVID Those are her own, still liable to her,
And who inherits her hath those withal.

Enter a Scot in haste

MESSENGER My liege, as we were pricking on the hills

To fetch in booty, marching hitherward

50 We might descry a mighty host of men:

The sun, reflecting on the armour showed

A field of plate, a wood of pikes advanced.

Bethink your highness speedily herein:

An easy march within four hours will bring

55 The hindmost rank unto this place, my liege.

KING DAVID Dislodge, dislodge, it is the King of England.

DOUGLAS Jemmy my man, saddle my bonny black.

KING DAVID Mean'st thou to fight, Douglas? We are too weak.

DOUGLAS I know it well, my liege, and therefore fly.

60 **COUNTESS** My lords of Scotland, will ye stay and drink? *Coming forward*

above

KING DAVID She mocks at us, Douglas: I cannot endure it.

COUNTESS Say, good my lord, which is he must have the lady,

And which her jewels?— I am sure, my lords,

Ye will not hence till you have shared the spoils.

65 **KING DAVID** She heard the messenger and heard our talk,

And now that comfort makes her scorn at us.

[Enter] another Messenger

MESSENGER Arm, my good lord! O, we are all surprised!

COUNTESS After the French ambassador, my liege,

And tell him that you dare not ride to York,

70 Excuse it that your bonny horse is lame.

KING DAVID She heard that too, intolerable grief!—

 Woman, farewell: although I do not stay — *Exeunt Scots*

COUNTESS 'Tis not for fear, and yet you run away.—

 O happy comfort, welcome to our house!

75 The confident and boist'rous boasting Scot,

 That swore before my walls they would not back

 For all the armèd power of this land,

 With faceless fear that ever turns his back,

 Turned hence again the blasting north-east wind

80 Upon the bare report and name of arms.

Enter Montague

 O summer's day: see where my cousin comes.

MONTAGUE How fares my aunt? — We are not Scots,

 Why do you shut your gates against your friends?

COUNTESS Well may I give a welcome, cousin, to thee,

85 For thou com'st well to chase my foes from hence.

MONTAGUE The king himself is come in person hither:

 Dear aunt, descend and gratulate his highness.

COUNTESS How may I entertain his majesty,

 To show my duty and his dignity? *[Exit from above]*

Enter King Edward, Warwick, Artois, with others [including Lodowick]

90 **KING EDWARD** What, are the stealing foxes fled and gone

 Before we could uncouple at their heels?

WARWICK They are, my liege, but, with a cheerful cry,

 Hot hounds and hardy chase them at the heels.

Enter Countess [below]

KING EDWARD This is the countess, Warwick, is it not?

95 **WARWICK** Even she, my liege, whose beauty tyrants fear,

As a May blossom with pernicious winds,
Hath sullied, withered, overcast and done.

KING EDWARD Hath she been fairer, Warwick, than she is?

WARWICK My gracious king, fair is she not at all,

100 If that herself were by to stain herself,
As I have seen her when she was herself.

KING EDWARD What strange enchantment lurked in those her eyes *\$Aside\$*

When they excelled this excellence they have,
That now her dim decline hath power to draw
105 My subject eyes from piercing majesty
To gaze on her with dotting admiration?

COUNTESS In duty lower than the ground I kneel, *\$Kneels\$*

And for my dull knees bow my feeling heart
To witness my obedience to your highness
110 With many millions of a subject's thanks
For this your royal presence, whose approach
Hath driven war and danger from my gate.

KING EDWARD Lady, stand up: I come to bring thee peace, *\$Countess rises\$*

115 However thereby I have purchased war.
COUNTESS No war to you, my liege: the Scots are gone,
And gallop home toward Scotland with their hate.

KING EDWARD Lest, yielding here, I pine in shameful love, *\$Aside\$*

Come, we'll pursue the Scots.— Artois, away!

COUNTESS A little while, my gracious sovereign, stay

120 And let the power of a mighty king
Honour our roof: my husband in the wars,
When he shall hear it, will triumph for joy.
Then, dear my liege, now niggard not thy state:
Being at the wall, enter our homely gate.

125 **KING EDWARD** Pardon me, countess, I will come no near:ⁱⁱ

I dreamed tonight of treason, and I fear.

COUNTESS Far from this place let ugly treason lie.

KING EDWARD No farther off than her conspiring eye, *\$Aside\$*

Which shoots infected poison in my heart

130 Beyond repulse of wit or cure of art.

Now in the sun alone it doth not lie

With light to take light from a mortal eye,

For here two day-stars that mine eyes would see

More than the sun steals mine own light from me.

135 Contemplative desire, desire to be

In contemplation that may master thee!—

Warwick, Artois, to horse and let's away!

COUNTESS What might I speak to make my sovereign stay?

KING EDWARD What needs a tongue to such a speaking eye *\$Aside? \$*

140 That more persuades than winning oratory?

COUNTESS Let not thy presence, like the April sun,

Flatter our earth and suddenly be done.

More happy do not make our outward wall

Than thou wilt grace our inner house withal.

145 Our house, my liege, is like a country swain,

Whose habit rude and manners blunt and plain

Presageth nought, yet inly beautified

With bounty's riches and fair hidden pride:

For where the golden ore doth buried lie,

150 The ground, undecked with nature's tapestry,

Seems barren, sere, unfertile, fruitless, dry:

And where the upper turf of earth doth boast

His pride, perfumes and parti-coloured cost,

Delve there and find this issue and their pride
155 To spring from ordure and corruption's side.
But, to make up my all too long compare,
These ragged walls no testimony are
What is within, but like a cloak doth hide
From weather's waste the under-garnished pride.
160 More gracious than my terms can, let thee be:
Entreat thyself to stay a while with me.

KING EDWARD As wise as fair: what fond fit can be heard \$Aside\$

When wisdom keeps the gate as beauty's guard?—
Countess, albeit my business urgeth me,
165 It shall attend while I attend on thee.—
Come on, my lords, here will I host to-night. *Exeunt [all except Lodowick]*

LODOWICK I might perceive his eye in her eye lost,

His ear to drink her sweet tongue's utterance,
And changing passion, like inconstant clouds
170 That rack upon the carriage of the winds,
Increase and die in his disturbèd cheeks.
Lo, when she blushed, even then did he look pale,
As if her cheeks by some enchanted power
Attracted had the cherry blood from his:
175 Anon, with reverent fear when she grew pale,
His cheeks put on their scarlet ornaments,
But no more like her oriental red
Than brick to coral or live things to dead.
Why did he then thus counterfeit her looks?
180 If she did blush, 'twas tender modest shame,
Being in the sacred presence of a king:
If he did blush, 'twas red immodest shame,

To veil his eyes amiss, being a king.
If she looked pale, 'twas silly woman's fear,
185 To bear herself in presence of a king:
If he looked pale, it was with guilty fear,
To dote amiss, being a mighty king.
Then, Scottish wars, farewell! I fear, 'twill prove
A ling'ring English siege of peevish love.
190 Here comes his highness, walking all alone.

Enter King Edward

KING EDWARD She is grown more fairer far since I came hither,
Her voice more silver every word than other,
Her wit more fluent: what a strange discourse
Unfolded she of David and his Scots?
195 `Even thus', quoth she, `he spake' — and then spoke broad,
With epithets and accents of the Scot,
But somewhat better than the Scot could speak.
`And thus', quoth she, and answered then herself,
For who could speak like her? But she herself
200 Breathes from the wall an angel's note from heaven
Of sweet defiance to her barbarous foes.
When she would talk of peace, methinks, her tongue
Commanded war to prison: when of war,
It wakened Caesar from his Roman grave
205 To hear war beautified by her discourse.
Wisdom is foolishness but in her tongue,
Beauty a slander but in her fair face,
There is no summer but in her cheerful looks,
Nor frosty winter but in her disdain.
210 I cannot blame the Scots that did besiege her,

For she is all the treasure of our land,
But call them cowards that they ran away,
Having so rich and fair a cause to stay.—
Art thou there, Lod'wick? Give me ink and paper.

215 **LODOWICK** I will, my liege.

KING EDWARD And bid the lords hold on their play at chess,
For we will walk and meditate alone.

LODOWICK I will, my sovereign. [*Exit*]

KING EDWARD This fellow is well read in poetry
220 And hath a lusty and persuasive spirit:
I will acquaint him with my passion,
Which he shall shadow with a veil of lawn,
Through which the queen of beauty's queens shall see
Herself the ground of my infirmity.—

Enter Lodowick

225 Hast thou pen, ink, and paper ready, Lodowick?

LODOWICK Ready, my liege.

KING EDWARD Then in the summer arbour sit by me,
Make it our council house or cabinet:
Since green our thoughts, green be the conventicle
230 Where we will ease us by disburd'ning them.
Now, Lod'wick, invoke some golden muse
To bring thee hither an enchanted pen
That may for sighs set down true sighs indeed,
Talking of grief, to make thee ready groan,
235 And when thou writest of tears, encouch the word
Before and after with such sweet laments,
That it may raise drops in a Tartar's eye,
And make a flint-heart Scythian pitiful,

For so much moving hath a poet's pen.
240 Then, if thou be a poet, move thou so,
And be enrichèd by thy sovereign's love.
For, if the touch of sweet concordant strings
Could force attendance in the ears of hell,
How much more shall the strains of poets' wit
245 Beguile and ravish soft and human minds?

LODOWICK To whom, my lord, shall I direct my style?

KING EDWARD To one that shames the fair and sots the wise,
Whose body is an abstract or a brief,
Contains each general virtue in the world.
250 'Better than beautiful', thou must begin
Devise for fair a fairer word than fair,
And every ornament that thou wouldst praise,
Fly it a pitch above the soar of praise,
For flattery fear thou not to be convicted,
255 For were thy admiration ten times more,
Ten times ten thousand more the worth exceeds
Of that thou art to praise, thy praise's worth.
Begin, I will to contemplate the while.
Forget not to set down how passionate,
260 How heart-sick, and how full of languishment,
Her beauty makes me.

LODOWICK Write I to a woman?

KING EDWARD What beauty else could triumph over me,
Or who, but women, do our love-lays greet?
265 What, think'st thou I did bid thee praise? A horse?

LODOWICK Of what condition or estate she is
'Twere requisite that I should know, my lord.

KING EDWARD Of such estate that hers is as a throne,

And my estate the footstool where she treads

270 Then mayst thou judge what her condition is,
By the proportion of her mightiness.

Write on, while I peruse her in my thoughts.

..... iii

Her voice to music or the nightingale.

To music every summer-leaping swain

275 Compares his sunburnt lover when she speaks,
And why should I speak of the nightingale?

The nightingale sings of adulterate wrong

And that compared is too satirical,

For sin, though sin, would not be so esteemed

280 But rather virtue sin, sin virtue deemed.

Her hair far softer than the silkworm's twist,

Like to a flattering glass doth make more fair

The yellow amber — 'like a flattering glass'

Comes in too soon, for writing of her eyes

285 I'll say that like a glass they catch the sun,

And thence the hot reflection doth rebound

Against my breast and burns my heart within.

Ah, what a world of descant makes my soul

Upon this voluntary ground of love!—

290 Come, Lod'wick, hast thou turned thy ink to gold?

If not, write but in letters capital

My mistress' name, and it will gild thy paper.

Read, Lod'wick, read!

Fill thou the empty hollows of mine ears

295 With the sweet hearing of thy poetry.

LODOWICK I have not to a period brought her praise.

KING EDWARD Her praise is as my love, both infinite,
Which apprehend such violent extremes
That they disdain an ending period.

300 Her beauty hath no match but my affection:
Hers more than most, mine most, and more than more:
Hers more to praise than tell the sea by drops —
Nay more — than drop the massy earth by sands,
And sand by sand print them in memory:
305 Then wherefore talk'st thou of a period,
To that which craves unended admiration?
Read, let us hear.

LODOWICK `More fair and chaste than is the queen of shades.' *\$Reads\$*

KING EDWARD That line hath two faults, gross and palpable:
310 Compar'st thou her to the pale queen of night,
Who, being set in dark, seems therefore light?
What is she, when the sun lifts up his head
But like a fading taper, dim and dead?
My love shall brave the eye of heaven at noon,
315 And, being unmasked, outshine the golden sun.

LODOWICK What is the other fault, my sovereign lord?

KING EDWARD Read o'er the line again.

LODOWICK `More fair and chaste'— *\$Reads\$*

KING EDWARD I did not bid thee talk of chastity, *\$Stops him\$*
320 To ransack so the treasure of her mind,
For I had rather have her chaced than chaste!
Out with the moon line, I will none of it,
And let me have her likened to the sun:
Say she hath thrice more splendour than the sun,

325 That her perfections emulates the sun,
That she breeds sweets as plenteous as the sun,
That she doth thaw cold winter like the sun,
That she doth cheer fresh summer like the sun,
That she doth dazzle gazers like the sun:

330 And in this application to the sun
Bid her be free and general as the sun,
Who smiles upon the basest weed that grows
As lovingly as on the fragrant rose.
Let's see what follows that same moonlight line.

335 **LODOWICK** `More fair and chaste than is the queen of shades,
More bold in constancy'—

KING EDWARD In constancy than who?

LODOWICK —`than Judith was.'

KING EDWARD O monstrous line! Put in the next a sword
340 And I shall woo her to cut off my head.
Blot, blot, good Lod'wick! Let us hear the next.

LODOWICK There's all that yet is done.

KING EDWARD I thank thee then, thou hast done little ill,
But what is done is passing passing ill.

345 No, let the captain talk of boist'rous war,
The prisoner of immured dark constraint,
The sick man best sets down the pangs of death,
The man that starves the sweetness of a feast,
The frozen soul the benefit of fire,
350 And every grief his happy opposite:
Love cannot sound well but in lovers' tongues.
Give me the pen and paper, I will write.—

Enter Countess

But, soft, here comes the treasurer of my spirit. *\$Aside?!*
Lod'wick, thou know'st not how to draw a battle!
355 These wings, these flankers and these squadrons
Argue in thee defective discipline.
Thou shouldst have placed this here, this other here.

COUNTESS Pardon my boldness, my thrice-gracious lords,
Let my intrusion here be called my duty
360 That comes to see my sovereign how he fares.

KING EDWARD Go, draw the same, I tell thee in what form.

LODOWICK I go.

COUNTESS Sorry I am to see my liege so sad:
What may thy subject do to drive from thee
365 Thy gloomy consort, sullen melancholy?

KING EDWARD Ah, lady, I am blunt and cannot strew
The flowers of solace in a ground of shame.
Since I came hither, countess, I am wronged.

COUNTESS Now God forbid that any in my house
370 Should think my sovereign wrong! Thrice-gentle king,
Acquaint me with your cause of discontent.

KING EDWARD How near then shall I be to remedy?

COUNTESS As near, my liege, as all my woman's power
Can pawn itself to buy thy remedy.

375 **KING EDWARD** If thou speak'st true, then have I my redress:
Engage thy power to redeem my joys,
And I am joyful, countess, else, I die.

COUNTESS I will, my liege.

KING EDWARD Swear, countess, that thou wilt.

380 **COUNTESS** By heaven, I will.

KING EDWARD Then take thyself a little way aside

And tell thyself, a king doth dote on thee:
Say that within thy power it^{iv} doth lie
To make him happy, and that thou hast sworn
385 To give him all the joy within thy power:
Do this, and tell me when I shall be happy.

COUNTESS All this is done, my thrice-dread sovereign:

That power of love that I have power to give
Thou hast, with all devout obedience.
390 Employ me how thou wilt in proof thereof.

KING EDWARD Thou hear'st me say that I do dote on thee.

COUNTESS If on my beauty, take it if thou canst,

Though little, I do prize it ten times less.
If on my virtue, take it if thou canst,
395 For virtue's store by giving doth augment.
Be it on what it will that I can give
And thou canst take away, inherit it.

KING EDWARD It is thy beauty that I would enjoy.

COUNTESS O, were it painted I would wipe it off

400 And dispossess myself to give it thee!
But, sovereign, it is soldered to my life:
Take one, and both, for, like an humble shadow,
It haunts the sunshine of my summer's life.

KING EDWARD But thou mayst lend it me to sport withal.

405 **COUNTESS** As easy may my intellectual soul

Be lent away and yet my body live
As lend my body, palace to my soul,
Away from her and yet retain my soul.
My body is her bower, her court, her abbey,
410 And she an angel, pure, divine, unspotted.

If I should lend her house, my lord, to thee,
I kill my poor soul, and my poor soul me.

KING EDWARD Didst thou not swear to give me what I would?

COUNTESS I did, my liege, so, what you would I could.

415 **KING EDWARD** I wish no more of thee than thou mayst give,
Nor beg I do not, but I rather buy —
That is, thy love: and, for that love of thine
In rich exchange I tender to thee mine.

COUNTESS But that your lips were sacred, my lord,
420 You would profane the holy name of love.
That love you offer me you cannot give,
For Cæsar owes that tribute to his queen
That love, you beg of me, I cannot give,
For Sarah owes that duty to her lord.
425 He that doth clip or counterfeit your stamp
Shall die, my lord: and will your sacred self
Commit high treason against the king of heaven,
To stamp his image in forbidden metal,
Forgetting your allegiance and your oath?
430 In violating marriage' sacred law
You break a greater honour than yourself:
To be a king is of a younger house
Than to be married. Your progenitor,
Sole-reigning Adam on the universe,
435 By God was honoured for a married man,
But not by him anointed for a king.
It is a penalty to break your statutes,
Though not enacted with your highness' hand:
How much more to infringe the holy act

440 Made by the mouth of God, sealed with his hand?
I know my sovereign — in my husband's love,
Who now doth loyal service in his wars —
Doth but to try the wife of Salisbury,
Whether she will hear a wanton's tale, or no:
445 Lest being therein guilty by my stay,
From that, not from my liege, I turn away. *Exit*

KING EDWARD Whether is her beauty by her words divine,
Or are her words sweet chaplains to her beauty?
Like as the wind doth beautify a sail
450 And as a sail becomes the unseen wind,
So do her words her beauty, beauty words.
O, that I were a honey-gathering bee,
To bear the comb of virtue from his flower,
And not a poison-sucking envious spider
455 To turn the juice I take to deadly venom!
Religion is austere, and beauty gentle:
Too strict a guardian for so fair a ward.
O, that she were as is the air to me!
Why, so she is, for when I would embrace her,
460 This do I, and catch nothing but myself. *\$Embraces the air\$*
I must enjoy her, for I cannot beat
With reason and reproof fond love away.

Enter Warwick

Here comes her father. I will work with him *\$Aside\$*
To bear my colours in this field of love.
465 **WARWICK** How is it, that my sovereign is so sad?
May I with pardon know your highness' grief?
An that my old endeavour will remove it,

It shall not cumber long your majesty.

KING EDWARD A kind and voluntary gift thou proffer'st,
470 That I was forward to have begged of thee.
But, O thou world, great nurse of flattery,
Why dost thou tip men's tongues with golden words
And peise their deeds with weight of heavy lead,
That fair performance cannot follow promise?
475 O, that a man might hold the heart's close book,
And choke the lavish tongue when it doth utter
The breath of falsehood not characterized there!

WARWICK Far be it from the honour of my age
That I should owe bright gold and render lead.
480 Age is a cynic, not a flatterer:
I say again that if I knew your grief,
And that by me it may be lessenèd,
My proper harm should buy your highness' good.

KING EDWARD These are the vulgar tenders of false men
485 That never pay the duty of their words.
Thou wilt not stick to swear what thou hast said,
But when thou know'st my grief's condition,
This rash disgorgèd vomit of thy word
Thou wilt eat up again, and leave me helpless.

490 **WARWICK** By heaven, I will not, though your majesty
Did bid me run upon your sword and die.

KING EDWARD Say, that my grief is no way medicinable,
But by the loss and bruising of thine honour?

WARWICK If nothing but that loss may vantage you,
495 I would account that loss my vantage too.

KING EDWARD Think'st that thou canst unswear thy oath again?

WARWICK I cannot, nor I would not if I could.

KING EDWARD But if thou dost, what shall I say to thee?

WARWICK What may be said to any perjured villain

500 That breaks the sacred warrant of an oath.

KING EDWARD What wilt thou say to one that breaks an oath?

WARWICK That he hath broke his faith with God and man

 And from them both stands excommunicate.

KING EDWARD What office were it to suggest a man

505 To break a lawful and religious vow?

WARWICK An office for the devil, not for man.

KING EDWARD That devil's office must thou do for me,

 Or break thy oath and cancel all the bonds

 Of love and duty 'twixt thyself and me.

510 And therefore, Warwick, if thou art thyself,

 The lord and master of thy word and oath,

 Go to thy daughter and in my behalf

 Command her, woo her, win her any ways,

 To be my mistress and my secret love.

515 I will not stand to hear thee make reply:

 Thy oath break hers, or let thy sovereign die.

Exit

WARWICK O doting king or detestable office!

 Well may I tempt myself to wrong myself,

 When he hath sworn me by the name of God

520 To break a vow made by the name of God.

 What if I swear by this right hand of mine

 To cut this right hand off? The better way

 Were to profane the idol than confound it,

 But neither will I do. I'll keep mine oath

525 And to my daughter make a recantation

Of all the virtue I have preached to her.
I'll say she must forget her husband Salisbury,
If she remember to embrace the king.
I'll say an oath may easily be broken,
530 But not so easily pardoned, being broken.
I'll say it is true charity to love,
But not true love to be so charitable.
I'll say his greatness may bear out the shame,
But not his kingdom can buy out the sin.
535 I'll say it is my duty to persuade,
But not her honesty to give consent.

Enter Countess

See, where she comes: was never father had
Against his child an embassage so bad.

COUNTESS My lord and father, I have sought for you:
540 My mother and the peers importune you
To keep in presence of his majesty
And do your best to make his highness merry.

WARWICK How shall I enter in this graceless errand? *\$Aside\$*
I must not call her child, for where's the father
545 That will in such a suit seduce his child?
Then 'wife of Salisbury' — shall I so begin?
No, he's my friend, and where is found the friend
That will do friendship such endamage?—
Neither my daughter, nor my dear friend's wife, *\$To Countess\$*
550 I am not Warwick, as thou think'st I am,
But an attorney from the court of hell,
That thus have housed my spirit in his form,
To do a message to thee from the king.

The mighty King of England dotes on thee:
555 He that hath power to take away thy life
Hath power to take thy honour. Then consent
To pawn thine honour rather than thy life:
Honour is often lost and got again,
But life, once gone, hath no recovery.

560 The sun that withers hay doth nourish grass,
The king that would distain thee will advance thee.
The poets write that great Achilles' spear
Could heal the wound it made: the moral is,
What mighty men misdo they can amend.

565 The lion doth become his bloody jaws
And grace his foragement by being mild
When vassal fear lies trembling at his feet.
The king will in his glory hide thy shame,
And those that gaze on him to find out thee
570 Will lose their eyesight looking in the sun.
What can one drop of poison harm the sea
Whose hugy vastures can digest the ill
And make it lose his operation?
The king's great name will temper thy misdeeds,
575 And give the bitter potion of reproach
A sugared sweet and most delicious taste:
Besides, it is no harm to do the thing
Which without shame could not be left undone.
Thus have I, in his majesty's behalf,
580 Apparelled sin in virtuous sentences,
And dwell upon thy answer in his suit.

COUNTESS Unnatural besiege! Woe me unhappy,

To have escaped the danger of my foes
And to be ten times worse envired by friends!
585 Hath he no means to stain my honest blood,
But to corrupt the author of my blood
To be his scandalous and vile solicitor?
No marvel though the branches be then infected
When poison hath encompassèd the root:
590 No marvel though the leprous infant die,
When the stern dam envenometh the dug.
Why then, give sin a passport to offend,
And youth the dangerous rein of liberty:
Blot out the strict forbidding of the law,
595 And cancel every canon, that prescribes
A shame for shame or penance for offence.
No, let me die if his too boist'rous will
Will have it so, before I will consent
To be an actor in his graceless lust.
600 **WARWICK** Why, now thou speak'st as I would have thee speak!
And mark how I unsay my words again.
An honourable grave is more esteemed
Than the polluted closet of a king:
The greater man, the greater is the thing,
605 Be it good or bad, that he shall undertake:
An unreputed mote flying in the sun
Presents a greater substance than it is
The freshest summer's day doth soonest taint
The loathèd carrion that it seems to kiss :
610 Deep are the blows made with a mighty axe:
That sin doth ten times aggravate itself

That is committed in a holy place:
An evil deed done by authority
Is sin and subornation: deck an ape
615 In tissue, and the beauty of the robe
Adds but the greater scorn unto the beast.
A spacious field of reasons could I urge
Between his glory, daughter, and thy shame:
That poison shows worst in a golden cup,
620 Dark night seems darker by the lightning flash,
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds,
And every glory that inclines to sin,
The shame is treble by the opposite.
So leave I with my blessing in thy bosom,
625 Which then convert to a most heavy curse
When thou convert'st from honour's golden name
To the black faction of bed-blotting shame!

COUNTESS I'll follow thee, and when my mind turns so,
My body sink my soul in endless woe! *Exeunt*

[**Scene 3**]

Enter at one door Derby from France, at another door Audley with a drum

DERBY Thrice-noble Audley, well encountered here:
How is it with our sovereign and his peers?

AUDLEY 'Tis full a fortnight since I saw his highness,
What time he sent me forth to muster men,
5 Which I accordingly have done, and bring them hither
In fair array before his majesty.
What news, my lord of Derby, from the emperor?

DERBY As good as we desire: the emperor
Hath yielded to his highness friendly aid
10 And makes our king lieutenant-general
In all his lands and large dominions:
Then *via* for the spacious bounds of France!

AUDLEY What, doth his highness leap to hear these news?

DERBY I have not yet found time to open them.
15 The king is in his closet, malcontent,
For what, I know not, but he gave in charge
Till after dinner none should interrupt him:
The Countess Salisbury and her father Warwick,
Artois, and all, look underneath the brows.

20 **AUDLEY** Undoubtedly then something is amiss. *\$Trumpets within\$*

DERBY The trumpets sound: the king is now abroad.
Enter the King

AUDLEY^v Here comes his highness.

DERBY Befall my sovereign all my sovereign's wish.

KING EDWARD Ah, that thou wert a witch to make it so! *\$Aside\$*

25 **DERBY** The emperor greeteth you — *\$Presents letters\$*

KING EDWARD Would it were the countess! *\$Aside\$*

DERBY — And hath accorded to your highness' suit.

KING EDWARD *\$Aside\$* Thou liest: she hath not, but I would she
had!

AUDLEY All love and duty to my lord the king.

30 **KING EDWARD** Well, all but one is none.— *\$Aside\$*
What news with you?

AUDLEY I have, my liege, levied those horse and foot,
According to your charge, and brought them hither.

KING EDWARD Then let those foot trudge hence upon those horse

According to our discharge, and be gone.—

35 Derby, I'll look upon the countess' mind anon.

DERBY The countess' mind, my liege?

KING EDWARD I mean the emperor. Leave me alone.

AUDLEY What is his mind? \$To Derby\$

DERBY Let's leave him to his humour. *Exeunt [Derby and Audley]*

40 **KING EDWARD** Thus from the heart's abundance speaks the tongue:

Countess for emperor — and, indeed, why not?

She is as imperator over me, and I to her

Am as a kneeling vassal that observes

The pleasure or displeasure of her eye.—

Enter Lodowick

45 What says the more-than-Cleopatra's match

To Cæsar now?

LODOWICK That yet, my liege, ere night

She will resolve your majesty. \$Drum within\$

KING EDWARD What drum is this that thunders forth this march,

50 To start the tender Cupid in my bosom?

Poor sheepskin, how it brawls with him that beateth it!

Go, break the thund'ring parchment-bottom out

And I will teach it to conduct sweet lines

Unto the bosom of a heavenly nymph,

55 For I will use it as my writing paper,

And so reduce him from a scolding drum

To be the herald and dear counsel-bearer

Betwixt a goddess and a mighty king.

Go, bid the drummer learn to touch the lute,

60 Or hang him in the braces of his drum,

For now we think it an uncivil thing

To trouble heaven with such harsh resounds
Away!— *Exit [Lodowick]*

65 The quarrel that I have requires no arms
But these of mine, and these shall meet my foe
In a deep march of penetrable groans.
My eyes shall be my arrows, and my sighs
Shall serve me as the vantage of the wind
To whirl away my sweet'st artillery.
70 Ah, but alas, she wins the sun of me,
For that is she herself, and thence it comes
That poets term the wanton warrior blind.
But love hath eyes as judgement to his steps,
Till too much lovèd glory dazzles them.—
75 How now?

Enter Lodowick

LODOWICK My liege, the drum that struck the lusty march
Stands with Prince Edward, your thrice-valiant son. [*Exit*]

Enter Prince Edward

KING EDWARD I see the boy. O, how his mother's face, *\$Aside\$*
Modelled in his, corrects my strayed desire
80 And rates my heart and chides my thievish eye
Who being rich enough in seeing her,
Yet seeks elsewhere: and basest theft is that
Which cannot cloak itself on poverty.—
Now, boy, what news?

85 **PRINCE EDWARD** I have assembled, my dear lord and father,
The choicest buds of all our English blood
For our affairs to France, and here we come
To take direction from your majesty.

KING EDWARD Still do I see in him delineate \$Aside\$

90 His mother's visage: those his eyes are hers,
Who looking wistly on me make me blush,
For faults against themselves give evidence:
Lust is a fire, and men, like lanthorns, show
Light lust within themselves, even through themselves.

95 Away, loose silks of wavering vanity!
Shall the large limit of fair Brittany
By me be overthrown, and shall I not
Master this little mansion of myself?
Give me an armour of eternal steel:

100 I go to conquer kings, and shall I not then
Subdue myself and be my enemy's friend?
It must not be.— Come, boy, forward, advance!
Let's with our colours sweet the air of France.

Enter Lodowick

LODOWICK My liege, the countess with a smiling cheer
105 Desires access unto your majesty.

KING EDWARD Why, there it goes! That very smile of hers \$Aside\$
Hath ransomed captive France and set the king,
The Dauphin and the peers at liberty.—

Go, leave me, Ned, and revel with thy friends. *Exit Prince*
110 Thy mother is but black, and thou, like her,
Dost put it in my mind how foul she is.—

Go, fetch the countess hither in thy hand \$To Lodowick\$
And let her chase away those winter clouds,
For she gives beauty both to heaven and earth. *Exit Lodowick*
115 The sin is more to hack and hew poor men
Than to embrace in an unlawful bed

The register of all rarities
Since leathern Adam till this youngest hour.

Enter [Lodowick with the] Countess

120 Go, Lod'wick, put thy hand into thy purse,
Play, spend, give, riot, waste, do what thou wilt,
So thou wilt hence awhile and leave me here.— [*Exit Lodowick*]
Now, my soul's playfellow, art thou come, \$*To the Countess*\$
To speak the more than heavenly word of 'yea'
To my objection in thy beauteous love?

125 **COUNTESS** My father on his blessing hath commanded—

KING EDWARD That thou shalt yield to me.

COUNTESS Ay, dear my liege, your due.

KING EDWARD And that, my dearest love, can be no less
Than right for right and render love for love.

130 **COUNTESS** Than wrong for wrong and endless hate for hate.

But sith I see your majesty so bent,
That my unwillingness, my husband's love,
Your high estate, nor no respect respected
Can be my help, but that your mightiness
135 Will overbear and awe these dear regards,
I bind my discontent to my content,
And what I would not I'll compel I will:
Provided that yourself remove those lets
That stand between your highness' love and mine.

140 **KING EDWARD** Name them, fair countess, and by heaven I will.

COUNTESS It is their lives that stand between our love,
That I would have choked up, my sovereign.

KING EDWARD Whose lives, my lady?

COUNTESS My thrice-loving liege,

145 Your queen and Salisbury, my wedded husband,
 Who, living, have that title in our love
 That we cannot bestow but by their death.

KING EDWARD Thy opposition is beyond our law.

COUNTESS So is your desire: if the law
150 Can hinder you to execute the one,
 Let it forbid you to attempt the other:
 I cannot think you love me as you say
 Unless you do make good what you have sworn.

KING EDWARD No more. Thy husband and the queen shall die.

155 Fairer thou art by far than Hero was:
 Beardless Leander not so strong as I:
 He swum an easy current for his love,
 But I will through a Hellespont of blood
 To arrive at Sestos where my Hero lies.

160 **COUNTESS** Nay, you'll do more: you'll make the river too
 With their heart bloods that keep our love asunder,
 Of which my husband and your wife are twain.

KING EDWARD Thy beauty makes them guilty of their death
 And gives in evidence that they shall die —

165 Upon which verdict I, their judge, condemn them.

COUNTESS O, perjured beauty! More corrupted judge!
 When to the great star chamber o'er our heads
 The universal sessions calls to 'count
 This packing evil, we both shall tremble for it.

170 **KING EDWARD** What says my fair love? Is she resolute?

COUNTESS Resolved to be dissolved, and therefore this:
 Keep but thy word, great king, and I am thine.
 Stand where thou dost, I'll part a little from thee,

And see how I will yield me to thy hands. *\$Shows two daggers\$*
175 Here by my side doth hang my wedding knives:
Take thou the one and with it kill thy queen
And learn by me to find her where she lies,
And with this other I'll despatch my love,
Which now lies fast asleep within my heart.
180 When they are gone, then I'll consent to love.
Stir not, lascivious king, to hinder me.
My resolution is more nimble far
Than thy prevention can be in my rescue
An if thou stir, I strike: therefore stand still,
185 And hear the choice that I will put thee to.
Either swear to leave thy most unholy suit
And never henceforth to solicit me,
Or else, by heaven, this sharp-pointed knife
Shall stain thy earth with that which thou wouldst stain,
190 My poor chaste blood. Swear, Edward, swear,
Or I will strike and die before thee here.

KING EDWARD Even by that power I swear, that gives me now
The power to be ashamed of myself,
I never mean to part my lips again
195 In any words that tends to such a suit.
Arise, true English lady, whom our isle
May better boast of than ever Roman might
Of her, whose ransacked treasury hath tasked
The vain endeavour of so many pens:
200 Arise, and be my fault thy honour's fame,
Which after-ages shall enrich thee with.
I am awakèd from this idle dream.—

Warwick, my son, Derby, Artois and Audley, *\$Calls\$*
Brave warriors all, where are you all this while?

Enter all

205 Warwick, I make thee Warden of the North.—
 Thou, Prince of Wales, and Audley, straight to sea,
 Scour to Newhaven, some there stay for me.—
 Myself, Artois and Derby will through Flanders
 To greet our friends there and to crave their aid.
210 This night will scarce suffice me to discover
 My folly's siege against a faithful lover,
 For ere the sun shall gild the eastern sky
 We'll wake him with our martial harmony. *Exeunt*

TEXTUAL NOTES

ⁱ **roads** spelled rods in Q (means inroads, forays)

ⁱⁱ **near** spelled thus Q (means 'nearer')

ⁱⁱⁱ ... one or more lines are missing here

^{iv} **it** = Ed. Not in Q

^v **SH AUDLEY** = Q2. Q1 = Ar.