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the Annotated Popular Edition of

THE TRAGEDY of  
FERREX and PORREX  
(aka GORBODUC)

By Thomas Norton  
and Thomas Sackville

1561

# THE TRAGEDY OF FERREX AND PORREX (aka GORBODUC)

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## The Names of the Speakers.

**Gorboduc**, King of Great Britain.

**Videna**, Queen, and Wife to King Gorboduc.

**Marcella**, A Lady of the Queen's Privy Chamber.

**Ferrex**, Elder Son to King Gorboduc.

**Porrex**, Younger Son to King Gorboduc.

**Hermon**, A Parasite remaining with Ferrex.

**Tyndar**, A Parasite remaining with Porrex.

**Eubulus**, Secretary to the King.

**Arostus**, A Councillor to king Gorboduc.

**Dordan**, A Councillor assigned by the King to his  
Eldest Son Ferrex.

**Philander**, A Councillor assigned by the King to his  
Youngest Son Porrex.

(Both being of the old King's Council before.)

**Clotyn**, Duke of Cornwall.

**Fergus**, Duke of Albany.

**Mandud**, Duke of Loegriss.

**Gwenard**, Duke of Camberland.

**Nuntius**, A Messenger of the Elder Brother's Death.

**Nuntius**, A Messenger of Duke Fergus' rising in Arms.

## Chorus:

**Four Ancient and Sage Men of Britain.**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY

*The Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex* tells the story of the legendary King Gorboduc, an ancient Briton who unwisely divided his realm into separate parts, each to be ruled by one of his two sons. Our play, appearing as it does so early in the Elizabethan era, is to some degree modeled on ancient Roman drama, and as such the "action" takes place off-stage; however, the verse is stately, and, though repetitive, is best experienced if you mouth the speeches to yourself, and become completely absorbed in the driving, relentless strict iambic pentameter.

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

The text of *Ferrex and Porrex* is adapted from John S. Farmer's collection of the plays of Richard Edwards *et al.*, cited below at #3.

## NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

References to "Smith" in the annotations refer to the notes provided by editor L. Toumlin Smith in his edition of *Gorboduc*, cited at #16 below.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Farmer, John S., ed. *The Dramatic Writings of Richard Edwards, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville*. London: Early English Drama Society, 1906.
4. *The Encyclopedia Britannica*. 11th edition. New York: 1911.
6. Evans, Sebastian, trans. Geoffrey of Monmouth. *Histories of the Kings of Britain*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1920.
8. Smith, W., ed. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. London: John Murray, 1849.
16. Smith, L. Toumlin. *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*. Heilbronn: Verlag Von Gebr. Henninger, 1883.

### The Historical Importance of the Play

The *Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex* is of historical importance for two reasons: (1) it is the first proper history play of the English stage, and (2) it is the first play to employ blank verse (verse without rhyming).

Compared to the soon-to-come plays of Lyly, Marlowe and Shakespeare, *F&P* is, as stage drama, a dud. None of the action takes place on stage - all occurrences are *described* by the characters rather than presented on-stage - and there is hardly any engaging "dialogue", as we understand the term today; the play is, instead, simply a collection of long set-speeches.

The play is best enjoyed if you think of it as poetry - though not without strong emotion - in a dramatic context; furthermore, if you mouth the speeches to yourself, you can fully experience the relentless, locomotive-like drive of the strict iambic pentameter; which though old-fashioned to us today, must have been exciting to those who saw this performance in a time when the classic stage productions of the era's greatest dramatists were still in an unimaginable - though near - future.

### Gorboduc and the 12th Century Monk

Stories of the early Britons were being told by the early Middle Ages, and had even been collected in at least one long-lost tome. It was a 12th century monk, however, who wrote the definitive "history" of mythical Britain. This was Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100? - 1154), an educated man whose *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*) brought under one cover the entire body of legend of the history of the British people, starting with the first Britons, who were fugitives from Troy, through the tale of Gorboduc (the subject of this play), and beyond. Geoffrey's *History* became famous all over Britain and Europe, and was primarily responsible for popularizing such famous characters as King Arthur, Queen Guinevere and Merlin the Magician, whose romantic adventures still fascinate so many people today.<sup>17</sup>

### Note on the Use of Archaisms in this Play

The English language, from its very beginnings, has continually evolved, with new words and phrases constantly being added, even as others have dropped out. Such words and phrases no longer in use, which we may call *archaisms*, were frequently used by Elizabethan dramatists any time they wanted to give a feeling of "antiqueness" to the language. As *Gorboduc* takes place in a literally pre-historic time, Norton and Sackville have used a generous collection of archaic words to give their characters a color of ancientness.

An excellent, if brief, discussion of archaisms used by Shakespeare can be found on page 22 of David and Ben Crystal's indispensable *Shakespeare's Words*.<sup>2</sup>

A list of many of the likely archaisms used in this play appears at the end of this edition.

## ACT I

### THE ORDER OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE FIRST ACT, AND THE SIGNIFICATION THEREOF.

1 First the music of violins begins to play, during  
2 which comes in upon the stage six wild men clothed in  
3 leaves; of whom the first bares in his neck a faggot of  
4 small sticks, which they all, both severally and  
5 together, assay with all their strengths to break, but it  
6 cannot be broken by them. At the length one of them  
7 plucks out one of the sticks and breaks it; and the rest  
8 plucking out all the other sticks one after another, do  
9 easily break them, the same being severed: which,  
10 being conjoined, they had before attempted in vain.  
11 After they do this, they depart the stage, and the music  
12 ceases.  
13 Hereby is signified that a state knit in unity doth  
14 continue strong against all force; but, being divided,  
15 is easily destroyed. As befell upon Duke Gorboduc  
16 dividing his land to his two sons, which he before held  
17 in monarchy, and upon the dissention of the brethren  
18 to whom it was divided.

### ACT I, SCENE I.

*The Palace, Videna's room.*

*Enter Videna and Ferrex.*

1 **Viden.** The silent night that brings the quiet pause  
2 From painful travails of the weary day,  
Prolongs my careful thoughts, and makes me blame

*The Dumb Show:* Medieval and early Renaissance dramas may have been preceded by a *dumb show*, a brief pantomime that demonstrated ahead of the performance an allegorical representation of what was to happen, or the lessons to be drawn therefrom. A written explanation of the dumb show, as appears here, might have been handed out to the audience members so they could understand what otherwise would be meaningless to them.<sup>5</sup>

Please note, the original Dumb Show descriptions were written in the past tense. The editor of this edition has changed the tense to the present to make them more comfortable for the contemporary reader. The paragraph breaks are the editor's as well.

= you may wish to note that each Dumb Show in the play is accompanied by a different instrument.  
= primitive men, maybe early savage Britons.  
= carries about his neck. = bundle.  
= individually.  
= first alone, then together, the men try (*assay*) and fail to break the bundle of sticks as a whole.

= though referred to here as *duke*, Gorboduc is understood to have been a king of early Britain.

= absolute power.<sup>1</sup> = brothers.

*The scenes:* scene locations are absent from the original printings. I have adopted the locations suggested by Smith (Smith, p. xvii-xviii).<sup>16</sup>

*Entering Characters:* Videna is the queen of Britain and wife of King Gorboduc. Ferrex is the older of her two sons, and her favorite.

1-6: Videna's opening speech is actually quite beautiful: though nighttime brings relief from the drudgery of her days, it does not alleviate her anxiety. A close examination, though, reveals the speech does not seem entirely consistent, as would be the case of someone with terrible cares: why would she want day to appear more quickly, if it only results in her renewing her lamentations?

= work.

= anxious, full of care.

4	The <u>slow Aurore</u> , that so for love or shame	= <i>Aurore</i> , the Roman goddess of the dawn, is slow to appear, as if she is embarrassed by the grief her return brings to the queen.
	Doth long delay to show her <u>blushing</u> face;	= <i>blushing</i> can refer to Aurore's embarrassed countenance as well as the red color of the dawn.
6	And now the day renews my <u>grieffful plaint</u> .	= lamentation that is full of grief. <sup>2</sup>
8	<b>Ferr.</b> My gracious lady and my mother dear,	
	Pardon my grief for your so grievèd mind,	
10	To ask what cause so tormenteth <u>your</u> heart.	= Ferrex addresses his mother with the formal and respectful "you", as is correct; Videna, in turn, addresses her son as "thee", signifying both tender affection and her superior status as mother and queen.
12	<b>Viden.</b> So great a wrong, and <u>so unjust despite</u> ,	= "such an unfair act" <sup>1</sup> ; <i>despite</i> suggests a spiteful act. <sup>1</sup>
	Without all cause, against all course of <u>kind</u> !	= nature.
14	<b>Ferr.</b> Such causeless wrong and so unjust despite,	
16	May have redress, or at the least, revenge.	= unmanageable or ungovernable.
18	<b>Viden.</b> Neither, my son; such is the <u>froward</u> will,	18-19: "the person I have in mind has such obstinacy, that it is both my misfortune ( <i>mishap</i> <sup>2</sup> ) and yours ( <i>thine</i> )."
	The person such, such my mishap and thine.	<i>froward</i> = unmanageable or ungovernable.
20	<b>Ferr.</b> <u>Mine know I none</u> , but grief for your distress.	= "I know of no such misfortune"
22	<b>Viden.</b> Yes; mine for thine, my son: a father? no:	
24	In <u>kind</u> a father, not in kindness.	= nature; earlier in the Elizabethan era, the word <i>kind</i> was frequently used to describe familial relationships specifically, or nature in general. The dual meanings of <i>kind</i> are employed repeatedly throughout the play. With <i>kindliness</i> , Videna here also puns on <i>kind</i> with its modern meaning.
26	<b>Ferr.</b> My father? why? I know nothing at all,	
	Wherein I have <u>misdone</u> unto his grace.	= done harm. <sup>1</sup>
28	<b>Viden.</b> <u>Therefore</u> , the more unkind to thee and me:	= "exactly, and that is why"
30	For, knowing well, my son, the tender love	
	That I have ever borne and bear to thee,	
32	He, grieved thereat, is not content alone	= ie. "to take you away from me".
	<u>To spoil thee of my sight</u> , my chiefest joy,	= "but the king also wants to take away your birthright", ie. sole rule of Britain.
34	<u>But thee, of thy birthright</u> , and heritage,	= way or manner.
	Causeless, unkindly, and in wrongful <u>wise</u> ,	= deprive (you). <sup>2</sup>
36	Against all law and right he will <u>bereave</u> :	
	Half of his kingdom he will give away.	
38	<b>Ferr.</b> To whom?	
40	<b>Viden.</b> Ev'n to <u>Porrex his younger son</u> ;	= Porrex is also Ferrex's younger brother.
42	Whose growing pride I do so sore suspect,	
	That being raised to equal rule with thee,	
44	Me thinks I see his envious heart to swell,	
	Filled with disdain and with ambitious hope.	
46	The end the gods do know, whose alters I	
	<u>Full oft have made</u> in vain, of <u>cattle slain</u> ,	= ie. "have often filled". = note that our tale takes place in a pre-Christian Britain, where animal sacrifices are portrayed

48 To send the sacred smoke to Heavèn's throne,  
For thee my son; if things do so succeed,  
50 As now my jealous mind misdeemeth sore.

52 **Ferr.** Madam, leave care and careful plaint for me!  
Just hath my father been to every wight:

54 His first injustice he will not extend  
To me, I trust, that give no cause thereof;  
56 My brother's pride shall hurt himself, not me.

58 **Viden.** So grant the gods! but yet thy father so  
Hath firmly fixèd his unmovèd mind,  
60 That plaints and prayèrs can no whit avail;  
For those have I assayed, but even this day,

62 He will endeavor to procure assent  
Of all his council to his fond device.

64 **Ferr.** Their ancestors from race to race have born  
66 True faith to my forefathers and their seed:  
I trust they eke will bear the like to me.

68 **Viden.** There resteth all, but if they fail thereof,  
70 And if the end bring forth an ill success,  
On them and theirs the mischief shall befall,  
72 And so I pray the gods requite it them!  
And so they will, for so is wont to be  
74 When lords and trusted rulers under kings,  
To please the present fancy of the prince,  
76 With wrong transpose the course of governance.

78 Murders, mischief, or civil sword at length,  
Or mutual treason, or a just revenge,  
When right-succeeding line returns again

80 By Jove's just judgment and deservèd wrath,  
Brings them to cruèl and reproachful death,  
82 And roots their names and kindreds from the earth.

84 **Ferr.** Mother, content you, you shall see the end.

86 **Viden.** The end? thy end I fear, Jove end me first!

88 [Exeunt.]

## ACT I, SCENE II.

as occurring. Our authors no doubt learned about such practices in their academic studies of Homer and other ancient writers.

= turn out this away.

= fearful.<sup>1</sup> = ie. "distressingly suspects (will happen)."<sup>1</sup>

= worried lamenting or moaning<sup>1</sup>.

= person. By the mid-16th century, *wight* was already an archaic word. Our authors have deliberately filled this play with a number of archaic words to give the language a feeling of antiquity.

= not a bit.

61: *those have I assayed* = "I have tried (*assayed*) both plaints and prayers".

*even* = pronounced as a one-syllable word for purposes of meter.

= foolish idea

= ie. Gorboduc's counselors'.

= offspring, ie. descendants.

= moreover (another archaism).

= result,<sup>2</sup> not necessarily suggesting a positive outcome.

= ie. the counselors' families.

= repay.

= accustomed.

= change the proper order and system by which a nation is governed; Videna rues the civil strife that is assuredly attendant if the heir-apparent is deprived of his full birthright.

79-82: when the rightful heir regains the throne after a civil war, he will properly punish those who brought about the strife and discord.

= *Jove* is the alternate named used for Jupiter, king of the gods.

= deserved.

= ie. uproots.



*The King's Council Chamber.*

*Enter Gorboduc, Arostus, Philander and Eubulus.*

1 **Gorb** . My lords, whose grave advice and faithful aid  
2 Have long upheld my honour and my realm,  
3 And brought me to this age from tender years,  
4 Guiding so great estate with great renown;  
5 Now more importeth me, than erst, to use  
6 Your faith and wisdom, whereby yet I reign;  
7 That when by death my life and rule shall cease,  
8 The kingdom yet may with unbroken course  
9 Have certain prince, by whose undoubted right,  
10 Your wealth and peace may stand in quiet stay:  
11 And eke that they, whom nature hath prepared  
12 In time to take my place in princely seat,  
13 While in their father's time their pliant youth  
14 Yields to the frame of skilful governance,  
15  
16 May so be taught and trained in noble arts,  
17 As what their fathers which have reigned before  
18 Have with great fame derived down to them,  
19 With honour they may leave unto their seed;  
20 And not be thought for their unworthy life,  
21 And for their lawless swerving out of kind,  
22 Worthy to lose what law and kind them gave:  
23 But that they may preserve the common peace,  
24 The cause that first began and still maintains  
25 The lineal course of kings' inheritance,  
26 For me, for mine, for you, and for the state,  
27 Whereof both I and you have charge and care,  
28 Thus do I mean to use your wonted faith  
29 To me and mine, and to your native land.  
30 My lords, be plain, without all wry respect,  
31 Or poisonous craft to speak in pleasing wise,

32 Lest as the blame of ill succeeding things  
33 Shall light on you, so light the harms also.

34 **Aros**. Your good acceptance so, most noble king,  
35 Of such our faithfulness, as heretofore  
36 We have employed in duties to your grace,  
37 And to this realm whole worthy head you are,  
38 Well proves that neither you mistrust at all,  
39 Nor we shall need no boasting wise to show  
40 Our truth to you, nor yet our wakeful care  
41 For you, for yours, and for our native land.  
42 Wherefore, O King, I speak for one as all,  
43 Sith all as one do bare you egal faith:

44 Doubt not to use our counsels and our aids

*Entering characters:* King *Gorboduc* enters with his advisors. *Eubulus* is identified as the king's secretary, meaning he is Gorboduc's special confidant.<sup>3</sup>

= ie. a kingdom.

= "it is more necessary for me than ever before (*erst*)".

= "a settled or legitimate king".<sup>2</sup> The title of *prince* is frequently used in this play to mean *king*.

= permanent condition.<sup>1</sup>

= moreover.

13-15: "while I am alive, my sons are young enough for me to train and mold to prepare them to govern well."

*pliant* = submissive or moldable.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. ancestors.

= passed down.<sup>1</sup> Line 17 is one of the very few in this play to contain an extra 11th syllable.

= proper course of nature

= accustomed loyalty

29-30: Gorboduc wants the counselors' advice plainly and honestly, "without crookedly seeking to favour me" (Smith, p. 13).<sup>16</sup>

*all wry respect* = any distorted quality.

*in pleasing wise* = flattery.

31-32: "otherwise both the blame for what goes wrong, and the ills that will follow as a consequence, will land on (*light on*) you."

35-36: *as heretofore...grace* = "which we have always employed previously to serve you".

= leader.

= manner.

= the sense is "watchful", or "vigilant".<sup>1</sup>

= since. = equal.<sup>3</sup> *Egal* seems to have fallen out of use by 1600.<sup>1</sup>

= hesitate.<sup>1</sup>

46	Whose honours, goods, and lives, are whole avowed To serve, to aid, and to defend your grace.	
48	<b>Gorb</b> . My lords, I thank you all. <u>This is the case</u> :	= "here is the situation"
50	Ye know the gods, who have the sovereign care For kings, for kingdoms, and for <u>common weals</u> ,	= the common welfare. = more vigorous, ie. younger.
52	Gave me two sons in my <u>more lusty</u> age, Who now in my decaying years are grown	
54	Well towards <u>riper</u> state of mind and strength, To take in hand some greater princely <u>charge</u> .	= more mature. = responsibility.
56	As yet they live and spend their hopeful days With me and with their mother here in court:	
58	Their age now asketh other place and <u>trade</u> , And mine also doth ask another change;	= occupation <sup>16</sup>
60	Theirs to more <u>travail</u> , mine to greater ease. When fatal death shall end my mortal life,	= work
62	My purpose is to leave unto them <u>twain</u> The realm divided in two <u>sundry</u> parts:	= two. = separate.
64	The one, Ferrex mine elder son shall have, The other, shall the other Porrex rule.	
66	That both my purpose may more firmly stand, And <u>eke</u> that they may better rule their charge,	= also.
68	I mean forthwith to place them in <u>the same</u> : That in my life they may both learn to rule,	= ie. the same rank, equal shares.
70	And I may joy to see their ruling well. This is in sum what I would have <u>ye</u> weigh:	
72	First, whether ye <u>allow</u> my whole <u>device</u> , And think it good for me, for them, for you,	= as Gorboduc is addressing all his advisors, he uses the old plural pronoun <i>ye</i> . = approve. = idea.
74	And for our country, mother of us all: And if ye like it, and allow it well,	
76	Then for their guiding and their governance, Show forth such means of circumstance,	76-77: "provide me with details ( <i>circumstance</i> <sup>1</sup> ) as would be fitting ( <i>meet</i> ) and which should be observed ( <i>kept</i> <sup>1</sup> )." Note that two syllables have been lost from line 76.
78	As ye think meet to be both known and kept. <u>Lo</u> , this is all; now tell me your advice.	= Ben and David Crystal, in their book <i>Shakespeare's Words</i> , describe <i>lo</i> as an "attention marker", meaning "look" (Crystal, p. 26). <sup>2</sup>
80	<b>Aros</b> . And this is much, and asketh great advice; But for my part, my sovereign lord and king,	
82	This do I think: your majesty doth know, How under you in justice and in peace,	
84	Great wealth and honour long we have enjoyed; So as we cannot seem with greedy minds	84-86: "if we do advise you to step down, you know we are not doing it for any selfish reason, since we have all thrived materially and in honor while serving you."
86	To wish for change of prince or governance: But if we like your purpose and device,	
88	Our liking must be deemèd to proceed Of rightful reason, and of heedful care,	
90	Not for ourselves, but for <u>our common</u> state, Sith <u>our own state</u> doth need no better change:	= ie. "the kingdom that is all of ours". = ie. "our personal circumstances".
92	I think in all as <u>erst</u> your grace has said. First, when you shall unload your agèd mind	= previously or first (probably archaic).
94	Of heavy care and troubles manifold, And lay the same upon my lords your sons,	



96 Whose growing years may bear the burden long,  
 (And long I pray the gods to grant it so)  
 98 And in your life while you shall so behold  
 Their rule, their virtues, and their noble deeds,  
 100 Such as their kind behighteth to us all;  
 Great be the profits that shall grow thereof,  
 102 Your age in quiet shall the longer last,  
 Your lasting age shall be their longer stay:  
 104 For cares of kings, that rule as you have ruled  
 For public wealth and not for private joy,  
 106 Do waste man's life, and hasten crooked age  
 With furrowed face and with enfeebled limbs,  
 108 To draw on creeping death a swifter pace.  
 They two, yet young, shall bear the parted reign  
 110 With greater ease than one, now old, alone  
 Can wield the whole, for whom much harder is  
 112 With lessened strength the double weight to bear.  
 Your eye, your counsel, and the grave regard  
 114 Of father, yea, of such as father's name,  
 Now at beginning of their sundered reign  
 116 When it is hazard of their whole success,  
 Shall bridle so their force of youthful heats,  
 118 And so restrain the rage of insolence  
 Which most assails the young and noble minds,  
 120 And so shall guide and train in tempered stay  
 Their yet green bending wits with reverent awe,  
 122 As now inured with virtues at the first.  
 Custom, O king, shall bring delightfulness.  
 124 By use of virtue, vice shall grow in hate;  
 But if you so dispose it, that the day  
 126 Which ends your life, shall first begin their reign,  
 Great is the peril, what will be the end,  
 128 When such beginning of such liberties  
 Void of such stays as in your life do lie,  
 130 Shall leave them free to random of their will,  
 An open prey to traitorous flattery,  
 132 The greatest pestilence of noble youth:  
 Which peril shall be past, if in your life,  
 134 Their tempered youth with aged father's awe  
 Be brought in ure of skilful stayèdness;  
 136 And in your life, their lives disposèd so,  
 Shall length your noble life in joyfulness.  
 138 Thus think I that your grace hath wisely thought,  
 And that your tender care of common weal  
 140 Hath bred this thought, so to divide your land,  
 And plant your sons to bear the present rule  
 142 While you yet live to see their ruling well,

= promises<sup>16</sup>; another word that may have already been passing out of use in the mid-16th century.<sup>1</sup>

= means of support.<sup>1</sup>

= separate, split.

= the sense is "still vulnerable regarding".

117: "will act to control their youthful passions".

= moderate restraint.

= innocent or naïve. = pliable, moldable. = minds or mental capacities.

= accustomed.

125-6: "but if you wait until you die to hand over your rule to them"

128: "when they suddenly find they can do completely as they wish".

= checks.

= act without restraint<sup>2</sup> or without aim.<sup>1</sup>

= *traitorous* should be considered a two-syllable word throughout the play.

131-2: Elizabethan drama is filled with flattering and self-serving sycophants as are described in these two lines.

133-5: "if you are alive when the boys are made kings, you will be able to prevent any flatterers from leading them down the wrong path, and instead you will accustom them to pursuing wise policies."

= into use. = gravity or firmness.<sup>16</sup>

= lengthen.

= ie. thought this out.

144	That you may longer live by joy therein. What further means <u>behooveful</u> are and <u>meet</u> ,	= ie. which are both necessary or desirable ( <i>behooveful</i> <sup>3)</sup> and appropriate ( <i>meet</i> )
146 148 150	At greater leisure may your grace devise, <u>When all have said</u> ; and when we be agreed If this be best to part the realm in twain, And place your sons in present government: Whereof, as I have plainly said my mind, So would I hear the rest of all my lords.	= "once all of us advisors have had our say"
152 154 156 158 160 162 164 166	<b>Phil.</b> In part I think as hath been said before, In part again my mind is otherwise. As for dividing of this realm in twain, And <u>lotting</u> out the <u>fame</u> in <u>egal</u> parts, To either of my lords your grace's sons, <u>That think I best</u> for this your realm's <u>behoof</u> , For profit and advancement of your sons, And for your comfort and your honour <u>eke</u> : But so to place them while your life do last, To yield to them your royal governance, To be above them only in the name Of father, not in kingly state also, I think not good for you, for them, nor us. This kingdom since the bloody civil field, Where Morgan slain did yield his conquered part Unto his cousin's sword in Camberland,	= dividing. = honor. <sup>1</sup> = equal. = ie. "I think that is best". = benefit. <sup>2</sup> = also  166-7: a reference to the story told by Geoffrey of Monmouth of two cousins, <i>Morgan</i> and <i>Cunedag</i> , who rebelled against their common aunt, Cordela, who was sole sovereign of ancient Britain. Having captured and removed the reigning queen from power, Morgan and Cunedag divided rule of Britain, Morgan ruling north of the Humber River, his cousin ruling to its south. Encouraged to try to take all of Britain for himself, Morgan invaded the south, but his army was destroyed by Cunedag's. Cunedag pursued the fleeing Morgan until finally catching up with him in Wales (ie. Cambria, named after its first sole king <i>Camber</i> , a son of Brute: see the note below at line 169), where he slew him. Cunedag ruled the whole island for 33 years. Gorboduc was among his descendants (Evans, p. 34-35).
168	Containeth all that <u>whilom</u> did suffice Three noble sons of your forefather <u>Brute</u> :	= at one time.
170	So your two sons, it may suffice also; The <u>mo</u> the stronger, if they <u>gree</u> in one:	= <i>Brute</i> was the legendary first king of Britain. According to Geoffrey, Brute was the great-grandson of Aeneas, the Trojan hero and prince who, after the sack of Troy by the Greeks, escaped and settled in Italy to found Rome. Brute travelled to Greece, where he settled in with the descendants of the survivors of the race of Trojans. After a series of wars with the Greeks, Brute escaped with the Trojans, and after many adventures settled in Britain, which was uninhabited "save only of a few giants." Brute named the island after himself, founded the city of New Troy (later London), and when he finally died left Britain to be ruled successfully in separate pieces by his three sons (Evans, pp. 3-23).
		171: Philander argues that there are advantages to having two kings ruling separate, smaller kingdoms, <i>if</i> the individual kings are in amity; to line 181, he describes the many benefits such an arrangement may have; <i>mo</i> = more. <i>gree</i> = agree.

172	The smaller <u>compass</u> that the realm doth hold	= space or area.
	The easier is the sway thereof to wield;	
174	The nearer justice to the wrongèd poor,	
	The smaller <u>charge</u> , and yet enough for one.	= responsibility
176	And when the region is divided so	
	That <u>brethren</u> be the lords of either part,	= brothers
178	Such strength doth nature knit between them both,	
	In <u>sundry</u> bodies by conjoinèd love,	= separate
180	That not as two, but one of doubled force,	
	Each is to other as a sure defense;	
182	The nobleness and glory of the one,	
	Doth <u>sharp</u> the courage of the other's mind	= sharpen.
184	With virtuous envy to contend for praise:	184: a friendly competition arises as to which of the two sovereigns can be more virtuous.
	And such an <u>egalness</u> hath nature made,	= equality.
186	Between the brethren of one father's seed,	
	As an <u>unkindly</u> wrong it seems to be,	187-193: a younger son may resent the entire kingship falling to his older brother, when nature otherwise made them equals. <i>unkindly</i> = unnatural.
		= ie. under the rule of (his older brother).
188	To throw the brother subject <u>under feet</u>	= nature.
	Of him, whose peer he is by course of <u>kind</u> :	
190	And nature that did make this egalness,	
	Oft so <u>repineth</u> at so great a wrong,	= complains, feels dissatisfaction <sup>2</sup>
192	That oft she raiseth up a grudging grief	
	In younger brethren at the elder's state:	
194	Whereby both towns and kingdoms have been razed,	
	And famous stocks of royal blood destroyed:	
196	The brother, that should be the brother's aid,	
	And have a <u>wakeful</u> care for his defense,	= vigilant.
198	<u>Gapes</u> for his death, and blames the lingering years	198-9: the younger brother impatiently yearns ( <i>gapes</i> <sup>2</sup> ) for his brother's death, so that he may become king.
	That draws not forth his end with faster course;	
200	And oft impatient of so long delays,	
	With hateful slaughter he <u>prevents the Fates</u> ,	= anticipates ( <i>prevents</i> ) the actions of the Fates; the <i>Fates</i> were the three sister-goddesses who determined the length of the lives of humans. Philander means that the younger may act to kill the elder before his rightful lifetime is played out.
		= forever.
202	And heaps a just reward for brother's blood,	204: <i>here</i> = ie. "with this decision to split the kingdom".
	With endless vengeance on his stock <u>for aye</u> .	<i>met</i> = prevented, anticipated.
204	Such mischiefs <u>here</u> are wisely <u>met withal</u> ;	<i>withal</i> = altogether. <sup>1</sup>
		= Philander now changes tack: one cannot be sure that such perfect harmony will arise if two sons are given their own kingdoms while the father simultaneously and officially retires.
	If egal state may nourish egal love,	= nor (archaic).
206	Where none has cause to grudge the other's good,	
	<u>But now</u> the head to stoop beneath them both,	= manner
208	<u>Ne</u> kind, ne reason, ne good order bears.	
	And oft it hath been seen, where nature's course	
210	Hath been perverted in disordered <u>wise</u> ,	
	When fathers cease to know that they should rule,	
212	And children cease to know they should obey:	
	And often <u>over-kindly tenderness</u>	= "tenderness beyond nature" (Smith, p. 20) <sup>16</sup>
214	Is mother of unkindly stubbornness.	
	I speak not this in <u>envy</u> or reproach,	= malice

216	As if I grudged the glory of your sons, Whose honour I beseech the gods increase:	
218	Nor yet as if I thought there did remain So filthy <u>cankers</u> in their noble breasts,	= cancers, corruption
220	Whom I esteem (which is their greatest praise) <u>Undoubted</u> children of so good a king;	= unsuspected
222	Only I mean to show by certain rules, Which <u>kind</u> hath <u>graft</u> within the mind of man,	= nature. = grafted, implanted.
224	That nature hath her order and her course, Which, being broken, doth corrupt the state	
226	Of minds and things e'en in the best of all. My lords, your sons may learn to rule <u>of</u> you;	= from
228	Your own example in your noble court Is fittest guider of their youthful years,	
230	If you desire to seek some present joy By sight of their well ruling in your life,	
232	See them obey, so shall you see them rule: Who so obeyeth not with humbleness,	
234	Will rule with outrage and with insolence. Long may they rule, I do beseech the gods;	
236	Long may they learn, ere they begin to rule. If kind and fates would <u>suffer</u> , I would wish	= allow.
238	<u>Them</u> agèd princes and immortal kings. Wherefore, most noble king, I well assent	= ie. "them to live to be".
240	Between your sons that you divide your realm, And as <u>in kind</u> , so match them in degree:	= "nature has done"
242	But while the gods prolong your royal life, <u>Prolong your reign</u> ; for thereto live you here,	= Philander essentially argues that Gorboduc should continue to reign as senior king, even as he gives his two sons rule over their separate kingdoms.
244	And therefore have the gods so long <u>forborn</u> To <u>join you to themselves</u> , that still you might	= held off.
246	Be prince and father of our common weal: They, when they see your children <u>ripe</u> to rule,	= euphemism for "let you die".
248	Will make them room, and will remove you hence,  That yours, in right ensuing of your life,	= mature enough. 248: "will make room amongst themselves so you may join them in Heaven". 249: "so that your children, having rightfully followed you on the throne".
250	May rightly honour your immortal name.	
252	<b>Eubu.</b> Your <u>wonted</u> true regard of <u>faithful</u> hearts Makes me, O king, the bolder to presume	= accustomed. = loyal.
254	To speak what I conceive within my breast; Although <u>the same do not</u> agree at all	= "my breast does not"
256	With that which other here my lords have said, Nor which yourself have seemèd best to like.	
258	Pardon I crave, and that my words be deemed To flow from hearty zeal unto your grace,	
260	And to the safety of your common weal. To part your realm unto my lords your sons,	
262	I think not good for you, <u>ne</u> yet for them, But worst of all, for this our native land:	= nor
264	For with one land, one single rule is best: Divided reigns do make divided hearts;	
266	But peace preserves the country and the prince.	

268	Such is in man the greedy mind to reign, So great is his desire to climb aloft, In worldly stage the stateliest parts to bear,	
270	That faith and justice and all <u>kindly</u> love, Do yield unto desire of sovereignty,	= familial
272	Where egal state doth raise an egal hope To win <u>the thing</u> that either would attain.	= ie. sole rule over the nation
274	Your grace remembereth how in passed years, The mighty Brute, first prince of all this land,	
276	Possessed the fame and ruled it well in one: He, thinking that the <u>compass did suffice</u>	= ie. the range or size of the nation was large enough.
278	For his three sons three kingdoms <u>eke</u> to make, Cut it in three, as you would now in twain:	= moreover.
280	But how much British blood hath since been spilt To join again the sundered unity?	
282	What princes slain before their timely hour? What waste of towns and people in the land?	
284	What treasons heaped on murders and on spoils? Whose just revenge e'en yet is scarcely ceased,	
286	<u>Ruthful</u> remembrance is yet raw in mind. The gods forbid the like to chance again:	= pitiable, grief-causing. <sup>1</sup> Note the nice alliteration in this line.
288	And you, O king, give not the cause thereof. My Lord Ferrex your elder son, perhaps	
290	Whom kind and custom gives a rightful hope To be your heir and to <u>succeed</u> your reign,	= ie. "succeed you in"
292	Shall think that he doth suffer greater wrong Than he perchance will bear, if power serve.	= though normally pronounced as a 1-syllable word, here <i>power</i> possesses its modern two syllables.
294	Porrex the younger, so upraised in state, Perhaps in <u>courage</u> will be raised also,	= ambition <sup>2</sup>
296	If flattery then, which fails not to assail The tender minds of yet <u>unskilful</u> youth,	= lacking in judgment or knowledge. <sup>3,16</sup>
298	In one shall kindle and increase disdain, And envy in <u>the other's</u> heart enflame:	298: ie. cause disdain in the elder towards the younger. = ie. the younger one's.
300	This fire shall waste their love, their lives, their land, And ruthful ruin shall destroy them both.	
302	I wish not this, O King, so to befall, But fear the thing, that I do most abhor.	
304	Give no beginning to so dreadful end; Keep them in order and obedience;	
306	And let them both by now obeying you, Learn such behavior as <u>beseems</u> their state;	= is fitting to
308	The elder, mildness in his governance, The younger, <u>a yielding contentedness</u> ;	= ie. acceptance that the elder is the sole ruler
310	And keep them near unto your presence still, That they, restrained by the awe of you,	
312	May live in <u>compass</u> of well-tempered <u>stay</u> , And pass the perils of their youthful years.	= limit. = restraint. 313: another allusion to the notion that maturity will bestow on the boys the ability to rule more wisely and with moderation.
314	Your agèd life draws on to feebler time, Wherein you shall less able be to bear	
316	The <u>travails</u> that in youth you have sustained, Both in your person's and your realm's defense.	= work
318	If planting now your sons <u>in further parts</u> ,	= ie. to far-away locations



320 You send them further from your present reach,  
 Less shall you know how they themselves demean:  
 Traitorous corrupters of their pliant youth  
 322 Shall have unspied a much more free access;

And if ambition and inflamed disdain  
 324 Shall arm the one, the other, or them both,  
 To civil war, or to usurping pride,  
 326 Late shall you rue that you ne recked before.  
 Good is, I grant, of all to hope the best,  
 328 But not to live still dreadless of the worst.  
 So trust the one, that th' other be forseen.  
 330 Arm not unskilfulness with princely power;  
 But you that long have wisely ruled the reins  
 332 Of royalty within your noble realm,  
 So hold them, while the gods for our avails  
 334 Shall stretch the thread of your prolongedè days.

Too soon he clamb into the flaming car,

336 Whose want of skill did set the earth on fire.  
 Time and example of your noble grace,  
 338 Shall teach your sons both to obey and rule;  
 When time hath taught them, time shall make them place,  
 340 The place that now is full: and so I pray  
 Long it remain, to comfort of us all.

342  
 344 **Gorb.** I take your faithful hearts in thankful part:  
 But sith I see no cause to draw my mind,

To fear the nature of my loving sons,  
 346 Or to misdeem that envy or disdain  
 Can there work hate, where nature planteth love;  
 348 In one self purpose do I still abide:  
 My love extendeth egally to both,  
 350 My land sufficeth for them both also.  
 Humber shall part the marches of their realms:

352 The southern part the elder shall possess,

= govern or behave themselves.<sup>1</sup>  
 321-2: ie. those who would mislead them with malicious advice will have easier access to them if they are unseen (*unspied*) by you".

= in the end. = did not consider or heed.<sup>1</sup>  
 = the still common phrase *hope for the best* first appeared in the early 15th century.<sup>1</sup>

= "do not arm ignorance (*unskilfulness*)"  
 331-2: more nice alliteration appears in these two lines.

= benefit, good.  
 = an allusion to "the thread of life" spun by the Fates; when the Fate known as Atropos cuts one's thread, one's life ends.  
 335-6: a reference to *Phaeton*, a son of Apollo, the sun god. As an adolescent, Phaeton begged his father to let him drive the chariot that pulled the sun across the sky for one day. Apollo reluctantly acquiesced, but warned his son to be careful. Phaeton could not control the horses, and would have crashed onto the earth, had not Zeus killed him first with a thunderbolt.<sup>7</sup> *clamb* is an archaic form of "climbed".  
 = lack.

339: *time* will mature them, and time will at the appropriate time set them on the throne.

*The Advisors' Positions*: it may behoove us to summarize the positions of the advisors, as the excessive length of the speeches may have dulled our memories: (1) Arostus agrees with the king, that he should retire and divide the kingdom for his sons; (2) Philander allows for Gorboduc dividing the kingdom, but believes he should stay on as senior king to provide a moderating influence on the two youths; (3) Eubulus feels strongly that dividing the kingdom will lead to disaster.

= since. = perhaps meaning "to pull", though the sense seems to be "to change".

= wrongly believe

348: "I am still determined to do as I wish". *self* = same.

351: "the Humber River (which once cut further across central England than it does today<sup>18</sup>) shall be the boundary (*marches* = frontier, border<sup>1</sup>) between their separate kingdoms".



<p>354 356</p>	<p>The northern shall Porrex the younger rule. In quiet I will pass mine agèd days, Free from the travail and the painful cares That hasten age upon the worthiest kings. But lest the <u>fraud</u>, that ye do seem to fear</p>	<p>= deceit; the description in lines 357-360 is of sycophants misleading the young kings with ideas of grandeur and power.</p>
<p>358 360 362 364 366 368 370 372</p>	<p>Of flattering tongues, corrupt their tender youth, And <u>writhe</u> them to the ways of youthful lust, To climbing pride, or to revenging hate; Or to neglecting of their <u>careful charge</u>, <u>Lewdly</u> to live in wanton recklessness; Or to oppressing of the rightful cause; Or not to <u>wreak</u> the wrongs done to the poor, To tread down truth, or favor false deceit; I mean to join to either of my sons Someone of those whose long approvèd faith And wisdom tried may well assure my heart: That <u>mining</u> fraud shall find no way to creep Into their <u>fencèd</u> ears with grave advise. This is the end; and so I pray you all To bear my sons the love and loyalty That I have found within your faithful breasts.</p>	<p>= ie. turn or incline.<sup>1</sup> = ie. responsibility which requires great care. = basely.<sup>3</sup> = avenge 366-8: Gorboduc will assigned an experienced advisor to keep an eye on and wisely counsel his sons. = the sense is "undermining". 370: the sense is that the ears, thanks to the presence of a wise counselor, are defended (<i>fenced</i>) against insidious advice with good advice.<sup>16</sup></p>
<p>374 376</p>	<p><b>Aros.</b> You, nor your sons, our sovereign lord, shall <u>want</u> Our faith and service while our lives do last.</p>	<p>= lack</p>
<p>378</p>	<p>[<i>Exeunt.</i>]</p>	<p><i>End of the Acts:</i> Acts I-IV in <i>Gorboduc</i> are each followed by a <i>Chorus</i>, a kind of epilogue, presenting some final thoughts and lessons to be drawn from the action so far. According to the <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> (1911), a <i>Chorus</i> in Elizabethan drama consisted of a single character reciting such an epilogue.<sup>4</sup></p>
<p>380</p>	<p><b>Chorus.</b> When settled <u>stay</u> doth hold the royal throne</p>	<p>The Chorus of this play consists of <i>Four Ancient and Sage Men of Britain</i> (as listed in <i>The Names of the Speakers</i>); but as the final Act has no Chorus, perhaps a different <i>Sage Man</i> speaks at the end of each of the first four Acts.</p>
<p>382</p>	<p>In steadfast place by known and <u>doubtless</u> right, And chiefly when descent on one alone Make single and unparted reign <u>to light</u>;</p>	<p>= conditions. Note also the rhyme scheme of the Chorus' six-line stanzas: <i>ab-ab-cc</i>. The indentations are the editor's. = undoubted. = <i>to light</i> is modified by <i>on one</i>: "the royal throne lights on (ie. settles on) one heir alone".</p>
<p>384</p>	<p>Each <u>change of course</u> <u>unjoints</u> the whole <u>estate</u>,</p>	<p>384: <i>change of course</i> = alteration to the proper course of things.</p>
<p>386</p>	<p>And yields it <u>thrall</u> to ruin by <u>debate</u>.</p>	<p><i>unjoints</i> = dislocates.<sup>1</sup> <i>estate</i> = kingdom. = subject. = strife.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>388</p>	<p>The strength that knit by fast accord in one, Against all foreign power of mighty foes Could of itself defend itself alone;</p>	<p>= ie. but once separated.</p>
<p>390</p>	<p><u>Disjoinèd once</u>, the former force doth lose. The sticks, that <u>sundered</u> <u>brake</u> so soon in twain, In faggot bound attempted were in vain.</p>	<p>= ie. when separated. = broke. The reference is to the allegorical sticks of Act I's introductory Dumb Show.</p>

392      Oft tender mind that leads the partial eye  
Of erring parents in their children's love,  
394      Destroys the wrongly lovèd child thereby:  
This doth the proud son of Apollo prove,  
396      Who, rashly set in chariot of his sire,  
Inflamed the parchèd earth with Heavèn's fire.  
398      And this great king, that doth divide his land,  
And change the course of his descending crown,  
400      And yields the reign into his children's hand;  
From blissful state of joy and great renown,  
402      A mirror shall become to princes all,

To learn to shun the cause of such a fall.

END OF ACT I.

= biased.

395-7: a second allusion to the famous and oft-cited myth of Phaeton; see lines 335-6 above.

= example or warning; the early meaning of *mirror* as "an exemplar" actually may have predated its usual meaning of a reflective surface.<sup>1</sup>

402-3: it became a common grace note of Elizabethan drama to use a rhyming couplet to end a scene or act, often expressing a pithy sentiment.

## ACT II.

### THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE SECOND ACT.

1 First, the music of cornets begins to play, during  
2 which comes in upon the stage a king accompanied  
4 after he has placed himself in a chair of estate  
prepared for him, there comes and kneels before him a  
6 grave and aged gentleman and offers up a cup unto  
8 him of wine in a glass, which the king refuses. After  
him comes a brave and lusty young gentleman and  
presents the king with a cup of gold filled with poison,  
10 which the king accepts, and drinking the same,  
immediately falls down dead upon the stage, and so is  
12 carried thence away by his lords and gentlemen, and  
then the music ceases.

14 Hereby is signified that as glass by nature holdeth  
no poison, but is clear and may easily be seen through,  
16 ne boweth by any art: so a faithful counselor holdeth no

treason, but is plain and open, ne yieldeth to any  
18 undiscreet affection, but giveth wholesome counsel,  
which the ill-advised prince refuseth. The delightful  
20 gold filled with poison betokeneth flattery, which  
under fair seeming of pleasant words beareth deadly  
22 poison, which destroyeth the prince that receiveth it.  
As befell in the two brethren Ferrex and Porrex, who,  
24 refusing the wholesome advise of grave court  
counselors, credited these young parasites, and  
26 brought to themselves death and destruction thereby.

### ACT II, SCENE I.

*The Court of Prince Ferrex.*

*Enter Ferrex, Hermon and Dordan.*

1 **Ferr.** I marvel much what reason led the king  
2 My father, thus without all my desert,  
To reave me half the kingdom which by course  
4 Of law and nature should remain to me.

6 **Herm.** If you with stubborn and untamèd pride

= throne

= ie. who

= robust.

= from a Latin proverb: *bibere venenum in auro* = drink  
poison from a cup of gold.

= ie. nor bends.<sup>3</sup> = *art* refers to the ability of man to modify  
nature.

= injudicious bias<sup>2</sup>

= symbolizes

*Entering Characters:* *Hermon* is a follower of *Ferrex* (who we remember is the king's elder son) and a flattering sycophant, typically called a *parasite*. His job is to lead *Ferrex* (the new king of the southern half of Britain) astray with malevolent advice. *Dordan* is a trusted advisor assigned by King Gorboduc to keep watch over *Ferrex*, and protect him from the foolish counsel he is likely to receive from men like *Hermon*.

Note how Gorboduc has already divided his kingdom between the Acts; in fact, no action at all takes place on the stage throughout the play, all activity occurring between scenes.

= "without my having done anything to deserve it".

= deprive or rob.

6-14: *Hermon* argues that it would have made sense to rob *Ferrex* of his birthright only if he had done something

8 Had stood against him in rebelling wise;  
 Or if with grudging mind you had envied  
 So slow a sliding of his agèd years;  
 10 Or sought before your time to haste the course  
 Of fatal death upon his royal head;  
 12 Or stained your stock with murder of your kin;  
 Some face of reason might perhaps have seemed  
 14 To yield some likely cause to spoil ye thus.  
 16 **Ferr.** The wreakful gods pour on my cursèd head

18 Eternal plagues and never dying woes;  
 The hellish prince adjudge my damnèd ghost

To Tantal's thirst, or proud Ixion's wheel,

20 Or cruèl gripe to gnaw my growing heart,

22 To during torments and unquenchèd flames;  
 If ever I conceived so foul a thought,  
 To wish his end of life, or yet of reign.

24 **Dord.** Ne yet your father, O most noble prince,  
 26 Did ever think so foul a thing of you:  
 For he, with more than father's tender love,  
 28 While yet the fates do lend him life to rule,  
 (Who long might live to see your ruling well)  
 30 To you, my lord, and to his other son,  
 Lo, he resigns his realm and royalty;  
 32 Which never would so wise a prince have done,  
 If he had once misdeemed that in your heart  
 34 There ever lodgèd so unkind a thought.

to deserve such treatment; he enumerates several examples of such unworthy behavior.

= manner.

= displayed resentment towards.<sup>2</sup>

= hasten

= family tree<sup>2</sup>

= avenging. 16-23: this speech is one long sentence, whose point only becomes clear at the end: Ferrex wishes a number of curses upon himself, *if* he ever once held a malicious thought towards his father.

= a reference to Pluto, the Greek god and ruler of the underworld; technically, however, Pluto did not make the individual decisions about the punishments to be assigned to individual souls; such decisions were made by the judges Rhadamanthys, Minos and Aiakos, three men who were famous for establishing law and order during their lives on earth.<sup>7</sup>

19: Ferrex alludes to two famous stories from mythology:

(1) **Tantalus**, a son of Zeus, revealed secrets told him by the king of the gods, and for this indiscretion was punished by being placed in a lake to suffer permanent thirst and hunger; whenever he reached for the water around him or the fruit hanging from the branches above him, they would shrink away from him. Our word *tantalize* derives from his name.

(2) **Ixion's** father-in-law tried to extort Ixion's wedding presents from him, and in revenge Ixion invited the man to his home, wherein he caused him to fall into a pit filled with fire; Ixion was pardoned by Zeus, who invited him to a feast, but Ixion repaid his host by trying to seduce Zeus' wife Hera. He was punished by being tied by his hands and feet to a wheel which forever spun around in the underworld.<sup>8</sup>

= vulture.<sup>1</sup> The reference in this line is to the myth of **Tityus**, a giant who tried to rape the mortal woman Leto (the future mother of Helen of Troy); Zeus killed him with a bolt of lightning, and he was punished in hell by being tied to the ground (he covered nine acres) and having two vultures continuously eat his liver, which always grew back.<sup>8</sup>

= ie. enduring.

= "your father neither"; Dordan tries to soften the hurt caused by Gorboduc's decision to divide Britain.

= mistakenly thought

36 But tender love, my lord, and settled trust  
Of your good nature, and your noble mind,  
38 Made him to place you thus in royal throne,  
And now to give you half his realm to guide;  
40 Yea, and that half which in abounding store  
Of things that serve to make a wealthy realm,  
In stately cities, and in fruitful soil,  
42 In temperate breathing of the milder Heaven,  
In things of needful use, which friendly sea  
44 Transports by traffic from the foreign parts,  
In flowing wealth, in honour and in force,  
46 Doth pass the double value of the part  
That Porrex hath allotted to his reign.  
48 Such is your case, such is your father's love.

50 **Ferr.** Ah love, my friends? love wrongs not whom he  
loves.

52 **Dord.** Ne yet he wrongeth you, that giveth you  
So large a reign, ere that the course of time  
54 Bring you to kingdom by descended right,  
Which time perhaps might end your time before.

56 **Ferr.** Is this no wrong, say you, to reave from me  
58 My native right of half so great a realm?  
And thus to match his younger son with me  
60 In egal power, and in as great degree?  
Yea, and what son? The son whose swelling pride  
62 Would never yield one point of reverence,  
When I the elder and apparent heir  
64 Stood in the likelihood to possess the whole;  
Yea, and that son which from his childish age  
66 Envieth my honour, and doth hate my life.  
What will he now do, when his pride, his rage,  
68 The mindful malice of his grudging heart,  
Is armed with force, with wealth, and kingly state?

70 **Herm.** Was this not wrong? Yea, ill-advised wrong  
72 To give so mad a man so sharp a sword,  
To so great peril of so great mishap,  
74 Wide open thus to set so large a way.

76 **Dord.** Alas, my lord, what grievful thing is this,  
That of your brother you can think so ill?  
78 I never saw him utter likely sign  
Whereby a man might see or once misdeem  
80 Such hate of you, ne such unyielding pride:  
Ill is their counsel, shameful be their end,  
82 That raising such mistrustful fear in you,  
Sowing the seed of such unkindly hate,  
84 Travail by reason to destroy you both.  
Wise is your brother and of noble hope,  
86 Worthy to wield a large and mighty realm;  
So much a stronger friend have you thereby,  
88 Whose strength is your strength, if you gree in one.

39-47: Dordan notes that Ferrex has received the much wealthier southern half of Britain to rule.

= some editors prefer to read *ports*.

52-55: a clever argument: Ferrex should actually be grateful to have received a kingdom to rule *before* his father died, which is how events normally would proceed; in fact, it is even possible that Ferrex might have pre-deceased his father, in which case he *never* would have been king!

= equal. = rank.

61-66: according to Ferrex, Porrex has always been resentful of his having been born the younger son, and envious that Ferrex would be the next king; because he has not behaved in a dignified manner, nor accepted his fate, Porrex does not deserve to have a share in ruling Britain.

= unforgetting<sup>16</sup>

= risk or danger. = misfortune.

78-80: Dordan flatly contradicts Ferrex's description of a bitter younger brother.

= nor.

= strive

= ie. act in harmony

90	<b>Herm.</b> If nature and the gods had <u>pinchèd so</u>	= been stingy or ungenerous with <sup>9</sup>
92	Their flowing bounty, and their noble gifts Of princely qualities from you my lord, And poured them all at once in <u>wasteful wise</u>	93-94: ie. "if the gods had given all the qualities desirable in a king to your brother, and none to you". <i>wasteful wise</i> = a wasteful manner.
94	Upon your father's younger son alone;	
96	Perhaps <u>there be</u> , that <u>in your prejudice</u> Would say that birth should yield to worthiness:	= "there would be those who". = "to your detriment". 96: "would say that you, who should be king based on your birth, should yield the throne to your brother based on his superior <i>worthiness</i> ". = since. = some editors prefer <i>act</i> here.
98	But <u>sith</u> in each good gift and princely <u>art</u> Ye are his match, and in the chief of all – In mildness and in sober governance –	
100	Ye <u>far surmount</u> ; and sith there is in you Sufficing skill and <u>hopeful towardness</u>	= "are far superior". = an expectant willingness or desire.
102	To <u>wield</u> the whole, and match your elders praise, I see no cause why ye should lose the half,	= reign.
104	Ne would I with you yield to such a loss:	104: Hermon finally comes right out and explicitly advises Ferrex to not accept this division of the kingdom. = acceptance. = fear.
106	Lest your mild <u>sufferance</u> of so great a wrong Be deemèd cowardice and simple <u>dread</u> ,	
108	Which shall give courage to the fiery head Of your young brother to invade the whole.	
110	While yet therefore sticks in the people's mind The loathèd wrong of your disheritance;	109-119: another long sentence: Ferrex should anticipate Porrex and attack him first while he, Ferrex, still has the advantage. 109-110: "while the wrong done to you is still fresh in people's minds". = before.
112	And <u>ere</u> your brother have by settled power, By <u>guileful cloak</u> of an <u>alluring show</u> ,	112-3: the sense is that Porrex might, given enough time, be able to fool enough people to accept him as king simply by acting the part, and as a result gain enough support to be able to raise an army to resist Ferrex. <i>guileful cloak</i> = deceiving disguise. <sup>2</sup> <i>alluring show</i> = attractive playing of the part.
114	Got him some force and favour in this realm; And while the noble queen your mother lives, To work and <u>practice</u> all for your <u>avail</u> ;	114-5: Hermon is aware that Ferrex is his mother's favorite. = scheme. = benefit. = revenge.
116	Attempt redress by arms, and <u>wreak</u> yourselves Upon his life that gaineth by your loss,	
118	Who now to shame of you, and grieve of us, In your own kingdom triumphs over you:	
120	Show now your courage <u>meet</u> for kingly state, That they which have <u>avowed</u> to spend their goods, Their lands, their lives, and honours in your cause, May be the bolder to maintain your part	= fit. = vowed, promised.
122	When they do see that coward fear in you Shall not betray <u>ne fail</u> their faithful hearts.	= nor deceive <sup>16</sup>
124	If once the death of Porrex end the strife, And pay the price of his usurpèd reign, Your mother shall persuade the angry king, The lords your friends <u>eke shall appease</u> his rage;	
126	For they be wise, and well they can foresee	= will also work to mollify
128		
130		



That ere long time your agèd father's death

132 Will bring a time when you shall well requite  
 Their friendly favour, or their hateful spite,  
 134 Yea, or their slackness to advance your cause.  
 "Wise men do not so hang on passing state  
 136 Of present princes, chiefly in their age,  
 But they will further cast their reaching eye,  
 138 To view and weigh the times and reigns to come."  
 Ne is it likely, though the king be wroth,  
 140 That he yet will, or that the realm will bear,  
 Extreme revenge upon his only son:  
 142 Or if he would, what one is he that dare  
 Be minister to such an enterprise?

144 And here you be now placèd in your own,  
 Amid your friends, your vassals and your strength:  
 146 We shall defend and keep your person safe  
 Till either counsel turn his tender mind,  
 148 Or age, or sorrow end his weary days.  
 But if the fear of gods, and secret grudge  
 150 Of nature's law, repining at the fact,

Withhold your courage from so great attempt,  
 152 Know ye, that lust of kingdoms hath no law,  
 The gods do bear and well allow in kings  
 154 The things [that] they abhor in rascal routs.  
 "When kings on slender quarrels run to wars,  
 156 And then in cruèl and unkindly wise  
 Command thefts, rapes, murder of innocents,  
 158 To spoil of towns, and reigns of mighty realms;  
 Think you such princes do suppress themselves  
 160 Subject to laws of kind, and fear of gods?"  
 Murders, and violent thefts in private men

162 Are heinous crimes and full of foul reproach:  
 Yet none offence, but decked with glorious name  
 164 Of noble conquests in the hands of kings.  
 But if you like not yet so hot device,

166 Ne list to take such vantage of the time,  
 But, though with peril of your own estate,  
 168 You will not be the first that shall invade;  
 Assemble yet your force for your defense,  
 170 And for your safety stand upon your guard.

172 **Dord.** Oh, Heavèn! was there ever heard or known  
 So wicked counsel to a noble prince?

131-4: Hermon cleverly points out that Gorboduc's counselors will, out of self-interest, recognize that Gorboduc's eventual death will put them at Ferrex's mercy no matter what, so they will work hard to get the king to accept Ferrex's removal of Porrex; specifically, Ferrex would be expected to reward them for taking his side - or punish them if they don't!  
 = reward.

135-138: the quotations around these lines are meant to suggest that Hermon is quoting accepted authority or well-known maxims.

= irate or moved to great anger<sup>1</sup>

143: "be the one to carry out such an assignment".  
*minister* = agent.

= ie. "the good advice of his counselors sways Gorboduc's yielding or pliant (*tender*) mind"

150: "nature turns with pain or shrinks (*repines*) from the deed (*fact*) of killing one's brother" (Smith, p. 36).<sup>16</sup>

= greed for. = knows no or acknowledges no law.

= approve.<sup>3</sup>

= worthless rabble.<sup>2</sup>

= manner

= nature or familial relations.

= ie. those not serving any public office, or at least those who are not kings.

= ie. are not considered offensive or criminal

165: ie. "but if you are uncomfortable with such an extreme scheme (*hot device*)".

166: "nor wish (*list*) to take advantage of this propitious moment".

= "danger of losing your own kingdom".<sup>1</sup>

169-170: Hermon argues that even if Ferrex refuses to invade Porrex's half of Britain and kill him, then at a minimum he should raise an army that will be prepared to defend him when Porrex invades *his* half.

174	Let me, my lord, disclose unto your grace	174-5: Dordan will predict what will happen if Ferrex follows his advice.
	This heinous tale, what mischief it contains;	
176	Your father's death, your brother's, and your own,	
	Your present murder, and eternal shame.	
178	Hear me, O king, and suffer not to sink	
	So high a treason in your princely breast.	
180		
182	<b>Ferr.</b> The mighty gods forbid that ever I	
	Should once conceive such mischief in my heart.	
184	Although my brother hath <u>bereft</u> my realm,	= "deprived me of"
	And bear perhaps to me an hateful mind,	
186	Shall I revenge it with his death therefore?	
	Or shall I so destroy my father's life	
188	That gave me life? The gods forbid, I say,	
	Cease you to speak so anymore to me. –	
190	<u>Ne you, my friend</u> , with answer once repeat	= Ferrex here specifically addresses Dordan.
	So foul a tale: in silence let it die.	
192	What lord or subject shall have hope at all	
	That under me they safely shall enjoy	
194	Their goods, their honours, lands and liberties,	
	With whom neither one only brother dear,	
196	Ne father dearer, could enjoy their lives?	
	But sith I fear my younger brother's rage,	
	And sith perhaps some other man may give	
198	Some like advice, to move his <u>grudging</u> head	197-8: <i>sith...advice</i> = ie. "since one of Ferrex's counselors may give him the same advice you are giving me".
	At <u>mine estate</u> , which counsel may perchance	= envious.
200	<u>Take greater force</u> with him, than this with me;	= "my kingdom".
	I will in secret so prepare myself,	= ie. be more successfully persuasive.
202	As, if his malice or his lust to reign	
	Break forth in arms or sudden violence,	
204	I may withstand his rage, and keep mine own.	
206		205: Ferrex and Hermon may exit the stage here before Dordan speaks.
208	<b>Dord.</b> I fear the fatal time now draweth on	
	When civil hate shall end the noble line	
210	Of famous Brute, and of his royal seed:	
	Great Jove, <u>defend</u> the mischiefs now at hand!	= prevent <sup>3</sup> or "ward off". <sup>16</sup>
212	O that the <u>secretary's wise advice</u>	= ie. Eubulus' recommendation that Gorboduc not divide the kingdom as he did.
	Had <u>erst</u> been <u>heard</u> when he besought the king	= first. = ie. heeded.
214	Not to divide his land, nor send his sons	
	To <u>further parts</u> from presence of his court,	= distant lands
216	Ne yet to yield to them his governance.	
	Lo, such are they now in the royal throne	
	As was rash Phaeton in Phoebus' car;	216-8: another allusion to Phaeton's well known failure to drive the sun across the sky. Phaeton, as the son of the great Olympian god Apollo, of course is being compared to Ferrex and Porrex, referencing their inability to "control" or manage the country as their father did. <i>Phoebus</i> is an alternate name for Apollo, the god of the sun.
218	Ne then the fiery steeds did draw the flame	
	With <u>wilder randon</u> through the <u>kindled</u> skies,	= uncontrolled course. <sup>9,16</sup> = inflamed.
220	Then traitorous counsel now will whirl about	
	The youthful heads of these <u>unskilful</u> kings.	= foolish or ignorant <sup>1</sup>

222 But I hereof their father will inform;  
The reverence of him perhaps shall stay  
The growing mischiefs while they yet are green:  
224 If this help not, then woe unto themselves,  
The prince, the people, the divided land!  
226

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II, SCENE II.

*The Court of Prince Ferrex.*

*Enter Porrex, Tyndar, and Philander.*

= prevent.  
= "incipient" or "just beginning".

1 **Porr.** And is it thus? And doth he so prepare  
2 Against his brother as his mortal foe?  
And now while yet his aged father lives?  
4 Neither regards he him, nor fears he me?  
War would he have? and he shall have it so.

*Entering Characters:* Porrex is Ferrex's younger brother, and now king of the northern half of Britain. Tyndar is Porrex's own personal sycophant, and Philander his wise advisor, assigned by Gorboduc to remain by his side. This scene's parallels with the previous scene involving Ferrex and his counselors are obvious.

1-2: *And doth...foe?* = Ferrex's intention to raise an army in secret has clearly failed.

6 **Tyn.** I saw myself the great prepared store  
8 Of horse, of armour, and of weapons there;  
Ne bring I to my lord reported tales  
10 Without the ground of seen and searched truth.

9-10: Tyndar explains that he himself investigated and confirmed the rumors swirling around Ferrex's kingdom, and thus what he reports should be believed.

12 Lo, secret quarrels run about his court  
To bring the name of you, my lord, in hate.  
Each man almost can now debate the cause  
14 And ask a reason of so great a wrong,  
Why he so noble and so wise a prince  
16 Is as, unworthy, reft his heritage?  
And why the king, misled by crafty means,  
18 Divided thus his land from course of right?  
The wiser sort hold down their grievful heads;

= robbed of.  
= ie. Gorboduc.

19: As the parasites have won over Ferrex with their bad advice, the wiser men of Ferrex's realm are hanging their heads in sorrow.

20 Each man withdraws from talk and company  
Of those that have been known to favour you:  
22 To hide the mischief of their meaning there,  
Rumours are spread of your preparing here.  
24 The rascal numbers of unskilful sort  
Are filled with monstrous tales of you and yours.  
26 In secret I was counseled by my friends  
To haste me thence, and brought you, as you know,  
28 Letters from those that both can truly tell,  
And would not write unless they knew it well.

24: "the worthless (*rascal*) members of the ignorant (*unskilful*) classes (*sort*)"

= "get myself out of there quickly"

30 **Phil.** My lord, yet ere you move unkindly war,

= before. = "instigate this unnatural war", "unnatural" because it would be against his own brother.

32 Send to your brother to demand the cause:  
Perhaps some traitorous tales have filled his ears  
34 With false reports against your noble grace;

36 Which once disclosed shall end the growing strife,  
That else not stayed with wise foresight in time,  
38 Shall hazard both your kingdoms and your lives:  
Send to your father eke, he shall appease  
40 Your kindled minds, and rid you of this fear.

**Porr.** Rid me of fear? I fear him not at all;

42 Ne will to him, ne to my father send.  
If danger were for one to tarry there,  
44 Think ye it safety to return again?

46 In mischiefs, such as Ferrex now intends,  
The wonted courteous laws to messengers  
Are not observed, which in just war they use.

48 Shall I so hazard any one of mine?

50 Shall I betray my trusty friend to him  
That hath disclosed his treason unto me?

52 Let him entreat that fears, I fear him not:  
Or shall I to the king my father send?  
54 Yea, and send now while such a mother lives  
That loves my brother and that hateth me?  
56 Shall I give leisure, by my fond delays,  
To Ferrex to oppress me all unware?

58 I will not; but I will invade his realm,  
And seek the traitor-prince within his court.  
60 Mischief for mischief is a due reward.  
His wretched head shall pay the worthy price  
Of this his treason and his hate to me.  
62 Shall I abide, and treat, and send, and pray,  
And hold my yielden throat to traitor's knife,  
64 While I with valiant mind and conquering force  
Might rid myself of foes, and win a realm?  
66 Yet rather, when I have the wretch's head,  
Then to the king my father will I send.  
68 The bootless case may yet appease his wrath:

70 If not I will defend me as I may.

72 **Phil.** Lo, here the end of these two youthful kings!  
The father's death! the reign of their two realms!  
"O most unhappy state of counselors  
74 That light on so unhappy lords and times,  
That neither can their good advice be heard,

= stopped.

= risk.

= also.

= Philander's unfortunate decision to attribute *fear* as the driving force of Porrex's anxiety prompts a defensive reaction from Porrex, and the result is that he does not hear Philander's primary arguments.

43-44: "if it were dangerous for any one of my partisans to remain in Ferrex's kingdom now, are you so foolish as to think it would be safe for someone to return there?"

46-47: Porrex notes that the accustomed (*wonted*) immunities granted to official messengers between hostile kingdoms are not being observed. Such violations on the part of Ferrex, claims Porrex, clearly demonstrate Ferrex's bellicose attitude.

= "do you expect me to risk sending one of my messengers to him now?"

49-50: Porrex is unwilling to send the man who did so great a service for him by spying on Ferrex and reporting back the military build-up going on in the southern kingdom, ie. Tyndar, on such an obviously dangerous mission.

= beg.

55-56: "shall I give Ferrex time to make the preparations necessary that would allow him to make a surprise attack on me?" *fond* = foolish or stupid. *oppress* = overwhelm.<sup>16</sup> *unware* = unaware or unexpectedly.<sup>1</sup>

= suffer, endure.<sup>3</sup> = entreat, beg.

= surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

= only then.

68: since the situation, once Ferrex is dead, would be irreversible, Gorboduc will realize he has no choice but to accept it.

*bootless case* = irretrievable situation.

70: Porrex and Tyndar may exit the stage at this point.

= "see here".

= unfortunate.

= figuratively land or descend on.

76	Yet must they bear the blames <u>of ill success.</u> ” But <u>I will to the king</u> their father haste,	= "when the results are bad". = a common Elizabethan grammatical construction: in the presence of a verb of intent (here <i>will</i> ), the verb of action ( <i>go</i> ) is omitted.
78	Ere this mischief come to that likely end, That if the <u>mindful</u> wrath of <u>wreakful</u> gods	= the sense is "never forgetting". = avenging.
80	Since mighty <u>Ilion</u> 's fall, not yet appeased	80-83: the British, we remember, were descended from
82	With these poor remnants of the Trojan name, Have not determined by unmoved fate Out of this realm to raze the British line;	Brute and his band of itinerant Trojans. Philander's point is that the gods, perhaps not satisfied with having allowed the Greeks to destroy their original home ( <i>Ilion</i> is another traditional name for Troy), will only be finally appeased by the complete destruction of the royal Trojan line in Britain.
84	By good advice, by awe of father's name, By force of wiser lords, this kindled hate	= before
86	May yet be quenched, <u>ere</u> it consume us all.	= means of support.
88	<b>Chorus.</b> When youth not bridled with a guiding <u>stay</u> Is left to <u>randon</u> of their own delight,	= ie. act in an uncontrolled or wild manner.
90	And welds whole realms, by force of sovereign sway,	= uncontrolled or not yet mastered. <sup>1</sup>
92	Great is the danger of <u>unmastered</u> might, Lest <u>skillless</u> rage throw down with headlong fall	= irrational. <sup>16</sup>
94	Their lands, their states, their lives, themselves and all.	= nor laws of nature or familial relations; <i>laws</i> here should be pronounced with two syllables, as <i>láv-es</i> (Cauthen, p. 37). <sup>15</sup>
96	When growing pride doth fill the swelling breast, And greedy lust doth raise the climbing mind,	= fixed purpose. <sup>1</sup> = judgment. <sup>1</sup>
98	O, hardly may the peril be repressed; Ne fear of angry gods, <u>ne laws kind</u> ,	= ie. flattery.
98	Ne country's care can fire hearts restrain,	= harmful. <sup>16</sup>
100	When force hath armed envy and disdain. When kings of <u>foreset</u> will neglect the <u>rede</u>	106: note the alliteration in this line.
102	Of best advice, and yield to <u>pleasing tales</u> , That do their fancy's <u>noisome</u> humour feed,	= ie. whose anxious mind is easily influenced by others
104	Ne reason, nor regard of right avails: Succeeding heaps of plagues shall teach too late,	112-3: a reference to the allegorical Dumb Show at the beginning of Act II. Note also that 112-3 provide an extra rhyming couplet to conclude the Chorus.
106	To learn the mischiefs of misguiding state. Foul fall the traitor false, that undermines	
108	The love of brethren, to destroy them both! Woe to the prince <u>that pliant care inclines</u> ,	
110	And yields his mind to poisonous tale that floweth From flattering mouth! and woe to wretched land	
112	That wastes itself with civil sword in hand! Lo thus it is, poison in gold to take, And wholesome drink in homely cup forsake.	
END OF ACT II.		

## ACT III.

### THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE THIRD ACT.

1 First the music of flutes begins to play, during which  
2 comes in upon the stage a company of mourners all  
3 clad in black, betokening death and sorrow to ensue  
4 upon the ill-advised misgovernment and dissension of  
5 brethren, as befell upon the murder of Ferrex by his  
6 younger brother. After the mourners have passed  
7 thrice about the stage, they depart, and then the music  
8 ceases.

### ACT III, SCENE I.

*The King's Council Chamber.*

*Enter Gorboduc, Eubulus, and Arostus.*

1 **Gorb.** O cruèl fates, O mindful wrath of gods,

2 Whose vengeance neither Simois' strained streams

3 Flowing with blood of Trojan princes slain,  
4 Nor Phrygian fields made rank with corpses dead

Of Asian kings and lords, can yet appease;

6 Ne slaughter of unhappy Priam's race,

7 Nor Ilion's fall made level with the soil,  
8 Can yet suffice: but still continued rage  
9 Pursues our lines, and from the farthest seas  
10 Doth chase the issues of destroyed Troy.  
11 "O, no man happy, till his end be seen."

12 If any flowing wealth and seeming joy  
13 In present years might make a happy wight,  
14 Happy was Hecuba, the woefullest wretch

15 That ever lived to make a mirror of;  
16 And happy Priam with his noble sons;  
And happy I, till now alas, I see

= symbolizing

= probably meaning "remembering", ie. unforgetting;  
Gorboduc's speech harkens back to the Trojan War,  
and the destruction of his ancestor's city and slaughter  
of the royal family at the hands of the Greeks: the gods  
cannot or will not release the descendants of the  
Trojans, now the British, from their *wrath*.

= *Simois* is the attendant god of the river of the same  
name. The Simois flowed from Mt. Ida, and joined the  
Scamander River on the plains of Troy.<sup>8</sup> Note also  
the striking alliteration in this line.

= while the name *Phrygia* usually refers to an ancient  
nation that was situated in west-central Asia Minor, it  
can also be used to describe the broader area of western  
Asia Minor generally, or, as here, the region which  
contained Troy and the battlefields of the Trojan War  
specifically.<sup>4</sup>

= ie. the allies of the Trojans, who came from the western  
half of Asia Minor; although we may point out that a  
contingent from Thrace, which is on the European side  
of the border between the continents, also fought with  
the Trojans.

= nor. = *Priam* was the patriarch of the Trojan royal  
family at the time of the Trojan War. Priam famously  
had 50 sons, including Paris, whose eloping with Helen  
precipitated the Greek attack on Troy, and Hector, the  
Trojan side's greatest warrior.

= *Ilion* is an alternate name for Troy.

= descendants, ie. the British

= man.

= Priam's wife, and a princess of the royal family of the  
nation of Phrygia.<sup>10</sup>

= example.<sup>16</sup>



18 And feel my most unhappy wretchedness.  
Behold, my lords, read you this letter here;  
20 Lo, it contains the ruin of our realm  
If timely speed provide not hasty help.  
22 Yet, O ye gods, if ever woeful king  
Might move you kings of kings, wreak it on me

24 And on my sons, not on this guiltless realm:  
Send down your wasting flames from wrathful skies,  
26 To reave me and my sons the hateful breath.  
Read, read, my lords; this is the matter why  
28 I called you now to have your good advice.  
30 *The Letter from Dordan*  
*the Counselor of the Elder Prince.*  
32  
*Eubulus readeth the letter.*  
34  
My sovereign lord, what I am loath to write  
36 But loathest am to see, that I am forced  
By letters now to make you understand.  
38 My lord Ferrex, your eldest son, misled  
By traitorous fraud of young untempered wits,  
40 Assembleth force against your younger son;  
Ne can my counsel yet withdraw the heat  
42 And furious pangs of his enflamèd head.  
Disdain, saith he, of his inheritance,  
44 Arms him to wreak the great pretended wrong  
With civil sword upon his brother's life.  
46 If present help does not restrain this rage,  
This flame will waste your sons, your land, and you.  
48  
*Your Majesty's faithful and most*  
50 *humble subject,*  
Dordan.  
52  
*Aros.* O king, appease your grief and stay your plaint:  
54 Great is the matter and a woeful case;  
But timely knowledge may bring timely help.  
56 Send for them both unto your presence here:  
The reverence of your honour, age, and state,  
58 Your grave advice, the awe of father's name,  
Shall quickly knit again this broken peace.  
60 And if in either of my lords your sons  
Be such untamèd and unyielding pride,  
62 As will not bend unto your noble hests;  
If Ferrex the elder son can bear no peer,

64 Or Porrex not content, aspires to more  
Than you him gave, above his native right;  
66 Join with the juster side, so shall you force  
Them to agree, and hold the land in stay.  
68

23: *move* = ie. move to anger.  
*kings of kings* = ie. the gods.  
*wreak it* = "visit or vent your anger".  
= Gorboduc does not want the citizens to suffer from the  
anger of the gods, as in a civil war.

26: "to kill me and my sons".  
*reave* = rob, take away from.<sup>1</sup>

= immoderate. = *wits* here simply means a group of people.<sup>1</sup>

= *saith* is pronounced with one-syllable.  
= avenge. = falsely alleged.

53: "assuage your grief and put off (*stay*) your lamenting  
(*plaint*)"

= commands.<sup>16</sup>  
= cannot tolerate coexisting with another of equal rank.  
Note that line 63 contains an extra 11th syllable.

= under control<sup>1</sup>

*Enter Philander.*

70

**Eubu.** What meaneth this? Lo, yonder comes in haste  
Philander from my lord your younger son.

72

74

**Gorb.** The gods send joyful news.

76

**Phil.** The mighty Jove  
Preserve your majesty, O noble king.

78

**Gorb.** Philander, welcome; but how doth my son?

80

**Phil.** Your son, sir, lives; and healthy I him left:

82

But yet, O king, this want of lustful health

= ie. "your lack of vigorous health"

Could not be half so grievous to your grace

84

As these most wretched tidings that I bring.

86

**Gorb.** Oh heavens, yet more? no end of woes to me?

= while *Heaven* frequently in this play is pronounced with two syllables, here it should be read as a one-syllable word. One syllable became the norm in the era of Elizabethan drama.

88

**Phil.** Tyndar, O king, came lately from the court

= *Tyndar*, we remember, is Porrex's sycophantic advisor; it was he who convinced Porrex to prepare for war against his brother, whom Tyndar reported was building an army to use against Porrex.

90

Of Ferrex, to my lord your younger son,

And made report of great preparèd store

Of war, and saith that it is wholly meant

92

Against Porrex, for high disdain that he

= ie. "out of Ferrex's disdain for Porrex who".

Lives now a king and egal in degree

= equal.

94

With him that claimeth to succeed the whole,

As by due title of descending right.

96

Porrex is now so set on flaming fire,

Partly with kindled rage of cruèl wrath,

98

Partly with hope to gain a realm thereby,

That he in haste prepareth to invade

100

His brother's land, and with unkindly war

= unnatural

Threatens the murder of your elder son;

102

Ne could I him persuade, that first he should

Send to his brother to demand the cause;

104

Nor yet to you, to stay his hateful strife.

= delay.

Wherefore, sith there no more I can be heard,

= in consequence of which.<sup>1</sup> = since.

106

I come myself now to inform your grace,

And to beseech you, as you love the life

108

And safety of your children and your realm,

Now to employ your wisdom and your force,

110

To stay this mischief ere it be too late.

= stop

112

**Gorb.** Are they in arms? would he not send to me?

Is this the honour of a father's name?

114

In vain we travail to assuage their minds:

= strive. = mollify.<sup>16</sup>

As if their hearts, whom neither brother's love,

116

Nor father's awe, nor kingdom's cares can move,

= ie. reverence for their father. = worries or anxieties over their kingdoms.

Our counsels could withdraw from raging heat.

= advice.

118

Jove slay them both, and end the cursèd line!

120 For though, perhaps, fear of such mighty force  
As I, my lords, joined with your noble aids,  
122 May yet raise, shall repent their present heat;  
The secret grudge and malice will remain,  
124 The fire not quenched, but kept in close restraint,  
Fed still within, breaks forth with double flame:  
Their death and mine must 'pease the angry gods.

126 **Phil.** Yield not, O king, so much to weak despair:  
128 Your sons yet live; and long, I trust, they shall.  
If fates had taken you from earthly life,  
130 Before beginning of this civil strife,  
Perhaps your sons in their unmastered youth,  
132 Loose from regard of any living wight,  
Would run on headlong, with unbridled race,  
134 To their own death, and ruin of this realm.  
But sith the gods, that have the care for kings,  
136 Of things and times dispose the order so,  
That in your life this kindled flame breaks forth,  
138 While yet your life, your wisdom, and your power,  
May stay the growing mischief, and repress  
140 The fiery blaze of their enkindled heat;  
It seems, and so ye ought to deem thereof,  
142 That loving Jove hath tempered so the time  
Of this debate to happen in your days,  
144 That you yet living may the same appease,  
And add it to the glory of your latter age,  
146 And they your sons may learn to live in peace.  
Beware, O king, the greatest harm of all,  
148 Lest by your wailful plaints your hastened death  
Yield larger room unto their growing rage:

150 Preserve your life, the only hope of stay.  
And if your highness herein list to use  
152 Wisdom or force, counsel or knightly aid,  
Lo we, our persons, powers and lives are yours:  
154 Use us till death; O king, we are your own.

156 **Eubu.** Lo here the peril that was erst foreseen,  
When you, O king, did first divide your land,  
158 And yield your present reign unto your sons,  
But now, O noble prince, now is no time  
160 To wail and plain, and waste your woeful life;

Now is the time for present good advice –  
162 Sorrow doth dark the judgment of the wit.  
“The heart unbroken, and the courage free  
164 From feeble faintness of bootless despair,  
Doth either rise to safety or renown  
166 By noble valour of unvanquished mind;  
Or yet doth perish in more happy sort.”  
168 Your grace may send to either of your sons

119-122: "even if (*though*) we can raise our own army and use it to force the boys to stand down, it will not solve the root of the problem, which is their mutual envy and malice."

= "will be necessary to appease"; the OED cites this line as an example of the use of the old verb *pease* in place of '*pease*, which of course is a contraction of *appease*.<sup>1</sup>

127-8: Philander pleads with the king not to project an inevitable tragic ending to the unfolding situation.

129-130: a rhyming couplet has snuck its way into the blank verse here.

132: free from the close attention of any person with authority over them

= suppress

= "think about it this way".

= Jove, who is full of love.

= old age

148-9: Philander worries the king might die sooner than his appointed time, basically from a broken heart.

*wailful* *plaints* = sorrowful laments.<sup>1</sup>

= the sense is "control" or "preserving settled conditions".

= wishes.

153-4: Philander, speaking for all the counselors, pledges to do everything in his power to help the king - "just don't give up!"

= "see here". = earlier predicted: Eubulus refers to his own forecast that the kingdom would be ruined.

= lament; *plaint* is the noun, referring to a lament, while *plain* could be either a verb (as used here) or a noun.<sup>1</sup>

= cloud. = intellect.

163-7: a heart not weighed down by useless (*bootless*) despair will prevail, and result in either security and honor (*renown*), or death in a more fortunate manner.

= fortunate manner

170	Someone both wise and noble personage, Which with good counsel, and with weighty name Of father, shall present before their eyes	
172	Your <u>hest</u> , your life, your safety and their own, The present mischief of their deadly strife:	= commands
174	And in the while, assemble you <u>the force</u> Which your commandment, and the speedy haste	= ie. an army
176	Of all my lords here present can prepare. The terror of your mighty power shall <u>stay</u>	= control or suppress
178	The rage of both, or yet of one least.	
180	<i>Enter Nuntius.</i>	= messenger
182	<b>Nunt.</b> O king, the greatest grief that ever prince did hear, That ever woeful messenger did tell, 184 That ever wretched land hath seen before, I bring to you: Porrex your younger son, 186 With sudden force invaded hath the land That you to Ferrex did allot to rule; 188 And with his own most bloody hand he hath His brother slain, and doth possess his realm.	182-9: <i>Nuntius' Message</i> : note that Philander had only moments ago arrived to tell the king that the two brothers had raised armies; now, just minutes later, Porrex and Ferrex have already fought their war. In this technique called <i>Compression of Time</i> , multiple events that would necessarily require days or weeks to occur <i>off-stage</i> take place within minutes of each other <i>on-stage</i> . This tactic hastens the pace of the story, thus heightening the play's drama.
190	<b>Gorb.</b> O heavens! send down the flames of your revenge, 192 Destroy, I say, with flash of wreakful fire, The traitor son, and then the wretched <u>sire</u> !	= father, meaning himself; another rhyming couplet has inserted itself in 192-3.
194	But let us go, that yet perhaps I may Die with revenge, and 'pease the <u>hateful</u> gods.	= full of hate; you can create your own Elizabethan adjective by attaching <i>-ful</i> to the end of any emotion (and I suppose any noun), and the result will mean "full of (emotion)".
196		
198	[ <i>Exeunt.</i> ]	
200	<b>Chorus.</b> The <u>lust</u> of kingdom knows no sacred faith, No rule of reason, no regard of right, No <u>kindly</u> love, no fear of Heaven's wrath: 202 But with contempt of gods, and man's <u>despite</u> , Through bloody slaughter doth prepare the ways 204 To fatal sceptre, and accursèd reign: The son so loathes the father's lingering days, 206 <u>Ne dreads</u> his hand in brother's blood to stain. O wretched prince, ne dost thou yet <u>record</u> 208 The yet fresh murders done within the land Of thy forefathers, when the cruèl sword 210 <u>Bereft Morgan his life</u> with cousin's hands? Thus fatal plagues pursue the guilty race, 212 Whose murderous hand, <u>imbruèd</u> with guiltless blood,	= desire or greed for. Note that this Chorus is comprised of 4-line stanzas, each with a rhyme-scheme of <i>ab-ab</i> , before ending with a final rhyming couplet. 200: a spectacular bit of alliteration. = familial. = spite, malicious hate. <sup>3</sup> 205: the heir to the throne is resentful when the king his father lives too long. = "nor fears". = remember. <sup>16</sup>  = see Act I, ii, lines 166-7, for the note on <i>Morgan</i> .  = stained, defiled or steeped in <sup>1</sup>

214 Asks vengeance still before the heavens' face,  
With endless mischiefs on the cursèd brood.  
The wicked child thus brings to woeful sire  
216 The mournful plaint to waste his weary life;  
Thus do the cruèl flames of civil fire  
218 Destroy the parted reign with hateful strife:  
And hence doth spring the well from which doth flow  
The dead black streams of mournings, plaints, and woe.

= ie. his grieving father

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

### THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE FOURTH ACT.

1 First the music of hautboys begins to play, during  
2 which there comes forth from under the stage, as  
though out of hell, three furies, Alecto, Megera and

4 Ctisiphone, clad in black garments sprinkled with  
blood and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their  
6 heads spread with serpents instead of hair, the one  
bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the  
8 third a burning firebrand, each driving before them a  
king and a queen, which, moved by furies, unnaturally  
10 had slain their own children. The names of kings and  
queens were these, Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino,  
12 Cambyses, Althea; after that the furies and these pass

14 about the stage thrice, they depart, and then the music  
ceases.

16 Hereby is signified the unnatural murders to  
follow: that is to say, Porrex slain by his own mother,  
and King Gorboduc and Queen Videna killed by their  
18 own subjects.

= the *hautboy* is a double-reed musical instrument, similar to the oboe.<sup>1,2</sup>

= such stage effects were very popular in the Elizabethan era.

= the *Furies* were three goddesses whose job it was to follow and torment those who committed such serious crimes as murder of one's kin or breaches of faith and duty. *Alecto* was the never-tiring prosecutor, *Megera* was the "grim", and *Ctisiphone*, the "avenger of murder". The ladies were imagined to be dressed in black and with hair of snakes, and sometimes with wings. Each carried something with her, either a weapon, a torch, or a snake (see Murray, pp. 189-190).<sup>8,11</sup>

encircled<sup>1</sup>

In lines 11-12: the authors have listed a number of famous mythological characters who committed terrible crimes against their own families:

**Tantalus** = an alternate story told of *Tantalus* (compare the one described at Act II, i, line 19) had Tantalus inviting the gods to a feast. To test their alleged powers of perception, he killed, cooked, and served them his son Pelops (Murray, p. 243).<sup>11</sup>

**Medea** = the witch *Medea* had a number of gruesome stories told about her. In Euripides' play about Medea, she kills her children with Jason (of Jason and the Golden Fleece) to get revenge on him when he decides to leave her to marry a princess.

**Athamas and Ino** = *Athamas* was the husband of *Ino*, the daughter of Cadmus, the founder and king of Thebes. The couple were devoted to worshiping Bacchus, to the point where it caused Juno (the queen of the gods) to become furious with jealousy. She ordered one of the Furies, Tisiphone, to punish them by driving them mad. Tisiphone, wearing a "dress of serpents", proceeded to cause Athamas and Ino to go insane by throwing snakes, whose poison worked on their minds but not their bodies, upon them. Now mad, Athamas smashed their son against a wall, and Ino



## ACT IV, SCENE I.

*The Palace.*

*Enter Videna sola.*

1 **Viden.** Why should I live, and linger forth my time  
2 In longer life to double my distress?  
O me, most woeful wight, whom no mishap  
4 Long ere this day could have bereaved hence.

6 Mought not these hands by fortune or by fate  
Have pierced this breast, and life with iron reft?

8 Or in this palace here, where I so long  
Have spent my days, could not that happy hour  
10 Once, once have hap'd, in which these hugy frames  
With death by fall might have oppressèd me?  
Or should not this most hard and cruèl soil,  
12 So oft where I have pressed my wretched steps,  
Sometime had ruth of mine accursèd life,  
14 To rend in twain and swallow me therein?  
So had my bones possessèd now in peace  
16 Their happy grave within the closèd ground,  
And greedy worms had gnawn this pinèd heart  
18 Without my feeling pain: so should not now  
This living breast remain the ruthful tomb  
20 Wherein my heart yielded to death is graved:

Nor dreary thoughts with pangs of pining grief,  
22 My doleful mind had not afflicted thus.

threw herself into the sea, while Juno laughed at the whole scene (Humphries, pp. 94-99).<sup>13</sup>

**Cambyses** = the Greek historian Herodotus told a number of stories about *Cambyses*, son of the famous Persian ruler Cyrus the Great, and the successor to Cyrus. Driven mad in punishment for his having killed the sacred Egyptian cow known as Apis, Cambyses had his full brother Smerdis killed, then married and subsequently killed his younger sister.<sup>14</sup>

**Althea** = *Althea* was queen of Calydon. When her son Meleager was born, she was warned by one of the Fates that her son would live only so long as a particular piece of firewood remained unconsumed by fire. To keep him alive forever, Althea hid the log. Later in life, after Meleager had killed his mother Althea's brothers during a war, she burnt the firebrand in revenge, causing Meleager's immediate death.<sup>8</sup>

The scene: the entire scene is comprised of a soliloquy by Queen Videna.

3-4: "oh pitiful me, whom some calamity has not prior to today taken away from here, ie. taken my life."

*wight* = person.

*mishap* = misfortune.

*ere this day* = before today.

*bereaved hence* = taken or snatched away from here.<sup>1</sup>

5-6: "why couldn't fate or fortune have arranged for my own hands to rob me of my own life by piercing my breast with an iron instrument?"

*mought* = archaic form of "might".

*life with iron reft* = taken away my life with an iron instrument, ie. a dagger.

= fortunate. Smith notes the wordplay between *happy* in this line and *hap'd* in the next.<sup>16</sup>

= happened. = vast structures,<sup>3</sup> ie. immense walls.

= "pity on my". The use of *mine* for *my* was common until the end of the 18th century.<sup>1</sup>

= split apart.

= wasted with grief<sup>2</sup>

= pitiful.

= buried. The use of *grave* as a verb was still common in the Elizabethan era.<sup>1</sup>

= wasting.<sup>2</sup>

= grieving, full of sorrow.<sup>1</sup>

24 O my belovèd son! O my sweet child!  
 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight!  
 Is my belovèd son, is my sweet child,  
 26 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight,  
 Murdered with cruèl death? O hateful wretch!  
 28 O heinous traitor both to Heaven and earth!  
 Thou Porrex, thou this damnèd deed hast wrought;  
 30 Thou Porrex, thou shall dearly bye the same:  
 Traitor to kin and kind, to sire and me,  
 32 To thine own flesh, and traitor to thyself:  
 The gods on thee in hell shall wreak their wrath,  
 34 And here in earth this hand shall take revenge  
 On thee, Porrex, thou false and caitiff wight:  
 36 If after blood so eager were thy thirst,  
 And murderous mind had so possessèd thee;  
 38 If such hard heart of rock and stony flint  
 Lived in thy breast, that nothing else could like  
 40 Thy cruèl tyrant's thought but death and blood:  
 Wild savage beasts, might not their slaughter serve  
 42 To feed thy greedy will, and in the midst  
 Of their entrails to stain thy deadly hands  
 44 With blood deserved, and drink thereof thy fill?  
 Or if nought else but death and blood of man  
 46 Mought please thy lust, could none in Britain land  
 Whose heart be torn out of his loving breast  
 48 With thine own hand, or work what death thou wouldst,  
 Suffice to make a sacrifice to 'pease  
 50 That deadly mind and murderous thought in thee,  
 But he who in the self-same womb was wrapped  
 52 Where thou in dismal hour receivèdst life?  
 Or if needs, needs, this hand must slaughter make,  
 54 Moughtest thou not have reached a mortal wound,  
 And with thy sword have pierced this cursèd womb  
 56 That the accursèd Porrex brought to light,  
 And given me a just reward therefore?  
 58 So Ferrex yet sweet life might have enjoyed,  
 And to his agèd father comfort brought,  
 60 With some young son in whom they both might live.  
  
 But whereunto waste I this ruthful speech,  
 62 To thee that hast thy brother's blood thus shed?  
 Shall I still think that from this womb thou sprung?  
 64 That I thee bear? or take thee for my son?  
 No, traitor, no: I thee refuse for mine;  
 66 Murderer, I thee renounce, thou are not mine:  
 Never, O wretch, this womb conceivèd thee,  
 68 Nor never bode I painful throes for thee.  
Changeling to me thou art, and not my child,  
  
 70 Nor to no wight that spark of pity knew:  
 Ruthless, unkind, monster of nature's work,  
 72 Thou never sucked the milk of woman's breast,  
 But from thy birth the cruèl tiger's teats  
 74 Have nursèd thee, nor yet of flesh and blood

26: the repetition of line 24 here may be a printer's error.

= worked, done.

= pay or atone for.<sup>3</sup>

= family and nature. = ie. "your father and mother".

= avenge

= wretched person<sup>2</sup>

= satisfy, please<sup>2</sup>

41-44: basically, "couldn't you satisfy your blood-lust with hunting?"

= nothing

= appease

= ie. Ferrex.

= "(that) inauspicious".

= it was a common Elizabethan motif to believe that people "lived on" in some sense through their descendants.

61: ie. "but why am I wasting my pitiful breath?"

= from the verb *bide*, meaning "endured".<sup>3</sup>

= fairies were said to sometimes steal an attractive child and replace it with a repellent or stupid one, called a *changeling*.<sup>1</sup>

= person.

= unnatural.

76	Formed is thy heart, but of hard iron <u>wrought</u> ;	= made
	And wild and desert woods bred thee to life.	
78	But canst thou hope to 'scape my just revenge?	
	Or that these hands will not be <u>wroke</u> on thee?	= avenged (past tense of <i>wreak</i> ) <sup>9</sup>
80	Dost thou not know that Ferrex' mother lives,	
	That lovèd him more dearly then herself?	
82	And doth she live, and is not venged on thee?	
	<i>Exit Videna.</i>	
	<b><u>ACT IV, SCENE II.</u></b>	
	<i>The King's Court.</i>	
	<i>Enter Gorboduc and Arostus.</i>	
1	<b>Gorb.</b> We marvel much <u>whereto</u> this <u>lingering stay</u>	= for what purpose, why. <sup>1</sup> = delay.
2	Falls out so long: Porrex unto our court,	
	By order of our letters is returned:	3: ie. Porrex, responding to Gorboduc's command, has returned to his father's court.
4	And Eubulus received from us by <u>hest</u>	4-7: ie. Eubulus was instructed ( <i>hest</i> = command) to bring
6	At his arrival here, to give him charge	Porrex to Gorboduc's presence immediately on his arrival, but the king has not heard from either of them since Porrex's return.
8	Before our presence straight to make repair,	
	And yet we have no word whereof he stays.	
10	<b>Aros.</b> <u>Lo</u> where he comes, and Eubulus with him.	= look
	<i>Enter Eubulus and Porrex.</i>	
12	<b>Eubu.</b> According to your highness' <u>hest</u> to me,	= command.
14	Here have I Porrex brought, <u>even</u> in such <u>sort</u>	14: <i>even</i> = sometimes written <i>e'en</i> , <i>even</i> is usually pronounced as a one-syllable word for purposes of meter. <i>sort</i> = Cauthen suggests "condition" (p. 49). <sup>15</sup>
16	As from his wearied horse he did alight,	
	For that your grace did will such haste therein.	
18	<b>Gorb.</b> <u>We</u> like and praise this speedy will in you,	= throughout this speech Gorboduc uses the royal <i>we</i> and <i>our</i> to mean <i>I</i> and <i>my</i> .
20	To work the thing that to your <u>charge</u> we gave. –	= responsibility.
	Porrex, if we so far should swerve from kind,	20: ie. "if I was to behave in such an unnatural manner"
22	And from those bounds which law of nature sets,	
	As thou hast done by vile and wretched deed,	
24	In cruèl murder of thy brother's life;	
	Our present hand could <u>stay</u> no <u>lenger</u> time,	= hold back. = archaic form of <i>longer</i> .
26	But straight should bathe this blade in blood of thee	
	As just revenge of thy detested crime.	
28	<u>No</u> ; we should not offend the law of <u>kind</u>	= the sense is "But no". = nature or familial relationships.
	If now this sword of ours did slay thee here:	
30	For thou hast murdered him, whose heinous death	
	Even nature's force doth move us to revenge	
32	By blood again; but justice forceth us	
	To measure death for death, thy due desert:	
34	Yet sith thou art our child, and sith as yet	33-39: only because Porrex is Gorboduc's own son will the king give him a chance to explain his actions.
	In this hard case what word thou canst allege	
36	For thy defense, by us hath not been heard,	
	We are content to <u>stay</u> our will for that	= restrain

38	Which justice bids us presently to work; And give thee leave to use thy speech at full, If <u>ought</u> thou have to lay for thine excuse.	= anything
40		
42	<b>Porrex.</b> Neither, O king, I can or will deny, But that this hand from Ferrex life hath reft: Which <u>fact</u> how much my doleful heart doth wail, O! would it mought as full appear to sight As inward grief doth pour it forth to me.	= bad deed. 44-45: "if only you could actually see the sorrow in my heart, which is equaled in volume by the inward grief I feel for my actions".
44		
46	So yet perhaps, if ever ruthful heart Melting in tears within a manly breast, 48 Through deep repentance of his bloody <u>fact</u> , If ever grief, if ever woeful man 50 Might move regret with sorrow of his fault, I think the torment of my mournful case 52 Known to your grace, as I do feel the same, Would force even <u>Wrath</u> herself to pity me.	= deed  = <i>Wrath</i> , in whom pity would normally be absent, is personified. 54-55: ie. muddy water does not show a reflection.
54	But as the water troubled with the mud Shows not the face which else the eye should see, 56 Even so your <u>ireful</u> mind with stirrèd thought Cannot so <u>perfectly</u> discern my cause. 58 But this <u>unhap</u> , amongst <u>so many heaps</u>	= full of ire (not surprisingly!), angry. = clearly. 58: <i>unhap</i> = misfortune, probably archaic by this time. <i>so many heaps</i> = the sense is "such a multitude (of misfortunes)", though <i>many heaps</i> may be redundant.
60	I must content me with, most wretched man, That to myself I must reserve my woe, In <u>pinning</u> thoughts of mine accursèd <u>fact</u> : 62 Since I may not show here my smallest grief, Such as it is, and as my breast endures, 64 Which I esteem the greatest misery Of all mishaps that fortune now can send. 66 Not that I rest in hope with <u>plaints</u> and tears Should purchase life; for to the gods I <u>clepe</u> 68 For true record of this my faithful speech; Never this heart shall have the <u>thoughtful</u> dread 70 To die the death that by <u>your grace's doom</u> ,	= wasting. = act.   = wailing. = call or appeal <sup>3,16</sup> (archaic).  = full of thought, ie. anxious. <sup>16</sup> 70: <i>your grace</i> = a title used to address the members of the royal family in England until the time of Henry VIII, but subsequently only used for dukes and duchesses. <sup>1</sup> <i>doom</i> = judgment.
72	By just desert, shall be pronounced to me: <u>Nor never</u> shall this tongue once spend this speech	= double negatives were used as intensifiers in the Elizabethan era. = petition or act of begging.
74	Pardon to crave, or seek by <u>suit</u> to live. I mean not this, as though I were not touched 76 With <u>care of</u> dreadful death, or that I held Life in contempt: but that I know <u>the</u> mind Stoops to no dread, although the flesh be frail: 78 And for my guilt, I yield the same so great, As in myself I find a fear to sue 80 For grant of life.	= worry or fear over. = ie. "my".  41-80: <i>Porrex's speech</i> : Porrex has approached his father the right way: he admits his guilt, offers no excuse, and gladly submits himself to his father's judgment; not that he disregards the value of his life, but he is willing to accept the punishment he deserves.

82 **Gorb.** In vain, O wretch, thou show'st  
 A woeful heart; Ferrex now lies in grave,  
 84 Slain by thy hand.

86 **Por.** Yet this, O father, hear:  
 And then I end: your majesty well knows  
 88 That when my brother Ferrex and myself  
 By your own hest were joined in governance  
 90 Of this your grace's realm of Britain land,  
 I never sought nor travailed for the same;  
 92 Nor by myself, nor by no friend I wrought,  
 But from your highness' will alone it sprung,  
 94 Of your most gracious goodness bent to me,  
 But how my brother's heart e'en than repined  
 96 With swoll'n disdain against mine egal rule,  
 Seeing that realm which by descent should grow  
 98 Wholly to him, allotted half to me?  
 E'en in your highness' court he now remains,  
 100 And with my brother then in nearest place,  
 Who can record what proof thereof was showed,  
 102 And how my brother's envious heart appeared.  
 Yet I that judgèd it my part to seek  
 104 His favor and good-will, and loath to make  
 Your highness know the things which should have brought  
 106 Grief to your grace, and your offence to him,  
 Hoping my earnest suit should soon have won  
 108 A loving heart within a brother's breast,  
Wrought in that sort, that for a pledge of love  
 110 And faithful heart he gave to me his hand.

This made me think that he had banished quite  
 112 All rancour from his thought, and bare to me  
 Such hearty love, as I did owe to him:  
 114 But after once we left your grace's court,  
 And from your highness' presence lived apart,  
 116 This egal rule still, still, did grudge him so,

That now those envious sparks which erst lay raked  
 118 In living cinders of dissembling breast,  
 Kindled so far within his heart disdain,  
 120 That longer could he not refrain from proof  
 Of secret practice to deprive me life  
 122 By poison's force; and had bereft me so,

If mine own servant, hirèd to this fact,  
 124 And moved by troth with hate to work the same,  
 In time had not bewrayed it unto me.  
 126 When thus I saw the knot of love unknit,

= strived to gain

= directed at or inclined towards.

= complained, felt discontent over.

= "my equal reign or kingship".

99-102: this is an assertion, not a question: "as we speak, there is a man in your court (presumably meaning Dordan) who was with Ferrex and can reveal to you the envy and malice that was in his heart."

104-8: *loath...breast* = "I did not want to be the one to upset you by telling you the evil things Ferrex did, but rather I sought my brother out to try to regain his love for me."

= worked in that manner, ie. approached his brother in this way.

= Porrex's assertion that he went to Ferrex and was able to conclude a peace with him is belied by his earlier refusal to even send a messenger to Ferrex's kingdom (see Porrex's speech at Act II, ii, line 41).

= caused him to be discontented; this interesting use of *grudge* as a verb lingered on throughout the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

117-8: Smith identifies a custom (called *raking a fire*) of keeping a fire alive at night by covering it with ashes or cinders.<sup>16</sup> *erst* = first. *raked* = covered.<sup>1</sup>

= plot.

122: *By poison's force* = now Porrex claims that Ferrex was going to poison him!

*had bereft me so* = "and would have in fact robbed me of my life".

= ie. Tyndar.

= "loyalty (to me)".

= "exposed (*bewrayed*) Ferrex's plans to kill me".

= untied or undone.<sup>1</sup>



128	All honest <u>league</u> and faithful promise broke, The law of kind and <u>troth</u> thus <u>rent in twain</u> ,	= alliance. = loyalty. = torn apart.
130	His heart on mischief set, and in his breast Black treason hid; then, then, did I despair	
132	That ever time could win him friend to me: Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife	132-3: <i>Then saw...cloak</i> = this image is metaphorical.
134	Wrapped under cloak; then saw I deep deceit Lurk in his face, and death prepared for me: Even nature moved me then to hold my life	135-6: <i>Even nature...than his</i> = "I naturally felt it more important to preserve my life, even if it was at the expense of his". = bade, enjoined. <sup>2</sup>
136	More dear to me than his, and <u>bad</u> this hand, Since by his life my death must needs ensue,	
138	And by his death my life to be preserved, To shed his blood, and seek my safety so;	
140	And wisdom willèd me, without <u>protract</u> , In speedy <u>wise</u> to put the same <u>in ure</u> .	= delay. <sup>3</sup> = way. = into action. <sup>1</sup>
142	Thus have I told the cause that movèd me To work my brother's death, and so I yield	
144	My life, my death, to judgment of your grace.	86-144: <i>Porrex's speech</i> : Porrex is gambling that Gorboduc will be unwilling to kill his only remaining son, no matter how angry or upset he is over Porrex's murder of Ferrex; Porrex first thought of this line of reasoning in Act II, ii, lines 66-68.
146	<b>Gorb.</b> Oh cruèl wight, should any cause prevail To make thee stain thy hands with brother's blood?	
148	But what of thee we will resolve to do	148-150: <i>But what...unknown</i> = "my decision over what to do about this situation will come at a later time". = meantime.
150	Shall yet remain unknown: thou in the <u>mean</u> Shalt from our royal presence banished be, Until our princely pleasure further shall	
152	To thee be showed; depart therefore our sight, Accursèd child! [ <i>Exit Porrex.</i> ] What cruèl destiny,	
154	What <u>froward</u> fate hath <u>sorted us this chance</u> , That even in those, where we should comfort find;	= the stage direction is not in the original; it is Smith's suggestion. <sup>16</sup> = contrary. <sup>2</sup> = "arranged this situation for me". <sup>2</sup>
156	Where our delight now in our agèd days Should rest and be, even there our only grief	
158	And deepest sorrows to <u>abridge</u> our life, Most <u>pining cares</u> and deadly thoughts do grow.	= cut short. = wasting or consuming anxieties.
160		
162	<b>Aros.</b> <u>Your</u> grace should now, in these grave years of yours Have found <u>ere this</u> the price of mortal joys;	= read <i>Your</i> as "That your"; 161-2 is a sentence of regret, ruing the fact that now that he is in his old age, when he should be able to live in ease and contentment, Gorboduc should discover the price that must be paid for any happiness we have on earth. <i>ere this</i> = before now.
164	How short they be; how fading here in earth; How full of change; how brittle our <u>estate</u> ;	= condition
166	Of nothing sure, save only of the death To whom both man and all the world doth owe	
168	Their end at last; neither shall nature's power In other <u>sort</u> against your heart prevail,	= ways. = attempts (to pierce).
170	Than as the naked hand whose stroke <u>assays</u> The armèd breast where force doth <u>light</u> in vain.	= land or strike.



172	<b>Gorb.</b> Many can yield right grave and sage advice Of patient <u>sprite</u> to others wrapped in woe;	172-3: "it's easy for others to advise someone in despair to have a patient spirit ( <i>sprite</i> )".
174	And can in speech both rule and conquer <u>kind</u> ;	= nature. Gorboduc is bitter and sarcastic.
176	Who if by proof they might feel nature's force, Would show themselves men as they are indeed, <u>Which now will needs be gods</u> . But what doth mean	= "who now believe themselves to be gods", ie. invulnerable to grief. = sorrowful countenance or expression. <sup>16</sup>
178	The <u>sorry cheer</u> of her that here doth come?	
180	<i>Enter Marcella.</i>	<i>Entering character: Marcella is a noble woman serving as Queen Videna's lady-in-waiting, a position of honor.</i>
182	<b>Marc.</b> O, where is <u>ruth</u> ? or where is pity now? <u>Whither</u> is gentle heart and mercy fled?	= mercy or pity. = to where.
184	Are they exiled out of our stony breasts, Never to make return? Is all the world	
186	Drownèd in blood, and sunk in cruèlty? If not in women mercy may be found,	
188	If not, alas, within the mother's breast, To her own child, to her own flesh and blood;	
190	If ruth be banished <u>thence</u> ; if pity there May have no place; if there no gentle heart	= from there
192	Do live and dwell, where should we seek it then?	
194	<b>Gorb.</b> Madam, alas, what means your woeful tale?	
196	<b>Marc.</b> O <u>silly</u> woman I; why to this hour Have <u>kind</u> and fortune thus <u>deferred my breath</u>	= foolish or weak. = nature. = "protracted my life". <sup>1</sup>
198	That I should live to see this doleful day? Will ever <u>wight</u> believe that such hard heart	= humanity
200	Could rest within the cruèl mother's breast? With her own hand to slay her only son?	
202	But <u>out</u> , alas, these eyes beheld the same: They saw the dreary sight, and are become	= an exclamation of grief. <sup>1</sup>
204	Most ruthful <u>records</u> of the bloody <u>fact</u> . Porrex, alas, is by his mother slain,	= witnesses. <sup>1</sup> = criminal deed.
206	And with her hand, a woeful thing to tell, While slumb'ring on his <u>careful</u> bed he rests,	= full of cares or worries.
208	His heart stabbed in with knife is reft of life.	180-208: <i>Marcella's entrance and speech</i> : here is another example of <i>Compression of Time</i> ; Marcella's entrance and announcement that Videna has slain Porrex occurs a mere 22½ lines of speech after Porrex leaves the stage.
210	<b>Gorb.</b> O Eubulus, O, draw this sword of ours, And pierce this heart with speed. O hateful light,	
212	O loathsome life, O sweet and welcome death! Dear Eubulus, <u>work</u> this we thee beseech.	= do
214	<b>Eubu.</b> <u>Patient</u> your grace, perhaps he liveth yet, With wound received, but not of certain death.	= "be patient", a rare use of <i>patient</i> as a verb. <sup>1</sup>
218	<b>Gorb.</b> O let us then <u>repair</u> unto the place, And see if Porrex live, or thus be slain.	= go
220	<b>Marc.</b> Alas, he liveth not! it is too true. That with these eyes, of him a peerless prince, Son to a king, and in the flower of youth,	

224	Even with a <u>twink</u> a senseless <u>stock</u> I saw.	224: <i>twink</i> = a wink of an eye. <sup>1</sup> <i>stock</i> = a body shorn of the physical senses. <sup>1</sup>
226	[ <i>Exeunt Gorboduc and Eubulus.</i> ]	<i>Stage direction</i> : not in the original; the suggestion is Smith's. <sup>16</sup>
228	<b>Aros.</b> O damnèd deed!	
230	<b>Marc.</b> But hear his <u>ruthful</u> end:	= pitiful
232	The noble prince, pierced with the sudden wound, Out of his wretched slumber <u>hastely start</u> ,	= hastily or suddenly started. <sup>1</sup> = fell down. <sup>16</sup>
234	Whose strength now failing, straight he <u>overthrew</u> , When in the fall his eyes even now unclosed Beheld the queen, and cried to her for help.	
236	We then, alas, the ladies which that time Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed,	
238	And hearing him oft call the wretched name Of mother, and to cry to her for aid,	
240	Whose direful hand gave him the mortal wound, Pitying (alas, for <u>nought else</u> could we do)	= "there was nothing else"
242	His <u>ruthful end</u> , ran to the woeful bed, <u>Dispoilèd straight his breast</u> , and all we might,	= "quickly stripped off his upper garment"; <i>dispoil</i> = undress. <sup>16</sup>
244	Wipèd in vain with napkins next at hand The sudden streams of blood that flushèd fast Out of the gaping wound. O, what a look!	
246	O, what a <u>ruthful</u> , steadfast eye, methought He fixed upon my face, which to my death Will never part from me! when with a <u>braid</u> ,	= start or sudden spasm <sup>3</sup>
250	A deep-felt sigh he gave, and therewithal Clasping his hands, to Heaven he cast his sight; And straight pale death pressing within his face, The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.	
254	<b>Aros.</b> Never did age bring forth so vile a <u>fact</u> !	= deed
256	<b>Marc.</b> O hard and cruèl <u>hap</u> , that thus assigned Unto so worthy a wight so wretched end: But most hard cruèl heart, that could <u>consent</u> To lend the hateful destinies that hand, By which, alas, so heinous crime was wrought!	= fate. <sup>2</sup> 258: another line with an extra syllable. = agree. <sup>3</sup>
262	O queen of <u>adamant</u> ! O marble breast! If not the favour of his comely face, If not his princely cheer and countenance, His valiant active arms, his manly breast, If not his fair and seemly personage, His noble limbs, in such proportion <u>cast</u> As would have <u>rapt</u> a <u>silly</u> woman's thought; – If this <u>mought</u> not have moved thy bloody heart,	= legendary and oft-referred-to mineral of great hardness
266		= molded.
268		= enraptured, captured the heart of. = foolish.
270	And that most cruèl hand, the wretched weapon E'en to let fall, and kissed him in the face, With tears for <u>ruth</u> to <u>reave</u> such one by death: Should nature yet consent to slay her son? O mother, thou to murder thus thy child?	= might. 269-271: Marcella apostrophizes to Videna here: she wonders how it was possible for the queen not to be moved to drop her weapon and shower kisses on her son's face, even after having stabbed him.
272		= pity. = rob.
274		

276	E'en Jove with justice must with lightning flames From Heaven send down some strange revenge on thee.	
278	Ah, noble prince, how oft have I beheld Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed, Shining in armour bright before the <u>tilt</u> ,	= jousting tournament; such elements of medieval romance described by Marcella to the end of her speech are obviously anachronistic (Cauthen, p. 57). <sup>15</sup>
280	And with thy mistress' sleeve tied on thy <u>helm</u> ,	= helmet (probably archaic). The <i>sleeve</i> is attached to the helmet as a favor.
282	And <u>charge thy staff</u> to please thy lady's eye, That <u>bowed</u> the head-piece of thy friendly foe? How oft in arms on horse to <u>bend the mace</u> ? How oft in arms on foot to break the sword? Which never now these eyes may see again.	= ie. level his lance (Cauthen, p. 57). <sup>15</sup> = bent. <sup>3</sup> = aim or direct his weapon; <i>mace</i> = a heavy club, possibly with a metal, sometimes spiked, head. <sup>1</sup>
286	<b>Aros.</b> Madam, alas, in vain these <u>plaints</u> are shed,	= laments.
288	Rather with me depart, and help to <u>suage</u> The <u>thoughtful</u> griefs that in the agèd king Must needs by nature grow by death of this His only son, whom he did hold so dear.	= allay. = sorrowful. <sup>1</sup>
292	<b>Marc.</b> What wight is that which saw that I did see, And could refrain to wail with plaint and tears? Not I, alas, that heart is not in me: But let us go, for I am grieved anew, To call to mind the wretched father's woe.	
298		
300	[Exeunt.]	
302	<b>Chorus.</b> When greedy <u>lust</u> in royal seat to reign Hath <u>reft</u> all care of gods and <u>eke</u> of men, And cruèl heart, wrath, treason and disdain, Within th' ambitious breast are lodgèd, then Behold how mischief wide herself displays, And with the brother's hand the brother slays. When blood thus shed doth stain the Heavèn's face Crying to Jove for vengeance of the deed, The mighty god e'en moveth from his place, With wrath to <u>wreak</u> ; then sends he forth with speed The dreadful <u>furies</u> , daughters of the night, With serpents girt, carrying the whip of ire, With hair of stinging snakes, and shining bright With flames and blood, and with a brand of fire: These for revenge of wretched murder done, Do make the mother kill her only son. Blood asketh blood, and death must death <u>requite</u> : Jove by his just and everlasting <u>doom</u> Justly hath ever so requited it; The times before record, and times to come Shall find it true, and so doth present proof Present before our eyes for our <u>behoof</u> . O happy wight that suffers not the snare Of murderous mind to tangle him in blood; And happy he, that can in time <u>beware</u>	= desire. The final Chorus returns to the 6-line stanzas, except for the second stanza, which is 10 lines. = robbed. = also.  = work his vengeance. = the chorus returns to the image of the <i>Furies</i> , who physically appeared during the Dumb Show at the beginning of this Act.  = repay. = judgment.  = this word dating from the 13th century means "benefit".  = the sense is "learned from".

326 | By others' harms, and turn it to his good:  
But woe to him, that fearing not t' offend,  
328 | Doth serve his lust, and will not see the end.

END of ACT IV.

301-328: *rhyming words*: the fact that the lines in the Chorus were meant to rhyme is evidence of how the sounds of vowels have changed over the centuries; in 1561, the following pairs of words from the Chorus would have rhymed: *requite - it, doom - come, blood - good*.

## ACT V.

### THE ORDER AND SIGNIFICATION OF THE DUMB SHOW BEFORE THE FIFTH ACT.

1 First the drums and flutes begin to sound, during  
2 which there comes forth upon the stage a company of  
3 harquebusiers and of armed men, all in order of battle.  
4 These, after their pieces discharge, and that the armed  
5 men three times march about the stage, depart, and  
6 then the drums and flutes cease.

7 Hereby is signified tumults, rebellions, arms and civil  
8 follow, as wars to fell in the realm of Great Britain,  
9 which by the space of fifty years and more, continued  
10 in civil war between the nobility after the death of  
11 King Gorboduc and of his issues, for want of certain

12 limitation in the succession of the crown, till the time  
13 of Dunwallo Molmutius, who reduced the land to  
14 monarchy.

### ACT V, SCENE I.

*A Council of the King's Lords after the murder of  
King and Queen.*

*Enter Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, Fergus  
and Eubulus.*

1 **Clot.** Did ever age bring forth such tyrant's hearts?

2 The brother hath bereft the brother's life;  
3 The mother she hath dyed her cruèl hands  
4 In blood of her own son, and now at last  
5 The people, lo, forgetting troth and love,  
6 Contemning quite both law and loyal heart,  
7 E'en they have slain their sovereign lord and queen.

8 **Mand.** Shall this their traitorous crime unpunished rest?

9 E'en yet they cease not, carried out with rage,  
10 In their rebellious routs, to threaten still  
11 A new bloodshed unto the prince's kin,  
12 To slay them all, and to uproot the race  
13 Both of the king and queen, so are they moved  
14 With Porrex's death, wherein they falsely charge

= a *harquebus* was an early long gun, and a *harquebusier* was a soldier armed with such a weapon.<sup>1</sup>

= for

11: *issues* = children.

11-12: *want of certain limitation in* = ie. lack of provision for.

13-14: *Dunwallo...monarchy* = after the royal family had been completely wiped out, Britain succumbed to civil war "for a long space", eventually splitting into separate kingdoms. It was up to *Dunwallo Molmutius*, a prince of the royal family of Cornwall, to lead an army which defeated the other kings of Britain, and reunite the island under a single ruler (See Evans, p. 36-37).<sup>6</sup>

*Entering characters:* the first four named gentleman are dukes, and therefore the leading nobility of Britain.

= *Clotyn* is the Duke of Cornwall, perhaps the south-west quadrant of England.

= loyalty.

= scorning.

= *Mandud* is the Duke of Loegris, a region which comprises perhaps the central, east and south-east regions of Britain. The exact extent of all the dukes' lands is unclear; according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the first British king Brute divided the island into three sections and allotted them to his three sons, the three realms being Loegria (the central part of the island, says Geoffrey), Camber (present day Wales) and Albany (modern Scotland).

= mobs.<sup>2</sup>

= enraged

16	The guiltless king without <u>desert</u> at all,	= ie. his deserving it
18	And traitorously have murdered him therefore, And <u>eke</u> the queen.	= also
20	<b><u>Gwen.</u></b> Shall subjects dare with force	= <i>Gwenard</i> is the Duke of Camberland, which includes modern-day Wales at least.
22	To work revenge upon their <u>prince's fact</u> ?	= sovereign's criminal act.
24	Admit the worst that may, as sure in this The deed was foul, the queen to slay her son, Shall yet the subject seek to take the sword, Arise against his lord, and slay his king?	
26	O wretched state, where those rebellious hearts	= torn.
28	Are not <u>rent</u> out e'en from their living breasts, And with the body <u>thrown onto the fowls</u> As carrion food, <u>for terror of</u> the rest.	= the modern equivalent might be "thrown to the vultures". = "in order to scare".
30	<b><u>Ferg.</u></b> There can no punishment be thought too great	= <i>Fergus</i> is the Duke of Albany, which comprises modern Scotland.
32	For this so grievous crime: let speed therefore	= is appropriate or necessary.
34	Be used therein, for it <u>behooveth so</u> .	
36	<b><u>Eubu.</u></b> <u>Ye</u> all, my lords, I see, consent in one,	= Eubulus uses <i>ye</i> in its old plural sense, as he is addressing all of the dukes.
38	And I as one consent with ye in all.	
40	I hold it more than <u>need</u> , with sharpest law To punish this tumultuous bloody rage: For nothing more may shake the common state Than <u>sufferance</u> of uproars without <u>redress</u> ;	= necessary
42	<u>Whereby how soon</u> kingdoms of mighty power, After great conquests made, and flourishing In fame and wealth, have been to ruin brought, I pray to Jove that we may rather <u>wail</u> Such <u>hap</u> in them, than witness in ourselves.	= toleration. = remedy <sup>1</sup> , though <i>redress</i> may imply punishment. <sup>1</sup>
44	Eke fully with the duke my mind agrees, That no cause serves, whereby the subject may	= in context, the sense is "we can see in history how some".
46		
48	Call to <u>accompt</u> the doings of his prince, Much less in blood by sword to work revenge, No more than may the hand cut off the head, In act nor speech, no: <u>not in secret thought</u> The subject may rebel against his lord, Or judge of him that sits in <u>Caesar's seat</u> ,	= grieve over. <sup>2</sup> = occurrences. <sup>2</sup>
50		47-54: these lines are missing from the 1570 edition of the play, but appear in the 1565 printing. The lines are adapted here from Smith's edition. <sup>16</sup>
52		47-49: "there is no action a sovereign can take, no matter how harmful or evil, that can be challenged by his subjects, or justify rebellion or acts of revenge." = account.
54	With <u>grudging</u> mind to damn those he dislikes. Though kings forget to govern as they ought,	= ie. not even in his thoughts
56	Yet subjects must obey as they are bound.	= ie. the sovereign's seat, or throne. Actually, the reference to Caesar is technically anachronistic (if such a word can be applied to what is legendary history), as the events of our play occurred before Caesar and the Romans first arrived in Britain in 55 B.C. As a side note, there was an additional legend in medieval England that Julius Caesar had been the original builder of the White Tower. = grumbling. <sup>16</sup> 55: ie. "though a sovereign may not always rule with moderation as he should"



But now, my lords, before ye farther wade,  
 58 Or spend your speech, what sharp revenge shall fall  
 By justice' plague on these rebellious wights;  
 60 Methinks, ye rather should first search the way  
 By which in time, the rage of this uproar  
 62 Mought be repressed, and these great tumults ceased.  
 Even yet the life of Britain land doth hang  
 64 In traitor's balance of unequal weight;  
 Think not, my lords, the death of Gorboduc,  
 66 Nor yet Videna's blood will cease their rage:  
 E'en our own lives, our wives and children dear,  
 68 Our country, dear'st of all, in danger stands  
 Now to be spoiled; now, now made desolate,  
 70 And by ourselves a conquest to ensue.  
 For, give once sway unto the people's lusts,  
 72 To rush forth on, and stay them not in time,  
 And as the stream that rolleth down the hill,  
 74 So will they headlong run with raging thoughts  
 From blood to blood, from mischief unto moe,  
 76 To ruin of the realm, themselves and all:  
 So giddy are the common people's minds,  
 78 So glad of change, more wav'ring than the sea.  
 Ye see, my lords, what strength these rebels have;  
 80 What hugy number is assembled still:  
 For though the traitorous fact for which they rose  
 82 Be wrought and done, yet lodge they still in field;  
 So that how far their furies yet will stretch  
 84 Great cause we have to dread. That we may seek  
 By present battle to repress their power,  
 86 Speed must we use to levy force therefore;  
 For either they forthwith will mischief work,  
 88 Or their rebellious roars forthwith will cease:  
 These violent things may have no lasting long.  
 90 Let us therefore use this for present help:  
 Persuade by gentle speech, and offer grace,  
 92 With gift of pardon, save unto the chief,  
 And that upon condition that forthwith  
 94 They yield the captains of their enterprise  
 To bear such guerdon of their traitorous fact,  
 96 As may be both due vengeance to themselves,  
 And wholesome terror to posterity.  
 98 This shall, I think, scatter the greatest part  
 That now are holden with desire of home,  
 100 Wearied in field with cold of winter's nights,  
 And some, no doubt, stricken with dread of law.  
 102 When this is once proclaimed, it shall make

57-62: this is one long sentence; Eubulus is suggesting that it is premature to discuss the punishment of the rebels; instead, they need to first figure out how to end the violence.

= people

= unequal

72: "we shall also be conquered" (Smith, p. 80).<sup>16</sup>

71: the sense is, "if you allow the people to act out their desires or inclinations".

= stop.

= more

= fickle.<sup>2</sup>

78: ie. the people don't know what they want.

= a large number.

= deed.

= *wrought* is the past tense of "work", referring to an action intended to bring about a certain result.

= raise an army

90: "in the meantime, here is what we should do".

91-92: offer a general pardon to all the rebels, except for the leaders; this was the typical approach taken by kings in all of the historical dramas of the era, such as in John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* and Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part II*, and *Richard III*.

= immediately<sup>1</sup>

= ie. receive. = reward. = deeds.

97: ie. a warning to those in the future who may consider rebelling against their monarch.

98-101: this is great psychology on the part of Eubulus: having initially joined the rebellion in a fit of irrational frenzy, most of the rabble will quickly tire of the escapade, and will look for an excuse (in this case, a pardon) to go home.

102-4: a general pardon will in turn make the leaders of

104	The captains to mistrust the multitude, Whose safety bids them to betray their <u>heads</u> ;	the rebellion less trusting of their followers, who they now realize have a strong incentive to turn them over to the royal army! <i>heads</i> = leaders.
106	And so much more, because the <u>rascal routs</u> , In things of great and perilous attempts,	= wretched rabble. 106: "when it comes to momentous and dangerous schemes".
108	Are never trusty to the noble race. And while we <u>treat</u> and <u>stand on terms of grace</u> ,	108: ie. "so that by offering a general pardon". <i>treat</i> = negotiate. <i>stand on terms of grace</i> = "insist on the conditions of our offer".
110	We shall both <u>stay</u> their fury's rage the while, And <u>eke</u> gain time, whose only help sufficeth <u>Withouten</u> war to vanquish rebel's power.	= mollify. = also. 110-1: <i>whose only...power</i> = "which will allow us to suppress the rebellion while preventing further bloodshed." <i>withouten</i> = without (probably archaic).
112	In the meanwhile, make you in readiness Such <u>band of horsemen</u> as ye may prepare:	= ie. a cavalry force
114	Horsemen, you know, are not the common's strength, But are the force and store of noble men,	
116	Whereby th' unchosen and unarmèd <u>sort</u> Of skillless rebels, whom none other power	= collection.
118	But number makes to be of dreadful force, With sudden brunt may quickly be oppressed.	117-8: <i>whom none...force</i> = the rabble, being untrained in war, is dangerous only because of their large numbers.
120	And if this gentle means of proffered grace, With stubborn hearts cannot so far avail	
122	As to assuage their desperate courages, Than do I wish such slaughter to be made,	
124	As present age and eke posterity May be <u>adrad</u> with horror of revenge,	= variation on <i>adread</i> , meaning "terrified"; archaic. <sup>1</sup>
126	That justly than shall on these rebels fall: This is, my lords, the sum of mine advice.	
128		
130	<b>Clot.</b> Neither this case admits debate at large; And though it did, this speech that hath been said Hath well abridged the tale I would have told.	129-131: "There is no time for a protracted debate; but even if there were, Eubulus has spoken so well that there is no need for me to go on at length just to agree with him." = agree. <sup>3</sup>
132	Fully with Eubulus do I <u>consent</u> In all that he hath said: and if the same	= into action <sup>2</sup>
134	To you, my lords, may seem for best advice, I wish that it should straight be put <u>in ure</u> .	
136		
138	<b>Mand.</b> My lords, than let us presently depart, And follow <u>this</u> that <u>liketh</u> us so well.	= ie. this plan. = pleases. <sup>2</sup>
140	[ <i>Exeunt all except Fergus.</i> ]	<i>Stage Direction:</i> as Fergus' next speech is clearly a soliloquy, the stage direction is my own suggestion.
142	<b>Ferg.</b> If ever time to gain a kingdom here Were offered man, now it is offered me.	
144	The realm is <u>reft</u> both of their king and queen;	= robbed; <i>reft</i> is the past tense of the verb <i>reave</i> , which appears, together with its cognate <i>bereave</i> , an even dozen times in this play. Interestingly, <i>reft</i> and <i>bereft</i> also appear a combined total of exactly a dozen times.
146	The offspring of the <u>prince</u> is slain and dead: No <u>issue</u> now remains: the heir unknown; The people are in arms and mutinies;	= king. = children.

148 Then nobles they are busied how to cease  
150 These great rebellious tumults and uproars;  
And Britain land now desert left alone,  
152 Amid these broils uncertain where to rest,  
Offers herself unto that noble heart  
That will or dare pursue to bear her crown.  
154 Shall I, that am the Duke of Albany,  
Descended from that line of noble blood,  
156 Which hath so long flourished in worthy fame  
Of valiant hearts, such as in noble breasts  
158 Of right should rest above the baser sort,  
Refuse to venture life to win a crown?  
160 Whom shall I find enemies that will withstand  
My fact herein, if I attempt by arms  
162 To seek the same now in these times of broil?

164 These dukes' power can hardly well appease  
The people that already are in arms:

166 But if perhaps my force be once in field,  
Is not my strength in power above the best  
Of all these lords now left in Britain land?  
168 And though they should match me with power of men,  
Yet doubtful is the chance of battles joined:

170 If victors of the field we may depart,  
Ours is the sceptre then of Great Britain;

172 If slain amid the plain this body lie,  
Mine enemies yet shall not deny me this,  
174 But that I died giving the noble charge,  
To hazard life for conquest of a crown.  
176 Forthwith therefore will I in post depart  
To Albany, and raise in armour there  
178 All power I can: and here my secret friends,

180 By secret practice shall solicit still,  
To seek to win to me the people's hearts.

[Exit.]

## ACT V, SCENE II.

*The same.*

*Enter Eubulus.*

1 **Eubu.** O Jove, how are these people's hearts abused?  
2 What blind fury thus headlong carries them?  
That though so many books, so many rolls

= barren, or like a wilderness<sup>1</sup>

= *Britain land* is personified.

= by right. = ie. stand. = lower, meaner.

= "risk my life".

160-2: "who would stand up against me should I take advantage of the instability in Britain to grab the crown for myself?" The duke seems to be trying to talk himself into seizing the moment.

*fact* = deed.

*broil* = disturbances.<sup>1</sup>

In line 160, Smith has *emnies* instead of *enemies*, perhaps chosen for the sake of the meter.<sup>16</sup>

163-4: the sense is that the dukes have either so inadequate an army or so little influence that they are not likely to be able to quell the rebellion on their own.

168-9: "Even if the other dukes' army is as large as my own, you can never tell who will win a battle"; Fergus tries to convince himself that the great reward is worth the risk of an uncertain war.

= needless to say, the use of the term *Great Britain* here is terribly anachronistic, not coming into use until the early part of the second millenium.<sup>1</sup>

= "risk my life".

= immediately. = in haste.<sup>16</sup>

178: *all power* = ie. as large an army as.

178-180 = *and here... hearts* = remember that Fergus' home, Albany, is modern day Scotland; as Fergus heads way up north to raise an army, he will need partisans in the south to work to create a faction that will favor his bid for the throne.

4	Of ancient time, record what grievous plagues <u>Light on these rebels aye</u> , and though so oft	= ie. rebels always ( <i>aye</i> ) suffer from.
6	Their ears have heard their agèd fathers tell What just <u>reward</u> these traitors <u>still</u> receive,	= ie. punishment. = always.
8	Yea, though themselves have seen deep death and blood, By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword	
10	To such assigned, yet can they not beware; Yet cannot <u>stay</u> their <u>lewd</u> rebellious hands:	= halt. = base. <sup>3</sup>
12	But suffering, lo, foul treason to <u>distain</u> Their wretched minds, forget their loyal heart,	= disgrace. <sup>3</sup>
14	Reject all truth, and rise against their prince. A <u>ruthful</u> case, that those whom duty's bond,	= pitiful
16	Whom grafted law by nature, truth, and faith, Bound to preserve their country and their king,	
18	Born to defend their commonwealth and prince, <u>E'en</u> they should give consent thus to subvert	= ie. "that even"
20	Thee, Britain land, and from thy womb should spring, O native soil, those that will needs destroy	
22	And ruin thee, and <u>eke themselves in fine</u> . For lo, when once the dukes had offered grace	= "themselves as well in the end." <sup>1</sup>
24	Of pardon sweet, the multitude, misled By traitorous <u>fraud</u> of their <u>ungracious</u> heads,	= deception. = rude. <sup>1</sup>
26	One <u>sort</u> that saw the dangerous success Of stubborn standing in rebellious war,	26-33: one group ( <i>sort</i> ) of rebels, recognizing that they were really nothing more than a disorderly mob ( <i>tumultuous routs</i> ), and also anxious for Britain as well as secretly fearful of the consequences of their actions, turned their leaders over to the government.
28	And knew the différence of prince's power From headless number of <u>tumultuous routs</u> ,	= ie. care for their country.
30	Whom <u>common country's care</u> , and private fear, Taught to repent the terror of their rage,	
32	Laid hands upon the captains of their band, And brought them bound unto the mighty dukes:	
34	And other sort, not trusting yet so well The truth of pardon, or mistrusting more	34-40: the leaders of a second portion of the rebels, no longer trusting their followers, ran away before the indecisive mob acted.
36	Their own offense, than that they could conceive Such hope of pardon for so foul misdeed;	
38	Or for that they their captains could not yield, Who fearing to be yielded, fled before,	
40	<u>Stale</u> home by silence of the secret night: The third <u>unhappy</u> and enraged sort	= stole (archaic). <sup>1</sup>
42	Of desperate hearts, who, stained in prince's blood, From traitorous furor could not be withdrawn	41-49: the third part of the rebel armies kept on fighting. <i>unhappy</i> = troublesome. <sup>1</sup>
44	By love, by law, by grace, ne yet by fear, By proffered life, nay yet by threatened death;	
46	With minds hopeless of life, dreadless of death, Careless of country, and aweless of God,	
48	Stood bent to fight as furies did them move, With violent death to close their traitorous life.	
50	These all by power of horsemen were <u>oppressed</u> ,	50: this last group of rebels was destroyed or overwhelmed ( <i>oppressed</i> ) by the government's army, which naturally fought from horseback. A small but skilled cavalry force will always defeat an untrained mob fighting on foot.
52	And with revenging sword slain in the field, Or with the strangling cord hanged on the tree; Where yet their carrion carcasses do preach,	53-54: ie. their dead, swinging bodies speak a lesson to

54	The fruits that rebels reap of their uproars, And of the murder of their sacred prince.	those who want to study what happens to rebels.
56	But lo, <u>where do approach</u> the noble dukes, By whom these tumults have been thus appeased.	= ie. "here come"
58		
60	<i>Enter Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, and Arostus.</i>	<i>Entering Characters:</i> notice that Fergus is missing!
62	<b>Clot.</b> I think the world will now at length beware, And fear to put on arms against their prince.	
64	<b>Mand.</b> If not? those treacherous hearts that dare rebel, Let them behold the wide and <u>hugy</u> fields	= vast
66	With blood and bodies spread with rebels slain, The lofty trees clothed with the corpses dead,	
68	That, strangled with the cord, do hang thereon.	
70	<b>Aros.</b> A just reward, such as all times before Have ever <u>lotted</u> to those wretched folks.	= ie. allotted
72		
74	<b>Gwen.</b> But what means he that cometh here so fast?	= "But who is that hurrying towards us?"
76	<i>Enter Nuntius.</i>	= another messenger
78	<b>Nunt.</b> My lords, as duty and my truth doth move, And of my country work and care in me, That if the spending of my breath availed To do the service that my heart desires, I would not shun t' embrace a present death; So have I now in that wherein I thought My <u>travail mought</u> perform some good effect, Ventured my life to bring these tidings here. Fergus, the mighty Duke of Albany, Is now in arms, and lodgeth in the fields With twenty thousand men; <u>hither</u> he bends His speedy march, and <u>minds</u> t' invade the crown: Daily he gathereth strength, and <u>spreads</u> abroad, That to this realm no certain heir remains, That Britain land is left without a guide, That he the sceptre seeks for nothing else But to preserve the people and the land, Which now remain as ship without a <u>stern</u> . Lo, this is that which I have here to say.	79-81: "Even if bringing you this message costs me my life, it is worth it to do this service for you."  = effort. = might.  = to here. = intends. <sup>2</sup> = ie. spreads rumors or tales.
96	<b>Clot.</b> Is this his faith? and shall he falsely thus <u>Abuse the vantage</u> of unhappy times? O wretched land, if his outrageous pride, His cruèl and untempered willfulness, His deep dissembling shows of false pretence, Should once attain the crown of Britain land! Let us, my lords, with timely force resist The new attempt of this our common foe, As we would quench the flames of common fire.	= ie. the steering mechanism <sup>1</sup>  = ie. take improper advantage
100		
102		
104		
106	<b>Mand.</b> Though we remain without a certain prince To wield the realm, or guide the wandering rule, Yet now the common mother of us all,	
108		



110 Our native land, our country, that contains  
 112 Our wives, children, kindred, ourselves, and all  
 114 That ever is or may be dear to man,  
 116 Cries unto us to help ourselves and her.  
 118 Let us advance our powèrs to repress  
 120 This growing foe of all our liberties.

122 **Gwen.** Yea, let us so, my lords, with hasty speed –  
 124 And ye, O gods, send us the welcome death  
 126 To shed our blood in field, and leave us not  
 128 In loathsome life to linger out our days,  
 130 To see the hugy heaps of these unhaps  
 132 That now roll down upon the wretched land,  
 134 Where empty place of princely governance,  
 136 No certain stay now left of doubtless heir,  
 138 Thus leave this guideless realm an open prey  
 140 To endless storms and waste of civil war.

142 **Aros.** That ye, my lords, do so agree in one,  
 144 To save your country from the violent reign  
 146 And wrongfully usurpèd tyranny  
 148 Of him that threatens conquest of you all,  
 150 To save your realm, and in this realm yourselves  
 152 From foreign thraldom of so proud a prince,  
 154 Much do I praise; and I beseech the gods,  
 156 With happy honour to requite it you.  
 158 But O, my lords, sith now the heavèns' wrath  
 Hath reft this land the issue of their prince,  
 Sith of the body of our late sovereign lord  
 Remains no moe, since the young kings be slain,  
 And of the title of descended crown

Uncertainly the divers minds do think  
 Even of the learnèd sort, and more uncertainly  
 Will partial fancy and affection deem;

But most uncertainly will climbing pride,  
 And hope of reign, withdraw to sundry parts  
 The doubtful right and hopeful lust to reign.  
 When once this noble service is achieved  
 For Britain land, the mother of ye all,  
 When once ye have with armèd force repressed  
 The proud attempts of this Albanian prince,

That threatens thraldom to your native land,  
 When ye shall vanquishers return from field,  
 And find the princely state an open prey  
 To greedy lust and to usurping power;  
 Then, then, my lords, if ever kindly care  
 Of ancient honour of your ancestors,  
 Of present wealth and noblesse of your stocks,  
 Yea, of the lives and safety yet to come  
 Of your dear wives, your children, and yourselves,

120-1: note the alliteration in both these lines.  
 = "enormous misfortunes (*unhaps*)".

123: ie. the throne has no sovereign to occupy it.

124: ie. no unambiguous chain of succession for the crown.

= enslavement by

= since.

= taken from. = children. = ie. king.

138: one more line with an extra syllable.

= no more.

140-2: *And of...learned sort* = even the educated class is unclear, and of various ideas, regarding what to do regarding who should be king.

= various.

142-3: *and more uncertainly...deem* = judgment regarding the matter will be warped by biased imagination (*partial fancy*<sup>1</sup>) and emotion (*affection*).

= ie. from Albany, or Scottish. This is a word which I would like to see revived to describe any person from Albany, NY.

= slavery.

= ie. shall as.

= "nobility of your families or ancestors"



160	Might move your noble hearts with gentle <u>ruth</u> ,	= mercy.
	Then, then, have pity on the <u>torn estate</u> ;	= torn-apart nation.
162	Then help to salve the <u>wellnear</u> hopeless sore;	= nearly. <sup>1</sup>
	Which ye shall do, if ye yourselves withhold	
164	The slaying knife from your own mother's throat:	
	Her shall you save, and you, and yours in her,	165: Arostus points to different nobles around him; note how in this line he uses the singular <i>you</i> before returning to the plural <i>ye</i> .
166	If ye shall all with one assent forbear	166-172: Arostus asks the nobles to agree not to claim the throne for themselves; a new king should instead be elected by an assembly of Britain's nobility.
	Once to lay hand, or take unto yourselves	= "under any false pretense".
168	The crown, <u>by colour of pretended right</u> ,	
	Or by what other means soe'er it be,	
170	Till first by common counsel of you all	
	In <u>parliament</u> , the regal diadem	= the word <i>parliament</i> , of course, is anachronistic, not entering the English language until the 13th or 14th century. <sup>1</sup>
172	Be set in certain place in governance;	= take under consideration. <sup>1</sup>
	In which your parliament, and in your choice,	
174	<u>Prefer</u> the right, my lords, without respect	
	Of strength or friends, or whatsoever cause	
176	That may set forward any other's part;	
	For right will last, and wrong cannot endure:	
178	Right, mean I his or hers, upon whose name	
	The people rest by mean of native line,	
180	Or by the virtue of some former law	
	Already made their title to advance.	
182	Such one, my lords, let be your chosen king;	182-4: the repetition of initial words in consecutive lines is known as <i>anaphora</i> .
	Such one so born within your native land;	= promote. = way.
184	Such one <u>prefer</u> ; and in no <u>wise</u> admit	
	The heavy yoke of foreign governance:	
186	Let foreign titles <u>yield to public wealth</u> .	= the sense is "be rejected in favor of the national interest" <sup>1</sup>
	And with that heart wherewith ye now prepare	
188	Thus to withstand the proud invading foe,	
	With that same heart, my lords, keep out also	
190	Unnaturál <u>thraldom</u> of <u>strangers' reign</u> ,	= slavery. = rule by foreigners.
	Ne suffer you against the rules of kind,	191-2: "do not tolerate violations of the rules of nature or family by allowing an outsider to rule Britain."
192	Your mother land to serve a foreign prince.	
194	[ <i>Exeunt all except Eubulus.</i> ]	194: this stage direction is the editor's suggestion. Eubulus' speech is more in the nature of a summary or epilogue for the audience than part of a conversation with the other nobles, and replaces the Chorus which does not appear in this Act.
196	<b>Eubu.</b> <u>Lo, here</u> the end of Brutus' royal line,	= "see here"
	And, lo, the entry to the woeful wreck	
198	And utter ruin of this noble realm.	
	The royal king, and <u>eke</u> his sons are slain;	= also
200	No ruler rests within the regal seat;	
	The heir, to whom the sceptre <u>longs</u> , unknown;	= ie. belongs. <sup>16</sup>
202	That to each force of foreign prince's power,	202-4: "to any foreign prince who may seek to take advantage of Britain's current vulnerable state to try to seize the throne".
	Whom vantage of our wretched state may move	
204	By sudden arms to gain so rich a realm;	
	And to the proud and greedy mind at home,	
206	Whom blinded <u>lust</u> to reign leads to aspire,	= desire
	Lo, Britain realm is left an open prey,	
208	A present spoil by conquest to ensue.	

210 Who seeth not now how many rising minds  
 Do feed their thoughts with hope to reach a realm?  
 And who will not by force attempt to win  
 212 So great a gain that hope persuades to have?  
A simple colour shall for title serve.  
 214 Who wins the royal crown will want no right;  
  
 Nor such as shall display by long descent  
 216 A lineal race to prove himself a king.  
  
 In the meanwhile these civil arms shall rage,  
 218 And thus a thousand mischiefs shall unfold,  
 And far and near spread thee, O Britain land;  
 220 All right and law shall cease; and he that had  
 Nothing to-day, to-morrow shall enjoy  
 222 Great heaps of gold; and he that flowed in wealth,  
 Lo, he shall be bereft of life and all;  
 224 And happiest he that then possesseth least:  
 The wives shall suffer rape, the maids deflowered,  
 226 And children fatherless shall weep and wail;  
 With fire and sword thy native folk shall perish:  
 228 One kinsman shall bereave another life;  
 The father shall unwitting slay the son;  
 230 The son shall slay the sire, and know it not.  
 Women and maids the cruèl soldiers' swords  
 232 Shall pierce to death, and silly children, lo,  
 That playing in the streets and fields are found,  
 234 By violent hand shall close their latter day.  
 Whom shall the fierce and bloody soldier  
 236 Reserve to life? whom shall he spare from death?  
 E'en thou, O wretched mother, half alive,  
 238 Thou shalt behold thy dear and only child  
 Slain with the sword, while he yet sucks thy breast.  
 240 Lo, guiltless blood shall thus eachwhere be shed.  
 Thus shall the wasted soil yield forth no fruit,  
 242 But derth and famine shall possess the land.  
 The towns shall be consumed and burnt with fire;  
 244 The peopled cities shall wax desolate;  
 And thou, O Britain, whilom in renown,  
 246 Whilom in wealth and fame, shalt thus be torn,  
 Dismembered thus, and thus be rent in twain;  
 248 Thus wasted and defaced, spoiled and destroyed;  
 These be the fruits your civil wars will bring.  
 250 Hereto it comes, when kings will not consent  
 To grave advice, but follow willful will.  
 252 This is the end, when in fond princes' hearts  
 Flattery prevails, and sage rede hath no place.  
 254 These are the plagues, when murder is the mean  
 To make new heirs unto the royal crown.  
 256 Thus wreak the gods, when that the mother's wrath  
Nought but the blood of her own child may 'suage.  
 258 These mischiefs spring with rebels will arise

209-210: "can anyone be blind to how many people there  
 are who hope to capture the vacant throne?"  
 = whom.  
 = a transparent pretext.  
 = ie. not lack a claim to a right to the crown. The tone of  
 this line is cynical.  
 215-6: "anybody can come up with a family tree that  
 'proves' they are descended from the royal family."  
 As a factual matter, so many English monarchs had  
 so many children both inside and outside of marriage that  
 probably every Englishman and Englishwoman alive  
 today is descended from some branch of the royal family.  
  
 = ie. take the life of a relative.  
 = unknowingly.  
  
 = defenseless  
  
 = end. = ie. last day on earth.  
 = *soldier* here may be tri-syllabic.  
 = ie. save the life of.  
  
 = everywhere (archaic)<sup>1</sup>  
  
 = scarcity; an archaic form of *dearth*.<sup>1</sup>  
  
 = gradually become deserted.<sup>1</sup>  
 = formerly (*whilom*) famous or highly esteemed.<sup>3</sup>  
  
 = heed.  
 = ie. stubbornly follow their own inclinations.  
 = foolish.  
 = wise advice.  
 = means.  
  
 = avenge. = alluding of course to Queen Videna.  
 = nothing. = pacify.

260 To work revenge and judge their prince's fact.  
 This, this ensues when noble men do fail  
 In loyal troth, and subjects will be kings:  
 262 And this doth grow, when, lo, unto the prince,  
 Whom death or sudden hap of life bereaves,  
 264 No certain heir remains, such certain heir  
 As not all only is the rightful heir,  
 266 But to the realm is so made known to be,  
 And truth thereby vested in subjects' hearts,  
 268 To owe faith there, where right is known to rest.  
 Alas, in parliament what hope can be,  
 270 When is of parliament no hope at all?  
 Which, though it be assembled by consent,  
 272 Yet is not likely with consent to end;  
 While each one for himself, or for his friend  
 274 Against his foe, shall travail what he may.  
 While now the state left open to the man  
 276 That shall with greatest force invade the same,  
 Shall fill ambitious minds with gaping hope,  
 278 When will they once with yielding hearts agree?  
 Or in the while, how shall the realm be used?  
 280 No, no; then parliament should have been holden,  
 And certain heirs appointed to the crown  
 282 To stay the title of established right,  
 And plant the people in obedience,  
 284 While yet the prince did live, whose name and power  
 By lawful summons and authority  
 286 Might make a parliament to be of force,  
 And might have set the state in quiet stay:  
 288 But now, O happy man, whom speedy death  
 Deprives of life, ne is enforced to see  
 290 These huyg mischiefs and these miseries,  
 These civil wars, these murders, and these wrongs  
 292 Of justice, yet must God in fine restore  
 This noble crown unto the lawful heir:  
 294 For right will always live, and rise at length,  
 But wrong can never take deep root to last.  
 296

[*Exeunt.*]

FINIS

### Norton and Sackville's Invented Words

Like all of the writers of the era, Norton and Sackville made up words when they felt like it, usually by adding prefixes and suffixes to known words, combining words, or using a word in a way not yet used before. The following is a list of words and phrases from *Ferrex and Porrex* that are indicated by the OED as being either the first or only use of a given word, or, as noted, the first use with a given meaning:

**Albanian**  
**chorus** (first use in English literature)  
**climbing**

= evil deed

= accident. = takes the life of.

= variation on *alonely*, meaning "only."

= faith or loyalty<sup>16</sup>

= ie. in parliament there is.

= general agreement.

= "strive for in any way he can"

= yearning, or with mouths open as if hoping to swallow.<sup>2</sup>

= meantime.

= obliged.<sup>1</sup>

= secure or steady.<sup>1</sup>

= nor. = obliged.

### Norton and Sackville's Archaic Words

The following is a list of words used by the authors in *Ferrex and Porrex* that were likely already archaic by the time they wrote the play in the mid-16th century (see the discussion at the beginning of the play):

**adrad**  
**behight**  
**bode** (past tense of bide)  
**clepe**  
**derth** (for dearth)  
**eachwhere**

**descended**  
**dumb show**  
**ensuing**  
**foreset** (meaning set purpose)  
**lustful** (meaning vigorous)  
**marble** (figurative use, meaning cold and unyielding)  
**motherland**  
**murderous** (used to describe anything other than a person)  
**overkindly**  
**randon** (meaning to wander aimlessly)  
**rising** (meaning moving up in social status or power)  
**stand on** (meaning to insist on, as terms of negotiation)  
**stayedness**  
**succeeding**  
**unjoint** (to sever or separate something other than actual joints)  
**unmastered**

**eke**  
**erst**  
**hastely**  
**helm**  
**lenger**  
**mought**  
**overthrow** (meaning "to fall down")  
**stale** (for stole)  
**unhap**  
**wight**  
**withouten**  
**wroke**

## THE ANNOTATIONS

References to "Smith" in the annotations refer to the notes provided by editor L. Toumlin Smith in his edition of *Gorboduc*, cited at #16 below.

The footnotes in the play correspond as follows:

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