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presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

EDWARD the SECOND

by Christopher Marlowe

Written c. 1592

Earliest Extant Edition: 1594

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

King Edward the Second.
Queen Isabella, Wife of King Edward the Second.
Margaret, Niece to King Edward the Second, Daughter of the Earl of Gloucester.
Prince Edward, his Son, afterwards King Edward the Third.
Earl of Kent, Brother of King Edward the Second.

Gaveston, the King's Favourite.

The King's Party:
Spenser, the elder.
Spenser, the younger, his Son.
Baldock.
The Earl of Arundel.
Beaumont.
Levune, a Frenchman.

The King's Noble Opponents:
The Earl of Warwick.
The Earl of Pembroke.
James, a retainer of Pembroke.
The Earl of Lancaster.
The Earl of Leicester.
Lord Berkeley.
Mortimer, the elder.
Mortimer, the younger, his Nephew.

More of the King's Opponents:
Archbishop of Canterbury.
Bishop of Coventry.
Bishop of Winchester.
Trussel.
Sir John of Hainault.
Rice ap Howell.

The King's Jailers:
Gurney.
Matrevis.
Lightborn.

Abbot, Monks, Herald, Lords, Three Poor Men, Mower, Champion, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.
Ladies.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

The focus of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* is more on personalities than politics, particularly spotlighting the king's obsessive attachment to his various favorites. The consequences of Edward's irrational and unkingly behavior are catastrophic for all. The result is a tragedy in the true sense of the word, a play with no heroes, a drama in which the king's wounds are self-inflicted, and a story in which those whose lives are intertwined with that of the king are left without any honourable options or recourse.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of the play is adapted from the *Mermaid* edition of the plays of Christopher Marlowe, edited by Havelock Ellis, and cited in the footnotes below at #4, with some wording and spelling from the original 1594 quarto reinstated.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

References in the annotations to various editors refer to the notes provided by these scholars for *Edward II* in their individual collections of Marlowe's work, each volume cited fully below. Hutchison's book, however, is a standard biography of Edward.

Biographical and historical notes appearing in italics are adapted from the *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sydney Lee (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1885-1900), unless otherwise noted.

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

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words.* London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Ribner, Irving. *The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1963.
4. Ellis, Havelock, ed. *The Best Plays of the Old Dramatists: Christopher Marlowe*. London: Viztelly & Co., 1887.
5. Hutchison, Harold F. *Edward II*. New York: Stein and Day, 1971.
6. Briggs, William D. *Marlowe's Edward II*. London:

David Nutt, 1914.

7. Tancock, Osborne William. *Marlowe - Edward the Second*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887.

8. Dyce, Alexander. *The Works of Christopher Marlowe.* London: George Routledge and Sons, 1876.

9. Schelling, Felix E. *Christopher Marlowe*. New York: American Book Company, 1912.

10. Cunningham, Lt. Col. Francis. *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1879.

11. Verity, A.W. *Edward the Second*. London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1896.

14. Bevington, David, and Rasmussen, Eric. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Historical and biographical notes which are not strictly necessary to understand the play, but provide background of possible interest, are supplied in italics.

A. Our Story So Far.

On 25 April 1284, at the castle of Carnarvon in Wales, a son was born to **the English king, Edward I**. According to an apocryphal story, the old king proclaimed that his son, also named **Edward**, was destined to be the sovereign of the Welsh.

It was not until young Edward's older brother **Alfonso** died in August of 1284 that Edward became heir to the throne. During his childhood, Edward was presented with a foster brother, a child named **Pierce** (alternately Piers or Peter) **Gaveston**, the son of a Flemish knight who had fought with the king against the Scots. Gaveston became Edward's nearest friend and confidant, a relationship which eventually blossomed into an uncomfortably close love.

Edward was trained to be a warrior, but he seems to have preferred such rustic pursuits as blacksmithing, raising horses, digging trenches and thatching houses. When they were older, Edward and Pierce joined the aging king in his later battles with the Scottish, acceptably acquitting themselves.

In 1305, an immature Edward "invaded" the forests owned by the Treasurer and Bishop of Coventry, **Walter Langton**. When Langton criticized the prince for his trespass, Edward responded with insults; King Edward sided with his Treasurer, and banished his son from the court for six months. Young Edward never forgave the prelate; Edward's resentment would come back to haunt Langley when the old king died, as we will see in Act I of our play.

The other important event of the junior Edward's life occurred in early 1307, when it was reported that he asked his father to give the lands of Ponthieu in France as a gift to Gaveston; the old king, enraged, and perhaps also worried about the too-near relationship between Gaveston and his son, banished his son's best friend from England on February 26.

Just five months later, King Edward died, and young Edward ascended the throne. His first order of business was to recall his companion Gaveston.

B. Basic Timeline of the Play.

Edward II can be basically divided into two halves:

Part One: Act I.i - Act III.i; the Gaveston years (1307-1312).

Transitional Scene: Act III.ii; the scene ties together Gaveston's removal in 1312 to Edward's military challenge to Lancaster at Boroughbridge in 1322.

Part Two: Act III.iii - Act V.v; the final years of Edward's reign (1322-1327).

Coda: Act V.vi, the final scene of the play; the end of the Mortimer era (1330).

C. Scene Breaks, Settings, and Stage Directions.

Edward II was originally published in 1594; later editions, which included modest revisions, followed in 1598, 1612 and 1622. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of the earliest quarto as much as possible. Words or syllables which have been added to the text to clarify the sense or repair the meter are identified by being surrounded by hard brackets [ ]; as such, they may be omitted by a director who wishes to remain truer to the original text.

The quartos do not divide *Edward II* into numbered scenes, nor do they provide scene settings or identify *asides*. We have broken up the play into Acts and Scenes as suggested Ellis. We adopt the scene settings suggested by Dyce and Ellis, and the *asides* by Dyce.

Finally, as is our normal practice, a good number of the quarto's stage directions have been modified, and others added, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. Most of these changes are adopted from Dyce.

D. Annotations in *Italics*.

Those annotations which appear in *italics* serve two distinct functions: they provide either:

(1) biographical background on the characters, or
(2) historical context for the events of the play, allowing the reader:
    (a) to see when in real time the events depicted in Edward II occurred, and
    (b) to know where Marlowe has deviated from historical reality, either by changing the timeline of events, or inventing action or characters out of thin air.

The most important thing to note is that **it is not necessary to read the italicized annotations in order to understand the play.**

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Street in London.

Enter Gaveston, reading a letter that was brought him from the king.

Entering Character: ***Pierce Gaveston*** has been a close companion of the new king, Edward II, since Edward was a boy - uncomfortably close, for many. In fact, the last king, Edward's father Edward I, had banished Gaveston from the kingdom in February 1307, perhaps because of the "inordinate love", as one chronicler put it, he had for young Edward.

But now, only five months later, old King Edward has died (7 July 1307), and the new king, our Edward II, has wasted no time in recalling his friend Gaveston from exile - on 6 August, to be exact.

Gav. "*My father is deceased! Come, Gaveston,*
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend."
Ah! words that make me surfeit with delight!
What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
Than live and be the favourite of a king!
Sweet prince, I come; these, these thy amorous lines
Might have enforced me to have swum from France,
And, like Leander, gasped upon the sand,
So thou would'st smile, and take me in thine arms.

1-2: Gaveston rereads the letter sent to him by his bosom-friend, the new king Edward.
= "fill me".
= happen.
= compelled.
6-9: Marlowe's intention to have the relationship between Edward and Gaveston be understood as more than platonic is established in the first few lines of the play. ***Leander*** was a mythological youth who famously swam every night across the Hellespont (the modern Dardanelles in Turkey) to visit his love, Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite.

Gaveston's use of phrases such as ***amorous*** and ***take me in thine arms*** solidify the point for those who missed the mythological allusion.

The sight of London to my exiled eyes
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;

11: ***Elysium*** = the section of Hades reserved for the blessed souls, ie. paradise.
new-come = newly-arrived.

Not that I love the city, or the men,
But that it harbours him I hold so dear −
The king, upon whose bosom let me die,

= "swoon", but ***die*** was also used frequently to refer to sexual climax.

And with the world be still at enmity.

16 What need the artic people love starlight,
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?

16-17: "why would the people of the Arctic admire the stars, when the sun shines there 24 hours a day?" As Tancock[7] notes, the nobles, whom Gaveston hates, are the ***stars***, and Edward is the ***sun***. Note the rhyming couplet of these lines.
artic = usual early form of ***arctic***.

18 Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers!
My knee shall bow to none but to the king.

= "no longer will I have to servilely bow".

20 As for the multitude, that are but sparks,
Raked up in embers of their poverty; −

20-21: Gaveston compares the masses of common people (***multitudes***) to mere ***sparks*** of a dying or dormant flame, in stark contrast to the sun that is Edward; the lines allude to the practice of keeping a fire alive overnight by raking ashes over the glowing coals.[6]

22 *Tanti*; I'll fawn first on the wind
That glanceth at my lips, and flieth away.

22-23: Gaveston would rather defer to the lightest breeze than to ever bow again to a member of England's nobility.
Tanti = "so much for you", an exclamation of contempt, perhaps accompanied by a rude gesture.[23]
fawn = the quartos print ***fanne***, but the line is short, and if, as Dyce[8] notes, something has dropped out, it is impossible to recreate what is missing, so ***fanne*** is universally emended to ***fawn***.
glanceth at = brushes against.

24 But how now, what are these?

= who.

26 *Enter three Poor Men.*

Entering Characters: the ***Poor Men*** approach Gaveston to inquire as to whether he might hire them on in any capacity.

28 ***Men.*** Such as desire your worship's service.

28-34: as often happens in Marlowe's plays, dialogue comprised of speeches of less than a line slips in and out of verse and into prose.

30 ***Gav.*** What canst thou do?

32 ***1st P. Man.*** I can ride.

34 ***Gav.*** But I have no horse[s]. − What art thou?

36 ***2nd P. Man.*** A traveller.

38 ***Gav.*** Let me see − thou would'st do well
To wait at my trencher and tell me lies at dinner-time;

39: ***wait at my trencher*** = ie. "act as my waiter".
trencher = dinner plate.
tell me lies = entertain the diners with exaggerated tales of his travels.

40 And as I like your discoursing, I'll have you. −
And what art thou?

40: "and if I like your stories, I'll hire you."

42 ***3rd P. Man.*** A soldier, that hath served against the Scot.

43: Edward's father, Edward I, known as the "Hammer of the Scots", fought numerous campaigns against England's northern neighbors (his enemies included the now-lionized William Wallace and Robert Bruce). Elizabethan drama is filled with ex-soldiers who have been reduced to poverty since they mustered out.

44 ***Gav.*** Why, there are hospitals for such as you;

= basically poorhouses for disabled soldiers. Gaveston's

I have no war, and therefore, sir, be gone.

suggestion is insulting.[6,7]

3rd P. Man. Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,
That would'st reward them with an hospital!

48-49: the tendency of an ungrateful society to forget about those who have fought on its behalf is frequently alluded to in Elizabethan drama.

That would'st = "you who would".

Gav. [*Aside*] Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much
As if a goose should play the porpentine,
And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast.

51-53: like the goose imitating the porcupine's mythological ability to shoot its quills, the ex-soldier has no capacity to hurt - or even affect - Gaveston in any way.

51-55: the words spoken in the ***aside*** allow Gaveston to share his true feelings with the audience; the aside ends with a dash (−) at the end of line 55.

porpentine = alternate form of ***porcupine***.

dart = shoot.

But yet it is no pain to speak men fair;
I'll flatter these, and make them live in hope. −

54-55: Gaveston recognizes that his best tactic is to dissemble pleasantly with the poor men; too bad he will not remember this moment when he is dealing with the nobles of England!

You know that I came lately out of France,
And yet I have not viewed my lord the king.
If I speed well, I'll entertain you all.

= recently.
= seen.
= "am successful". = hire, take into service.

Men. We thank your worship.

Gav. I have some business. Leave me to myself.

Poor Men. We will wait here about the court.

[*Exeunt Poor Men.*]

66: the Poor Men disappear from the play,

Gav. Do. These are not men for me:
I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,

= ie. poets who write about love or sexual desire.[1] Note how, in this speech, Gaveston's descriptions of the myriad ways he and the king will while away the hours becomes saturated with sexual imagery.

Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please.

= pliable.

Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,

73: a ***masque*** was a brief play or show, usually with music and dancing, and involving the portrayal of gods and allegorical characters; Gaveston means he will arrange such shows for Edward's entertainment.

The masque was thought at the time to have originated in ***Italy***, but they were actually of English conception.[6] Masques also were not introduced into English society until the 16th century.[1,3]

Lines 72-73 provide us with another rhyming couplet.

Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,

= outside of the palace.

Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;

76: Gaveston's young male servants (***pages***) will be dressed like nymphs of the woods (***sylvan nymphs***), which were definitely female.

My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,

77: ***satyrs*** = a race of mythical half-men, half-goats, known for their healthy sexual appetites.

grazing = strolling or passing over.[22]

Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay. = grotesquely-performed country dances.[1,2]

Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape, = dressed or disguised as ***Diana***, the Roman goddess of the hunt and of virginity; until the Restoration, all women's parts on-stage were played by boys.[9]

With hair that gilds the water as it glides, 80: note the wordplay of ***gilds*** and ***glides***.
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms, = small crowns, but used here to mean "bracelets".
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree, = playful or merry.[1] = ie. olive branch.
To hide those parts which men delight to see, 83: oh dear!
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by, = himself. = close by, with bawdy pun.

One like Actæon peeping through the grove, 85-88: the reference is to the famous mythological story of
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed, ***Actaeon***, a young man who accidentally stumbled onto
And running in the likeness of an hart Diana bathing naked in the woods; the virgin goddess
By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die − punished Actaeon by turning him into a stag (***hart***), and he was torn apart by his own dogs.

Such things as these best please his majesty.
My lord! here comes the king, and the nobles
From the parliament. I'll stand aside. = Gaveston positions himself so that he can hear the ensuing conversation without being seen; it was an important convention of Elizabethan drama that characters could confidently spy on each other without being discovered.

[*Retires*.] = steps back.

Enter King Edward, Lancaster, the elder Mortimer, Young Mortimer, Kent, Warwick, Pembroke and Attendants.

Entering Characters: ***King Edward II*** is attended by some of England's leading nobles; ***Lancaster***, ***Pembroke*** and ***Warwick*** are earls, and together with the ***Mortimers*** are bitter enemies of Gaveston. The ***Earl of Kent*** is Edmund, the half-brother of King Edward.

By convention, the Earls are referred to by their titles rather than their given names: e.g., Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, is simply called Lancaster, etc.

The reader need not worry about distinguishing between the different nobles, as they all basically act towards and feel the same way about Edward and Gaveston. The only peer who stands out from the crowd is the ***Younger Mortimer*** (nephew of the Elder Mortimer), who is somewhat more hot-headed than his companions; Young Mortimer also enjoys an especially close friendship with King Edward's wife Isabel.

As a matter of history, neither Kent nor the Mortimers were involved in the Gaveston affair: the Mortimers, as the leading nobles of the marches, or borders, of Wales, were busy these years (1307-1312) ruling all of Wales; Edmund, the Earl of Kent, was too young to take part in politics, having been born in 1301.

K. Edw. Lancaster!

Lanc. My lord.

Gav. [*Aside*] That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor. = ***Thomas, second Earl of Lancaster*** *(1277?-1322), was a first cousin of King Edward II, his father being Edmund Crouchback, who was Edward I's brother (see the Family*

		Tree on our website's Edward II page). As one of the most powerful barons in England, Lancaster, who by all reports was an unpleasant man, particularly resented the upstart Gaveston.
	K. Edw. Will you not grant me this? −	
106	[*Aside*] In spite of them	
	I'll have my will; and these two Mortimers,	
108	That cross me thus, shall know I am displeased.	= thwart.
110	***E. Mort.*** If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.	
112	***Gav.*** [*Aside*] That villain Mortimer! I'll be his death.	
114	***Y. Mort.*** Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself,	= the Elder Mortimer. = ie. Lancaster or Warwick.[14]
	Were sworn to your father at his death,	= ie. had. = a disyllable: *SWO-ern*. = ie. Edward I.
116	That he should ne'er return into the realm:	= ie. Gaveston; none of the characters on the stage is aware that Gaveston has already returned to London - never mind that he is eavesdropping on the discussion!
	And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,	= before.
118	This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,	= ie. "that I should be using against England's enemies".
	Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,	119-121: ie. if Edward recalls Gaveston, then Young Mortimer will refuse to fight on behalf of England in the future. Note how Mortimer, in his rising anger, has switched pronouns in addressing the king, from the proper and respectful ***you*** to the familiar and contemptuous ***thou***.
120	And underneath thy banners march who will,	
	For Mortimer will hang his armour up.	
122		
	Gav. [*Aside*] *Mort dieu*!	123: "God's death", a French oath. With this swear, Gaveston puns on the name of ***Mortimer***.
124		
	K. Edw. Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.	= regret.
126	Beseems it thee to contradict thy king? −	= "is it seemly for you"; note that it was acceptable, indeed correct, for the sovereign to address his subjects as ***thou***, to signal his superiority in status.
	Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?	= ambitious.[1]
128	The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,	= make smooth.
	And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.	= ie. an ironic comment, referring indignantly to the refusal of the nobles to bend their knees to the king.
130	I will have Gaveston; and you shall know	
	What danger 'tis to stand against your king.	
132		
	Gav. [*Aside*] Well done, Ned!	= ***Ned*** is a nickname for ***Edward***. It derives from the ancient use of "mine" for "my": "mine Ed" transmuted into "my Ned", just as "mine Ellie" morphed into "my Nellie".
134		
	Lanc. My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,	
136	That naturally would love and honour you,	
	But for that base and óbscure Gaveston?	= ***obscure*** was often stressed on its first syllable, as here.
138	Four earldoms have I, besides Lancaster −	*138-9: Lancaster inherited the titles of Lancaster, Leicester and Derby from his father; he then received Lincoln and Salisbury through his wife Alice, the daughter and heiress of Henry of Lacy.*[9]
	Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester, −	
140	These will I sell, to give my soldiers pay,	140-2: Lancaster overtly threatens rebellion.
	Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm;	= before.

Therefore, if he be come, expel him straight. = immediately.

Kent. Barons and earls, your pride hath made me mute; 144-5: Edward's half-brother Edmund, the Earl of Kent,
But now I'll speak, and to the proof, I hope. berates the nobles for challenging the king so rudely.
mute = speechless.
to the proof = to the point, or irrefutably.[3,6]

I do remember, in my father's days,
Lord Percy of the North, being highly moved, = riled, angered.
Braved Moubery in presence of the king; = challenged, insulted.
For which, had not his highness loved him well,
He should have lost his head; but with his look = ie. would have been executed. = ie. the king's countenance.

Th' undaunted spirit of Percy was appeased, = a monosyllable here: *spir't*.

And Moubery and he were reconciled: 146-152: there is no historical basis for this anecdote, though there is a flavour of the quarrel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray (***Maubery***) during the reign of Richard II, as portrayed in the opening scene of Shakespeare's *Richard II*.[6]

Yet dare you brave the king unto his face. − = defy.
Brother, revenge it, and let these their heads = Kent addresses his half-brother the king.

Preach upon poles, for trespass of their tongues. 155: ***Preach upon poles*** = it had long been a tradition in England to cut off the heads of traitors (after they have been hanged and eviscerated) and place them on poles, which were then displayed on London Bridge.
trespass = committing an offense with.

War. O, our heads!

K. Edw. Ay, yours; and therefore I would wish you grant −

War. Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer. 161: perhaps spoken as an aside.

Y. Mort. I cannot, nor I will not; I must speak. − = double negatives were perfectly acceptable in the 16th century; the second negative intensifies the negation.

Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads, 164: ***Cousin*** = Mortimer addresses the king, to whom he was distantly related; ***cousin*** was used loosely as a term of address to any of one's kin.
fence = protect.

And strike off his that makes you threaten us. − = ie. Gaveston's.
Come, uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king, = foolish or mad.[1]
And henceforth parlè with our naked swords. = ie. "do our talking"; the verb here is ***parle***, not ***parley***, though the meanings of the two words are identical.

E. Mort. Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads. = Schelling[9] notes that there is no known connection between the Mortimers and the county of Wiltshire.

War. All Warwickshire will love him for my sake. = ie. Gaveston; both this line, and Lancaster's first line at 173, are spoken ironically.[6]

Lanc. And northward Gaveston hath many friends. − = ie. in the north of England; Lancaster is in the county of Lancashire, located in north-west England.
Adieu, my lord; and either change your mind,
Or look to see the throne, where you should sit,
To float in blood; and at thy wanton head, = self-indulgent, pleasure-seeking.[1]
The glozing head of thy base minion thrown. = fawning. = favourite, but also referring to a homosexual lover.

Exeunt all except King Edward, Kent, Gaveston and Attendants.

K. Edw. I cannot brook these haughty menaces;
Am I a king, and must be overruled? −
Brother, display my ensigns in the field;
I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,
And either die or live with Gaveston.

Gav. I can no longer keep me from my lord.

[*Comes forward*.]

K. Edw. What, Gaveston! welcome! − Kiss not my hand −

Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee.
Why shouldst thou kneel? Know'st thou not who I am?
Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!

Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules,
Than thou hast been of me since thy exíle.

Gav. And since I went from hence, no soul in hell
Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.

K. Edw. I know it. − Brother, welcome home my friend.
Now let the treacherous Mortimers conspire,
And that high-minded Earl of Lancaster: −
I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight;

And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land,
Then bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.

I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,
Chief Secretary to the state and me,
Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.

= endure.

= banners of the army.

= exchange blows, probably derived from the sport of ***bandy***, an early version of tennis.[8]

192: Gaveston salutes Edward formally, kneeling and kissing his hand.

= Edward's use of ***thee*** signals his affection for his friend.

= ie. "I am another you;" this linguistic mingling of identities was a common short-hand way to emphasize how two people were the closest of friends.

196: another reference to inter-male love: ***Hylas*** was a young favourite of ***Hercules***, and sailed with the great hero on the Argonaut as they accompanied Jason in search of the golden fleece. When the ship stopped at Mysia, Hylas went to fetch water, where he was seduced or abducted by some water nymphs who were enchanted by his beauty. He was never seen again. Hercules, distraught, searched in vain for his minion; with Hercules inconsolable and unwilling to give up his search, the Argonauts sailed on without him.[20]

of (line 196) = by.

= "from here", though technically redundant, as ***hence*** alone means "from here".

= ie. addressing the Earl of Kent.

= ie. proud-minded.[6]

= the transitive use of ***joy*** as a verb was favoured by Marlowe.

= often used, as here, for ***than***.

208-210: of these offices and titles, only the earldom of Cornwall was actually bestowed on Gaveston.

The ***Chamberlain*** was a high officer of the sovereign's court: he was not only in charge of the royal household, but he also controlled access to the king; the only two men known to have served as Edward's Chamberlain were John Charlton and Hugh Despenser the Younger (Warner, *Household of Edward II*).[12]

The title ***Lord of Man*** is anachronistic: the *Isle of Man*, in the northern Irish Sea, had been historically controlled by Norway, and the Scots had only wrested Man away from the Norwegians in 1263. Edward I captured it by 1290, and Robert Bruce in turn had taken it in 1313. Man was ruled directly by whichever sovereign controlled it, until 1333, when Edward III gave the island to William Montecute, who

became the *King of Man*. The title *Lord Of Man* was introduced in the 16th century.

Gav. My lord, these titles far exceed my worth.

Kent. Brother, the least of these may well suffice
For one of greater birth than Gaveston.

214-5: even the least prestigious of these titles would be enough for one born into a higher rank than was Gaveston.

K. Edw. Cease, brother: for I cannot brook these words. –
Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts,
Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart;

= bear.

= ie. Gaveston's worth, ie. value to Edward.

If for these dignities thou be envíed,
I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,
Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.

= high offices. = hated.[8]
= "for no other reason but".[7]
= authority or rule.

Fear'st thou thy person? thou shalt have a guard:
Wantest thou gold? go to my treasury:

= "are you afraid for your personal safety?"
= "do you lack, ie. need, money?"

Wouldst thou be loved and feared? receive my seal,
Save or condemn, and in our name command
Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

225-7: Edward offers to give Gaveston authority to unilaterally punish those who offend him, or to do or take whatever he wants, with the king's authorization and pre-approval!
Whatso = whatsoever.
affects = ie. is drawn to.

Gav. It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
Which whiles I have, I think myself as great

= "be enough for".
= "while I have it".

As Cæsar riding in the Roman street,
With captive kings at his triumphant car.

231-2: Gaveston alludes to the well-known Roman practice of parading Rome's captured enemies' monarchs and leaders before the public in the spectacles known as ***triumphs***.

Enter the Bishop of Coventry.

Entering Character: in June 1305, ***Bishop Walter Langton*** reproved prince Edward for invading his woods; insults were traded, but the old king Edward I sided with the cleric (who also served as the king's Treasurer), and banished the prince from the court for six months. Young Edward did not forget the episode, and the moment he would get his revenge on the prelate has finally arrived.

Walter Langton *(d. 1321) first appears in the records as a clerk of Edward I's chancery, and from there steadily rose from one position to the next in the service of the king; his career culminated in his appointment as Treasurer in 1295, and he remained the closest advisor to the old king to the end of Edward's life. Langton further was elected* ***Bishop of Coventry*** *in 1296.*

At some point in time, Langton and the Archbishop of Canterbury, ***Robert Winchelsea****, had become mortal enemies, and when a number of outrageous charges were brought against Langton in 1301, he received no support from his Archbishop. The Treasurer was charged with "living in adultery with his step-mother", and then murdering her husband, a knight whose son was making these spurious accusations; Langton was further charged with "pluralism, simony, and intercourse with the devil", who was said to frequently appear to him in person.*

Suspended from office, Langton travelled to Rome to

defend himself personally in front of the pope, and finally, in 1303, he was declared innocent.

K. Edw. Whither goes my lord of Coventry so fast?

Bish. of Cov. To celebrate your father's exequies.
But is that wicked Gaveston returned?

= funeral rites.

It took a long time to get Edward I buried: he died on 7 July 1307, and his body was removed to Waltham Abbey; he was not buried until 27 October, at Westminster Abbey.

K. Edw. Ay, priest, and lives to be revenged on thee,
That wert the only cause of his exíle.

241-2: at the time Edward I exiled Gaveston in February 1307, the bishop had been the old king's most trusted advisor.
priest = a term of abuse for the bishop.
exile = often stressed, as here, on the second syllable.

Gav. 'Tis true; and but for reverence of these robes,
Thou should'st not plod one foot beyond this place.

= ie. "your vestments"; Gaveston suggests the Bishop's religious office is the only thing protecting his life.

Bish. of Cov. I did no more than I was bound to do;
And, Gaveston, unless thou be reclaimed,

= recalled, but perhaps with a further sense of "reformed".

As then I did incense the parliament,

249-250: ***As then…I now*** = "then I will do as I did back then, which was to urge (***incense***) the Parliament to order you out of England."

So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.

= "you shall go back"; note the common grammatical construction of this phrase: in the presence of a verb of intent (***shalt***), the verb of action (***go***) may be omitted.

Gav. Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.

'= common formula for "excuse what I am about to say", but here referring to what he is doing, which is violently grabbing the Bishop.[8] Gaveston is ironic.

[*Laying hands on the Bishop*.]

254: we include in this edition a number of clarifying stage directions, like this one, which were added by Dyce.

K. Edw. Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,

256: ***mitre*** = tall headdress worn by a bishop.[1]
rend = tear.
stole = vestment worn over the shoulders by ecclesiastics, consisting of a narrow strip of linen.[1]

And in the channel christen him anew.

= gutter.

Kent. Ah, brother, lay not violent hands on him!
For he'll complain unto the see of Rome.

= ie. the pope. The Bishop of Coventry's long career was filled with controversial episodes, causing him to appeal to the pope on several occasions; hence, Kent's comment is sarcastic, and not expressing genuine alarm at Edward's violence against the prelate.

Gav. Let him complain unto the see of hell!
I'll be revenged on him for my exíle.

K. Edw. No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods:
Be thou lord bishop and receive his rents,

= the Bishop was notorious for his great wealth and extensive properties, whose rents, ie. income, were estimated at 5000 marks annually.[36]

And make him serve thee as thy chaplain:
I give him thee − here, use him as thou wilt.

= treat.

Gav. He shall to prison, and there die in bolts.

= shackles.[2]

K. Edw. Ay, to the Tower, the Fleet, or where thou wilt.

272: ***the Tower*** = London's dreaded Tower of London, the fortress, castle and prison, and the final address for many of England's traitors and criminals, as well as numerous unlucky royal family members.

the Fleet = one of London's notorious prisons, first built in the 11th century, eventually becoming famous as a debtor's prison.[6]

where thou wilt = "wherever you wish."

Bish. of Cov. For this offense be thou accurst of God!

= by.

K. Edw. Who's there? Convey this priest [un]to the Tower.

= Edward calls for a guard.

Bish. of Cov. True, true.

278: the exact meaning of this line has been lost to history, but Bevington[14] takes a stab at it: he suggests the bishop is ironically, and with grim humour, commenting on ***convey's*** meanings of (1) conduct, and (2) make away with, as in a theft, applying the term to himself.

K. Edw. But in the meantime, Gaveston, away,
And take possession of his house and goods.
Come, follow me, and thou shalt have my guard
To see it done, and bring thee safe again.

= ie. "go!"

= safely back (again).[6]

Gav. What should a priest do with so fair a house?
A prison may beseem his holiness.

285-6: Gaveston mocks the great wealth of the Bishop.
286: a prison is a more fitting abode for the ascetic lifestyle expected of a man of the cloth.

[*Exeunt*.]

Postscript to the life of the Bishop of Coventry**:** *as depicted here, Walter Langton was indeed arrested on his way to arrange for the internment of Edward I. The new king seized all of the Bishop's property and wealth, including 50,000 pounds of silver, and gave most of it to Gaveston.*

For the next five years, the Bishop was kept in various prisons around England, including the Tower, until he was finally freed on 23 January 1312. Langton served Edward afterwards, their break having been repaired, at least to a small degree, till his death in 1321. Langton never received back any of the great fortune that had been taken from him 14 years before.

ACT I, SCENE II.

London.

Scene II: Ellis[4] suggests "Westminster" for the setting.

Enter on one side the two Mortimers; on the other, Warwick and Lancaster.

= ie. from one side of the stage.

War. 'Tis true, the bishop 's in the Tower,
And goods and body given to Gaveston.

2: not only did Gaveston get all the bishop's property, but he was also given responsibility for the cleric's imprisonment.

given = a monosyllable here, the ***v*** essentially omitted: *gi'en*.

Gaveston appointed two brothers named Felton to be the bishop's jailers; following the Frenchman's instructions, they moved Langton "maliciously" from castle to castle, all over England.

Lanc. What! Will they tyrannize upon the church?
Ah, wicked king! accursèd Gaveston!
This ground, which is corrupted with their steps,
Shall be their timeless sepulchre or mine.

= untimely; Lancaster suggests *somebody* will suffer an early death.

Y. Mort. Well, let that peevish Frenchman guard him sure;

9: ie. "that ***Frenchman*** Gaveston better be on guard for his own life."
peevish = spiteful or hateful, or foolish.[1,6]
sure = securely.

Unless his breast be sword-proof, he shall die.

E. Mort. How now! Why droops the Earl of Lancaster?

12: Lancaster appears dejected.

Y. Mort. Wherefore is Guy of Warwick discontent?

= why.

Lanc. That villain Gaveston is made an earl.

E. Mort. An earl!

18: that a relative nobody like Gaveston has been raised to a rank equal to those of the most powerful men of the realm is an insult beyond bearing!

War. Ay, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm,
And Secretary too, and Lord of Man.

E. Mort. We may not, nor we will not suffer this.

= tolerate.

Y. Mort. Why post we not from hence to levy men?

25: "why don't we ride hastily (***post***) out of here and raise an army?"

Lanc. "My Lord of Cornwall" now at every word!

27: the chroniclers of the time wrote that by the king's command, it was forbidden to address Gaveston in any way other than by his title, "an unusual practice at that period."[36]

And happy is the man whom he vouchsafes,
For vailing of his bonnet, one good look.

= grants.[2]
29: ie. if a man removes his hat in Gaveston's presence, he gets an approving look from the Frenchman.
vailing = (removing and) lowering.
bonnet = could refer to head-wear of either sex.[11]

Thus, arm in arm, the king and he doth march:
Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits;
And all the court begins to flatter him.

= ie. Gaveston.

War. Thus leaning on the shoulder of the king,
He nods and scorns and smiles at those that pass.

E. Mort. Doth no man take exceptions at the slave?

= object to.[1]

Lanc. All stomach him, but none dares speak a word.

= resent him, or consider him with ill-will.[8]

Y. Mort. Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster!

= betrays.

Were all the earls and barons of my mind,
We'll hale him from the bosom of the king,
And at the court-gate hang the peasant up,
Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride,

42: "if all the nobles of the land thought as I do".
= usually emended to ***We'd***. = drag.

= ie. swollen.

Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

1-46: the conversation reflects the genuine feelings of the nobles at the time; Gaveston's overbearing and supercilious attitude gravely offended practically every member of the upper class who encountered him.

War. Here comes my Lord of Canterbury's grace.

Lanc. His countenance bewrays he is displeased.

= betrays, shows.

Enter the Archbishop of Canterbury and an Attendant.

Entering Character*: *Cleric and theologian ***Robert Winchelsea (d. 1313) had been elected Archbishop of Canterbury in 1292. Over the many years he held this office, he had been a champion of the rights of the clergy over the crown, and fought and reconciled numerous times with Edward I, primarily over the right of the church to refuse to fund Edward's wars. Edward finally forced the elderly prelate into exile in May of 1306.*

Staying at the papal court in Bordeaux, Winchelsea suffered a paralyzing stroke from which he never fully recovered. Edward's death in February of 1307 led to Winchelsea's recall by the new young king, but his illness kept the Archbishop from returning in time to take part in Edward's coronation.

Winchelsea quickly proved himself to be one of Gaveston's most implacable enemies, and when Gaveston was banished in the spring of 1308, the Archbishop promised Gaveston to excommunicate him should he return.

A. of Cant. First, were his sacred garments rent and torn,
Then laid they violent hands upon him; next,

54-56: the Archbishop of Canterbury describes Gaveston's treatment of the Bishop of Coventry to his Attendant.

Himself imprisoned, and his goods asseized:

= ***assize*** was a legal term describing the seizure of immovable (usually real) property; here it means simply "seized".

This certify the Pope; − away, take horse.

= "go inform the Pope."

[*Exit Attendant*.]

Lanc. My lord, will you take arms against the king?

A. of Cant. What need I? God himself is up in arms,
When violence is offered to the church.

Y. Mort. Then will you join with us, that be his peers,
To banish or behead that Gaveston?

= ***peers*** in England refers to any and all of the inherited titles of nobility - duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron - though in Edward II's time there were only earls and barons.[6]

A. of Cant. What else, my lords? For it concerns me near;
The bishopric of Coventry is his.

= ie. "of course".

70: though not historically accurate, Edward, in line 266 of Scene i, had given Walter Langton's position of Bishop of Coventry to Gaveston.

Enter Queen Isabella.

Entering Character*: *born in 1292, ***Isabella (1292-1358) was the daughter of King Philip IV (the Fair) of France. In 1298, as part of a truce arranged by the pope between the warring kings of England and France, an engagement between the child-princess and Edward I's son Edward (himself only 14 years old) was arranged; the betrothal became official in May 1303 at the conclusion of a*

		permanent peace. *When the old king died, and our Edward ascended the throne, he was still a bachelor; it was only in January of 1308, 11 months after Edward I had died, that young Edward finally crossed over to France and married Isabella at Boulogne.* *Returning with Edward to England, Isabella was crowned queen on 25 February at Westminster.* *Almost immediately, Edward II distanced himself from his new and still very young bride, neglecting her to the point that her two uncles, Charles of Valois and Louis of Evreux, who had accompanied her to England, departed the island-nation in disgust. The new king even gave all of the wedding gifts they had received from Isabella's father, Philip IV, to Gaveston.*
74	***Y. Mort.*** Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?	= to where.
76	***Q. Isab.*** Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,	= a metaphor for "away from the world".[9]
	To live in grief and baleful discontent;	= deadly, malignant.[1]
78	For now my lord the king regards me not,	
	But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.	
80	He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,	= pats.
	Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;	
82	And when I come, he frowns, as who should say,	= "as if to say".
	"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."	= "to wherever you wish".
84		
	E. Mort. Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched?	
86		
	Y. Mort. Madam, return unto the court again:	
88	That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exíle,	
	Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,	
90	The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,	
	And courage too, to be revenged at full.	
92		
	A. of Cant. But yet lift not your swords against the king.	
94		
	Lanc. No; but we will lift Gaveston from hence.	= ie. steal.[14]
96		
	War. And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.	= "or he will always (***still***) be a presence in England."
98		
	Q. Isab. Then let him stay; for rather than my lord	
100	Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies,	= tumults.[7]
	I will endure a melancholy life,	
102	And let him frolic with his miniön.	
104	***A. of Cant.*** My lords, to ease all this, but hear me speak: –	= only.[14]
	We and the rest, that are his counsellors,	
106	Will meet, and with a general consent	
	Confirm his banishment with our hands and seals.	= a disyllable: *BAN'SH-ment*.
108		
	Lanc. What we confirm the king will frustrate.	109: Lancaster is pessimistic: he expects Edward will find a way to ignore any order of the barons to banish Gaveston from England. ***frustrate*** = a tri-syllable here: *FRUS-ter-ate*.[8]
110		
	Y. Mort. Then may we lawfully revolt from him.	111: if the king refuses to enforce a law passed by a ga-

thering of nobles - ie. Parliament - says Mortimer, then the peers may legally overthrow him.

War. But say, my lord, where shall this meeting be?

A. of Cant. At the New Temple.

= the ***New Temple*** was the home of the Templars, the ancient military order founded in 1118 A.D. in Jerusalem. It was referred to as ***New*** because it was the order's second English headquarters, built in 1184. Councils and parliaments were known to meet there on occasion.

Y. Mort. Content.

117: "fine."

A. of Cant. And in the meantime, I'll entreat you all

= ask, invite.

To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.

= the ***Palace of Lambeth***, located opposite London on the south side of the Thames (hence the need to cross to get to it), was, and still is, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lanc. Come, then, let's away.

= go.

Y. Mort. Madam, farewell.

Q. Isab. Farewell, sweet Mortimer; and, for my sake, Forbear to levy arms against the king.

= this is the first of several hints in the first half of *Edward II* of a special connection between the Younger Mortimer and Queen Isabella; indeed, rumours of an affair between the pair are mentioned repeatedly by the king and his partisans.

Historically, the two probably did not even meet until 1325 when they were both on the continent; besides that, Isabella was only a teenager at this time.

Y. Mort. Ay, if words will serve; if not, I must.

129: if words alone can convince the king to separate from Gaveston, then the nobles will not rebel; but if Edward ignores them, then the nobles will have no choice but to raise their arms against him.

[*Exeunt*.]

ACT I, SCENE III.

A Street.

Enter Gaveston and Kent.

Gav. Edmund, the mighty Prince of Lancaster,

= ***Edmund*** is the given name of the Earl of Kent.

That hath more earldoms than an ass can bear,
And both the Mortimers, two goodly men,

= Gaveston is, of course, sarcastic here and in the next line.

With Guy of Warwick, that redoubted knight,

= revered or formidable.[1,2]

Are gone towards Lambeth − there let them remain.

1-5: the king and his court are aware that the nobles are planning to meet; more than one editor has noted the pointlessness of this scene.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT I, SCENE IV.

The New Temple, London.

Scene IV: while the Archbishop suggested above that the barons will meet at the New Temple, Ellis argues that the setting is more likely the king's palace at Westminster, given Edward's multiple entrances and exits in this scene. Of course, Marlowe was always careless about identifying the exact location of his scenes.

Enter Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, the Elder Mortimer, Young Mortimer, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Attendants.

Lanc. Here is the form of Gaveston's exile;
May it please your lordship to subscribe your name.

= document.[1]
= sign.

A. of Cant. Give me the paper.

[*He subscribes, as the others do after him*.]

Lanc. Quick, quick, my lord; I long to write my name.

War. But I long more to see him banished hence.

= from here.

Y. Mort. The name of Mortimer shall fright the king,
Unless he be declined from that base peasant.

= ie. turned away from.[8]

Enter King Edward, Gaveston and Kent.

15: Bevington suggests that Edward sits on a throne, and that Gaveston stands right next to him.

K. Edw. What, are you moved that Gaveston sits here?
It is our pleasure; we will have it so.

= angered. = ie. is next to him.

Lanc. Your grace doth well to place him by your side,
For nowhere else the new earl is so safe.

E. Mort. What man of noble birth can brook this sight?

= tolerate.

Quam male conveniunt!
See what a scornful look the peasant casts!

24: Latin: "how poorly they fit together," or "how ill-matched they are," referring to Edward and Gaveston.

Pemb. Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?

27: though the Earl of Pembroke has appeared previously with the disaffected nobles, this is his first line of the play.

War. Ignoble vassal, that, like Phaëton,
Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun!

29-30: the reference is to the well-known and oft referred-to story of ***Phaeton***, the son of the sun-god Helios: as an adolescent, Phaeton begged his father to let him drive the chariot that pulled the sun across the sky. After much pleading, Helios reluctantly acquiesced, but warned his son to be careful. Phaeton could not control the horses, and would have crashed onto the earth, burning it, had not Zeus killed him first with a thunderbolt.

Warwick's point is that Gaveston, like Phaeton, has taken on a role he is unqualified for, as a guide or close advisor to the king (***the sun***).

Y. Mort. Their downfall is at hand, their forces down:
We will not thus be faced and over-peered.

= defied or intimidated.[2] = scorned or condescended to,[1] with perhaps a weak pun on ***peer***.

K. Edw. Lay hands [up]on that traitor Mortimer!

E. Mort. Lay hands [up]on that traitor Gaveston!

37: several of the Attendants seize Gaveston; Edward's

Kent. Is this the duty that you owe your king?

War. We know our duties − let him know his peers.

K. Edw. Whither will you bear him? Stay, or ye shall die.

E. Mort. We are no traitors; therefore threaten not.

Gav. No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them home.
Were I a king −

Y. Mort. Thou villain, wherefore talk'st thou of a king,
That hardly art a gentleman by birth?

K. Edw. Were he a peasant, being my miniön,
I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him.

Lanc. My lord, you may not thus disparage us. −
Away, I say, with hateful Gaveston!

E. Mort. And with the Earl of Kent that favours him.

[*Attendants remove Kent and Gaveston.*]

K. Edw. Nay, then, lay violent hands upon your king!
Here, Mortimer, sit thou in Edward's throne:
Warwick and Lancaster, wear you my crown.
Was ever king thus over-ruled as I?

Lanc. Learn then to rule us better, and the realm.

Y. Mort. What we have done, our heart-blood shall maintain.

War. Think you that we can brook this upstart[’s] pride?

K. Edw. Anger and wrathful fury stops my speech.

A. of Cant. Why are you moved? Be patiënt, my lord,
And see what we your counsellors have done.

Y. Mort. My lords, now let us all be resolute,
And either have our wills, or lose our lives.

K. Edw. Meet you for this, proud overdaring peers?

Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,

order is ignored.

= to where. = stop. = plural form of "you".

= "pay them back," ie. "punish them as they deserve."[1]

= why.

51: as noted before, in a land as class-conscious as was England, the nobles were naturally outraged that Gaveston, the son of a French knight, has been given a title to match their own; Mortimer's point is that Gaveston is barely (***hardly***)[1] a gentleman, a rank below that of noble.

= bow down.

= dishonour or vilify.[1,3]
= detestable.[1]

59: for the first time, resentment against the king's brother Edmund is expressed.

63-66: Edward, weak, easily gives in to despondency.

64-65: compare these lines to Scene XXII.82 of Marlowe's *The Massacre of Paris*, in which King Henry of France complains to the Duke of Guise, "Guise, wear our crown, and be thou King of France". A close study of Marlowe's works reveals that he reused ideas, expression, and even whole phrases repeatedly across his plays and poems.

= the sense is, "we will uphold with our blood if necessary". ***heart-blood*** = blood of the heart, understood to be the vital force that gives a being life

= put up with.

= "leaves me speechless".

= angry.

79-80: Mortimer admonishes his fellows: if they fail to stick together, or if they back down now, they will likely be hanged as traitors.

= "is this why you meet". = foolhardy in their daring.[1]
As easily as he fell into despair, Edward regains his fortitude.

= before.

This isle shall fleet upon the ocean,

= float.

And wander to the unfrequented Inde.

85: ***unfrequented*** = the stresses fall on the first and third syllables.

Inde = the Indian Ocean; several works of the 1580's refer to the ***sea of Inde***.

A. of Cant. You know that I am legate to the Pope;

87-89: the archbishop issues a thinly-veiled threat to the king.

On your allegiance to the see of Rome,
Subscribe, as we have done, to his exíle.

87-89: Throughout pre-Reformation English history, indeed throughout most of the history of the Catholic church, European sovereigns struggled to keep complete authority to do as they pleased, even as they acknowledged the pope to be the leader, at least in spiritual matters, of the western world.

The problem, of course, was that the pope, and through him his locally-placed bishops, frequently understood their moral authority to extend to political questions, and so a king or queen's governing wishes often clashed with the will of the church.

The pope, at least until the Reformation in England, ultimately held the upper hand, however, as he had in his possession, and frequently exercised, his overarching power to excommunicate monarchs (and in extreme cases could impose an interdict, as occurred under the reign of King John, in which the entire population of England was banned from receiving any of the sacraments - excepting baptism, confession and last rites - or receiving a Christian burial).[13]

Y. Mort. Curse him, if he refuse; and then may we
Depose him and elect another king.

= excommunicate.[7]

K. Edw. Ay, there it goes! But yet I will not yield:
Curse me, depose me, do the worst you can.

Lanc. Then linger not, my lord, but do it straight.

= ie. "sign this right now."

A. of Cant. Remember how the bishop was abused!
Either banish him that was the cause thereof,
Or I will presently discharge these lords
Of duty and allegiance due to thee.

101-102: perhaps the most terrifying power (at least from a monarch's perspective) claimed to be possessed by the church was its ability to release a nation's subjects from duty and loyalty to their sovereign.

In 1570, for example, as part of the church's program to reclaim England for the mother church, Pope Pius V issued a papal bull in which he not only excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, but also declared "the nobles, subjects and people of the said realm and all others who have in any way sworn oaths to her, to be forever absolved from such an oath and from any duty arising from lordship. fealty and obedience."[30]

K. Edw. [*Aside*] It boots me not to threat; I must speak fair:
The legate of the Pope will be obeyed. −

= "is useless for me"

105: Edward recognizes the that neither the archbishop nor the nobles are bluffing.

My lord, you shall be Chancellor of the realm;
Thou, Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet;
Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls;

106*f*: the king tries to bribe the nobles with high offices, if only they will allow Gaveston to remain in England.

And you, lord Warwick, President of the North;
And thou of Wales. If this content you not,
Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,
= separate.
And share it equally amongst you all,
So I may have some nook or corner left,
= a predecessor to "nook and cranny".[1]
To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.

A. of Cant. Nothing shall alter us − we are resolved.

Lanc. Come, come, subscribe.
= "sign!"

Y. Mort. Why should you love him whom the world hates so?

K. Edw. Because he loves me more than all the world.
Ah, none but rude and savage-minded men
Would seek the ruin of my Gaveston;
You that be noble-born should pity him.

War. You that are princely-born should shake him off:
For shame subscribe, and let the lown depart.
= scoundrel.[38]

E. Mort. Urge him, my lord.

A. of Cant. Are you content to banish him the realm?
= ie. from the.

K. Edw. I see I must, and therefore am content:
Instead of ink, I'll write it with my tears.

[*Subscribes.*]

137: Gaveston's banishment was announced by Edward on 18 May 1308.

Y. Mort. The king is love-sick for his miniön.

K. Edw. 'Tis done − and now, accursèd hand, fall off!

Lanc. Give it me − I'll have it published in the streets.
= the proclamation, not Edward's hand! = proclaimed.

Y. Mort. I'll see him presently despatched away.
= immediately.

A. of Cant. Now is my heart at ease.

War. And so is mine.

Pemb. This will be good news to the common sort.

E. Mort. Be it or no, he shall not linger here.
= "whether it is or isn't".

[*Exeunt all except King Edward.*]

K. Edw. How fast they run to banish him I love!
They would not stir, were it to do me good.
= the modern equivalent would be "they would not lift a finger".
Why should a king be subject to a priest?
= contemptuous term for the archbishop.

Proud Rome! that hatchest such imperial grooms,

160: ***Rome*** = ie. the Catholic church and its representatives.
imperial = ie. imperious.
grooms = servants (meant insultingly, as in "lowly

household servants").

With these thy superstitious taper-lights,

161: ***superstitious*** = contemptuous term commonly used to describe those Catholic works, objects and practices which Protestants found objectionable.
taper-lights = candles.

Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,

162: ***Wherewith*** = with which.
antichristian churches = in Elizabethan times, as it was illegal to practice Catholicism, such questioning of the legitimacy of the entire Catholic church was encouraged.

I'll fire thy crazèd buildings, and enforce
The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground!

163: ***fire*** = burn.
crazed = corrupt or ruined.[1,3]
163-4: ***enforce…ground!*** = metaphor for reducing the Catholic churches to ashes.

162-4: compare these lines to Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*, Scene XXVI.105-111:
Tell her, for all this...
...the papal monarch goes
To wrack, and [th'] antichristian kingdom falls:
...
I'll fire his crazèd buildings, and enforce
The papal towers to kiss the holy earth.

With slaughtered priests may Tiber's channel swell,
And banks raised higher with their sepulchres!

= often emended to ***make***. = Rome's primary river.

As for the peers, that back the clergy thus,
If I be king, not one of them shall live.

= "am really a".

Re-enter Gaveston.

170*ff*: here we see a good example of the playwright's tactic known as *Compression of Time*: in the brief time it took Edward to speak his 12-line soliloquy, the audience subconsciously allows for what must have been a significant period of real time to have passed, sufficient for the spreading of the news of Gaveston's exile to have taken place.
The technique is an excellent one for speeding up the pace of the play and increasing dramatic tension.

Gav. My Lord, I hear it whispered everywhere,
That I am banished and must fly the land.

K. Edw. 'Tis true, sweet Gaveston – O! were it false!

= ie. "if only it were".

The legate of the Pope will have it so,
And thou must hence, or I shall be deposed.

= ie. "must go from here".

But I will reign to be revenged of them;

= on.

And therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.
Live where thou wilt, I'll send thee gold enough;

180: thanks to Edward's generosity (and Gaveston's own amassing of wealth during his time in England), Gaveston never suffered financially during his periods of exile.

And long thou shall not stay, or if thou dost,

= ie. remain away from England.

I'll come to thee; my love shall ne'er decline.

= literally, "turn away from your direction."

Gav. Is all my hope turned to this hell of grief?

K. Edw. Rend not my heart with thy too-piercing words:

Thou from this land, I from myself am banished.

187: "if you are sent out of England, it will be as if I am banished from myself;" as noted earlier, in Elizabethan drama, a bosom friend was frequently described as a "second self".

Gav. To go from hence grieves not poor Gaveston;
But to forsake you, in whose gracious looks
The blessedness of Gaveston remains:
For nowhere else seeks he felicity.

= happiness.

K. Edw. And only this torments my wretched soul,
That, whether I will or no, thou must depart.

= common elliptical phrase (ie. one with omitted words), meaning "whether I desire it or not".[1]

Be Governor of Ireland in my stead,
And there abide till fortune call thee home.
Here take my picture, and let me wear thine;

196-7: as a way to at least partially frustrate the intended effect of Gaveston's exile, Edward actually did send his favourite to be lieutenant, or governor, of Ireland, where interestingly, he served successfully, reducing tensions and rebuilding fortresses, and the like.

[*They exchange pictures*.]

O, might I keep thee here as I do this,
Happy were I! but now most miserable!

= "would I be".

Gav. 'Tis something to be pitied of a king.

= by.

K. Edw. Thou shalt not hence − I'll hide thee, Gaveston.

= go.

Gav. I shall be found, and then 'twill grieve me more.

K. Edw. Kind words and mutual talk makes our grief greater:
Therefore, with dumb embracement, let us part −
Stay, Gaveston, I cannot leave thee thus.

= silent.
= "don't go yet".

Gav. For every look, my lord drops down a tear:
Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow.

= the quartos print ***lord***, but many editors emend it to ***love***.

K. Edw. The time is little that thou hast to stay,
And, therefore, give me leave to look my fill:
But, come, sweet friend, I'll bear thee on thy way.

218: Gaveston was actually given until 25 June - a full month - to leave England.

Gav. The peers will frown.

K. Edw. I pass not for their anger − Come, let's go;
O that we might as well return as go!

= care.

Enter Queen Isabella.

227: the quartos have Kent entering with the queen, but since he has no role in the scene, most editors omit him.

Q. Isab. Whither goes my lord?

K. Edw. Fawn not on me, French strumpet! get thee gone!

= whore; interestingly, Marlowe gives Edward here an ahistorical reason (other than his attraction to Gaveston) to explain his turning away from the queen - her suspected affair with Mortimer.

Q. Isab. On whom but on my husband should I fawn?

Gav. On Mortimer! with whom, ungentle queen −

I say no more − judge you the rest, my lord.

Q. Isab. In saying this, thou wrong'st me, Gaveston:
Is't not enough that thou corrupt'st my lord,
And art a bawd to his affectiöns,
But thou must call mine honour thus in question?

Gav. I mean not so; your grace must pardon me.

K. Edw. Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,
And by thy means is Gaveston exiled;
But I would wish thee reconcile the lords,
Or thou shalt ne'er be reconciled to me.

Q. Isab. Your highness knows it lies not in my power.

K. Edw. Away, then! touch me not − Come, Gaveston.

Q. Isab. Villain! 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord.

Gav. Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord.

K. Edw. Speak not unto her; let her droop and pine.

Q. Isab. Wherein, my lord, have I deserved these words?
Witness the tears that Isabella sheds,
Witness this heart, that sighing for thee, breaks,
How dear my lord is to poor Isabel!

K. Edw. And witness Heaven how dear thou art to me:

There weep: for till my Gaveston be repealed,
Assure thyself thou com'st not in my sight.

[*Exeunt Edward and Gaveston.*]

Q. Isab. O miserable and distressèd queen!
Would, when I left sweet France and was embarked,
That charming Circes, walking on the waves,
Had changed my shape, or at the marriage-day

The cup of Hymen had been full of poison,

Or with those arms that twined about my neck
I had been stifled, and not lived to see
The king my lord thus to abandon me!

240: ***a bawd*** = ie. one who ministers to the king's lust.
affections = inclinations.

246: as a matter of history, Isabella was only in her mid-teens during the Gaveston years, and played no role in either his presence in or banishment from England.

256: ie. by (allegedly) being the cause of his exile.

= languish, be dejected. = waste away with suffering.[1]

260: "what have I done to deserve these words from you?"

265: Edward is cruelly sarcastic: he may even put an arm around Gaveston as he speaks this line.
Heaven is normally pronounced as a one-syllable word, the ***v*** essentially omitted: *Hea'n*.

266: ***Gaveston*** = occasionally, as here, a disyllable: perhaps pronounced as *Gav's-ton*.
repealed = recalled, ie. his order of exile rescinded.

273-4: ***Circes***, or ***Circe***, was an enchantress who famously turned Odysseus' men into swine after feeding them food laced with magic potions in Book X of the *Odyssey*. The episode alluded to here is from Book XIV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which Circe, in love with the sea-god Glaucus, ***walks across water*** on her way to changing her rival for Glaucus' affection, the beautiful sea-nymph Scylla, into a monster.
Charming is thus meant literally, in the sense of one who employs charms.

= ***Hymen*** was the god of marriage; the reference is to a wedding toast.

= suffocated or strangled.[1]
277-8: note the rhyming couplet.

Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth
With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries;
For never doted Jove on Ganymede
So much as he on cursèd Gaveston:

279-282: Isabella compares herself to ***Juno***, the queen of the gods, whose own husband Jupiter (***Jove***) frequently sought affection in the arms of others, usually to her great anger or dismay; ***Ganymede*** was a Trojan prince whom Jove so admired for his beauty that he carried him off to Mt. Olympus to serve as the cup-bearer of the gods.

Note that Isabella has searingly employed a simile of intra-male love to which to compare Edward's affection for Gaveston.

But that will more exasperate his wrath;
I must entreat him, I must speak him fair,
And be a means to call home Gaveston:
And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston;
And so am I for ever miserable.

Re-enter Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, the Elder Mortimer and Young Mortimer.

Lanc. Look where the sister of the king of France
Sits wringing of her hands, and beats her breast!

War. The king, I fear, hath ill-entreated her. = ie. ill-treated.

Pemb. Hard is the heart that injures such a saint.

Y. Mort. I know 'tis ‘long of Gaveston she weeps. = on account of.[2]

E. Mort. Why? he is gone.

Y. Mort. Madam, how fares your grace?

Q. Isab. Ah, Mortimer! now breaks the king's hate forth,
And he confesseth that he loves me not.

Y. Mort. Cry quittance, madam, then, and love not him. = "get even with him", or "give him the same treatment".

Q. Isab. No, rather will I die a thousand deaths:
And yet I love in vain; − he'll ne'er love me.

Lanc. Fear ye not, madam; now his minion's gone,
His wanton humour will be quickly left. = capricious or self-indulgent frame of mind.[1,2]

Q. Isab. O, never, Lancaster! I am enjoined = "being forced".
To sue unto you all for his repeal: = beg or entreat. = recall.
This wills my lord, and this must I perform, = "this is what the king commands".
Or else be banished from his highness' presence.

Lanc. For his repeal, madam! he comes not back,
Unless the sea cast up his shipwrack[ed] body.

War. And to behold so sweet a sight as that,
There's none here but would run his horse to death. = ie. "who would not".

Y. Mort. But, madam, would you have us call him home?

Q. Isab. Ay, Mortimer, for till he be restored,
The angry king hath banished me the court; = from the.

And, therefore, as thou lov'st and tender'st me,
Be thou my advocate unto these peers.

Y. Mort. What! would you have me plead for Gaveston?

E. Mort. Plead for him he that will, I am resolved.

Lanc. And so am I, my lord: dissuade the queen.

Q. Isab. O, Lancaster! let him dissuade the king,
For 'tis against my will he should return.

War. Then speak not for him, let the peasant go.

Q. Isab. 'Tis for myself I speak, and not for him.

Pemb. No speaking will prevail; and therefore cease.

Y. Mort. Fair queen, forbear to angle for the fish
Which, being caught, strikes him that takes it dead;
I mean that vile torpedo, Gaveston,
That now, I hope, floats on the Irish seas.

Q. Isab. Sweet Mortimer, sit down by me a while,
And I will tell thee reasons of such weight
As thou wilt soon subscribe to his repeal.

Y. Mort. It is impossible; but speak your mind.

Q. Isab. Then thus; but none shall hear it but ourselves.

[*Talks to Young Mortimer apart*.]

Lanc. My lords, albeit the queen win Mortimer,
Will you be resolute, and hold with me?

E. Mort. Not I, against my nephew.

Pemb. Fear not; the queen's words cannot alter him.

War. No? Do but mark how earnestly she pleads!

Lanc. And see how coldly his looks make denial!

War. She smiles; now, for my life, his mind is changed!

Lanc. I'll rather lose his friendship, I, than grant.

Y. Mort. Well, of necessity it must be so. −
My lords, that I abhor base Gaveston,
I hope your honours make no questiön,
And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,
'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail;
Nay, for the realm's behoof, and for the king's.

= cares for or esteems; while Mortimer and Isabella may not be carrying on an affair as yet, the line is suggestive of a connection between them.

336: "I don't care if anyone else pleads with me to recall Gaveston, my mind is firmly made up against it."

= ie. avail.[8]

= fish.
= "kills him who catches it."
= ***torpedo*** is an ancient name for the electric ray; it was believed in antiquity to have the ability to electrocute anyone who touched it with a rod or stick.

352: ie. who is now on a ship heading to Ireland.

= gravity.

364: "even if Isabella can convince Mortimer to take her side".

= observe.

= an oath.

= consent.[1]

= advantage.
= benefit.

Lanc. Fie, Mortimer, dishonour not thyself!
Can this be true, 'twas good to banish him?
And is this true, to call him home again?
Such reasons make white black, and dark night day.

= "for shame!"

Y. Mort. My lord of Lancaster, mark the respect.

= "consider the special circumstances".[1,3]

Lanc. In no respect can contraries be true.

393: ie. it cannot be beneficial to both banish and recall Gaveston.

Q. Isab. Yet, good my lord, hear what he can allege.

395: ***good my lord*** = common inversion, meaning "my good lord".
allege = "offer as a reason."[1]

War. All that he speaks is nothing; we are resolved.

Y. Mort. Do you not wish that Gaveston were dead?

Pemb. I would he were!

= wish.

Y. Mort. Why then, my lord, give me but leave to speak.

= permission.

E. Mort. But, nephew, do not play the sophister.

= one who makes superficially convincing, but actually deceptive, arguments. In antiquity, professional sophists taught their students how to make logical arguments that could prove even the most absurd points. Such teachers were, unsurprisingly, frequently derided.

Y. Mort. This which I urge is of a burning zeal
To mend the king and do our country good.
Know you not Gaveston hath store of gold,
Which may in Ireland purchase him such friends
As he will front the mightiest of us all?

= comes from.
= put right.
= an abundance.
= confront; Mortimer suggests Gaveston has enough wealth to raise his own army, one large enough to challenge any of the nobles.

And whereas he shall live and be beloved,
'Tis hard for us to work his overthrow.

= wherever.[8]

War. Mark you but that, my lord of Lancaster.

= consider; Warwick is being persuaded after all.

Y. Mort. But were he here, detested as he is,
How easily might some base slave be suborned
To greet his lordship with a poniard,

= bribed or persuaded.
= dagger.

And none so much as blame the murtherer,

= ie. murderer; ***murder*** is sometimes spelled ***murther*** in the quarto, but not consistently (the same goes for ***murdered*** / ***murthered***, etc.). We follow the quarto's spelling in each case.

But rather praise him for that brave attempt,

= excellent undertaking; Briggs[6] points out that an Elizabethan audience would not have found assassination as distasteful as a modern theatre-goer would (p. 127).

And in the chronicle enroll his name
For purging of the realm of such a plague!

= history books; London at this time had an official civic position known as the *Chronologer of the City of London*, whose job it was to record the happenings of the city for posterity. The playwright Thomas Middleton even held the paid post in the 1620's (Taylor, p. 45).[15]

Pemb. He saith true.

Lanc. Ay, but how chance this was not done before?

= ie. "did it happen that".

Y. Mort. Because, my lords, it was not thought upon.
Nay, more, when he shall know it lies in us
To banish him, and then to call him home,
'Twill make him vail the top-flag of his pride,

431-2: Mortimer suggests that the combined act of banishing and then recalling Gaveston will humble him enough to convince him to give up his arrogant behaviour.
vail the top-flag = a nautical metaphor: a ship might lower (***vail***) a sail in a show of respect to another.

And fear t' offend the meanest nobleman.

= ie. "even the basest".

E. Mort. But how if he do not, nephew?

= ie. "what". = ie. modify his behaviour.

Y. Mort. Then may we with some colour rise in arms;

437: "then this will give us a pretext (***colour***) to rise in rebellion."

For howsoever we have borne it out,
Tis treason to be up against the king;

= Bevington suggests "argue our position".
= ie. up in arms.[14]

So shall we have the people of our side,
Which for his father's sake lean to the king,
But cannot brook a night-grown mushrump,

440-2: the people, in their present mood, are, out of love for Edward I, sympathetic to his son the present king; but when Gaveston returns, he can be expected to behave so offensively, that the masses will turn against Edward, thus making the barons' task easier.
brook = tolerate.
mushrump = alternate from of ***mushroom***, commonly used to describe one who has risen quickly, and usually undeservedly, in status; ***mushrump*** is likely tri-syllabic here: *MUSH-e-rump*.[10]

Such a one as my lord of Cornwall is,

= Mortimer sarcastically names Gaveston by his undeserved title.[14]

Should bear us down of the nobility.

= "vanquish us", or "go up against us."[1]

And when the commons and the nobles join,
'Tis not the king can buckler Gaveston;

= act together.
446: "even the king will not be able to protect (***buckler***) Gaveston."

We'll pull him from the strongest hold he hath.
My lords, if to perform this I be slack,
Think me as base a groom as Gaveston.

= castle.
= "as low a creature".

Lanc. On that condition, Lancaster will grant.

War. And so will Pembroke and I.

453: feeling Warwick's acceptance on behalf of Pembroke is presumptuous, some editors split line 453 into two speeches:
Pemb. *And so will Pembroke.*
War. *And I.*

E. Mort. And I.

Y. Mort. In this I count me highly gratified,
And Mortimer will rest at your command.

457-8: *our Younger Mortimer is* ***Roger Mortimer, eighth Baron of Wigmore*** *and* ***first Earl of March*** *(1287?-1330), and nephew of the Elder Mortimer. When Roger's father died in 1304, Edward I actually appointed Gaveston to be Roger's guardian! Roger and his uncle spent the early years*

of Edward II's reign administering their enormous properties along the Welsh border region and in Ireland.

Q. Isab. And when this favour Isabel forgets,
Then let her live abandoned and forlorn. –
But see, in happy time, my lord the king,
Having brought the Earl of Cornwall on his way,

Is new returned; this news will glad him much;

Yet not so much as me; I love him more
Than he can Gaveston; would he loved me
But half so much, then were I treble-blessed!

= "by luck".[14]

463: ie. the king accompanied Gaveston to his point of departure.

= "gladden"; this use of ***glad*** as a verb was common through the 19th century, and may even predate ***glad's*** use as an adjective.[1]

= triple-blessed; ***treble***, or ***triple***, was a common intensifier.

Edward's Return: note the Compression of Time employed in the scene; in the time it took to act out the last 200 lines, the king has escorted Gaveston to his port of departure (historically the city of Bristol, about 100 miles from London), and returned to the Palace.

Re-enter King Edward, mourning.

= ie. obviously grieving, perhaps wearing mourning clothing.[14]

K. Edw. He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.
Did never sorrow go so near my heart
As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;
And, could my crown's revénue bring him back,
I would freely give it to his enemies,
And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.

= absence.

= in this era, ***revenue*** was often stressed on its second syllable.

Q. Isab. Hark, how he harps upon his miniön!

= listen.

K. Edw. My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,

= the one-eyed giants were imagined to work as assistants to the smith-god Vulcan, hammering out lightning bolts for Jupiter.

And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah! had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,

= turns upside-down, ie. upsets.[1] = dizzy.[1]

484: ***had*** = if only.
bloodless Fury = the ***Furies*** were goddesses who tormented those guilty of certain egregious crimes as a means of punishing them. They are ***bloodless*** in the sense that they are incorporeal spirits.

And with my kingly sceptre strook me dead,
When I was forced to leave my Gaveston!

= alternate form of ***struck***.

Lanc. *Diablo!* What passions call you these?

= "the Devil!"

Q. Isab. My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.

K. Edw. That you have parlèd with your Mortimer!

= spoken; the root verb is ***parle***, not "parley", though the meanings are identical.

Q. Isab. That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repealed.

= recalled.

K. Edw. Repealed! The news is too sweet to be true!

Q. Isab. But will you love me, if you find it so?

K. Edw. If it be so, what will not Edward do?

Q. Isab. For Gaveston, but not for Isabel.

K. Edw. For thee, fair queen, if thou lovest Gaveston;
I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck,
Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success.

= ie. a necklace or pendant displaying a symbolic charm in the shape of a tongue.

Q. Isab. No other jewèls hang about my neck
Than these, my lord; nor let me have more wealth
Than I may fetch from this rich treasury. −
O, how a kiss revives poor Isabel!

= presumably referring to Edward's arms, which he likely has thrown about Isabella's neck in ecstatic gratitude.

511: a kiss likely accompanies the embrace.

K. Edw. Once more receive my hand; and let this be
A second marriage 'twixt thyself and me.

Q. Isab. And may it prove more happy than the first!
My gentle lord, bespeak these nobles fair,
That wait attendance for a gracious look,
And on their knees salute your majesty.

= "address these nobles amiably".

518: ***That wait attendance*** = ie. "who wait in attendance".[1]
gracious look = kindly or benevolent look (from Edward).[1]

K. Edw. Courageous Lancaster, embrace thy king!
And, as gross vapours perish by the sun,
Even so let hatred with thy sovereign's smile.
Live thou with me as my companiön.

= thick mists or fogs.[1]
= ie. "so let hatred between us also perish".

Lanc. This salutation overjoys my heart.

K. Edw. Warwick shall be my chiefest counselor:
These silver hairs will more adorn my court
Than gaudy silks, or rich imbrothery.
Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.

= Briggs calls this a "double superlative" (p. 127).[6]

= Edward refers to Warwick's ***silver hairs***, though he may only have been in his 40's at the time.
= embroidery, an occasionally-used alternate form.

War. Slay me, my lord, when I offend your grace.

K. Edw. In solemn triumphs and in public shows,
Pembroke shall bear the sword before the king.

= pageants or spectacles.[1]

Pemb. And with this sword Pembroke will fight for you.

K. Edw. But wherefore walks young Mortimer aside?
Be thou commander of our royal fleet;
Or, if that lofty office like thee not,
I make thee here Lord Marshal of the realm.

= why.
= pleases.
= a high office, commander of the armies. *As a matter of history, the title and position of Lord Marshal was hereditary, belonging to the Marshall family, and was never held by Mortimer.*

Y. Mort. My lord, I'll marshal so your enemies,
As England shall be quiet, and you safe.

= "lead" or "conduct", but Mortimer means ***marshal*** as a humorous substitute for "militarily crush".

K. Edw. And as for you, Lord Mortimer of Chirke,

= ***Roger Mortimer, Lord of Chirk*** *(1256?-1326), our Elder Mortimer, was one of the leading magnates of the marches, or borderlands, between England and Wales. The senior Mortimer fought in many of campaigns of Edward I, and*

when Edward II ascended the throne, he entrusted Mortimer with all the royal castles in Wales. With a weak monarch on the English throne, Mortimer ruled all of Wales "like a king" from 1307-1321, with the assistance of his nephew, our Young Mortimer.

***Chirk** is just across the English border in Wales.*

Whose great achievements in our foreign war
Deserves no common place, nor mean reward,

550: ie. "have earned you a special office or position, or notable reward".

Be you the general of the levied troops,
That now are ready to assail the Scots.

551-2: *the reference is to the historical appointment of the Younger (not the Elder) Mortimer as warden and lieutenant of Ireland in 1316, in which role he travelled to Ireland and defeated the armies of the Scottish, who had invaded the Emerald Isle in 1315 as part of what they hoped might become a general Celtic uprising against the English - or as a launching pad to an invasion of western England.*

E. Mort. In this your grace hath highly honoured me,
For with my nature war doth best agree.

Q. Isab. Now is the king of England rich and strong,
Having the love of his renownèd peers.

K. Edw. Ay, Isabel, ne'er was my heart so light. −
Clark of the crown, direct our warrant forth
For Gaveston, to Ireland:

561: ***Clark of the crown*** = the position of ***Clark*** (or Clerk) ***of the Crown*** in Chancery was not created until 1331, during the reign of Edward III.

warrant = a written order, here authorizing Gaveston to return to England.

Enter Beaumont with warrant.

Entering Character: ***Beaumont*** is apparently one Lord Henry de Beaumont, identified in the chronicles as a supporter of the king, at least until 1323.[6] *No Beaumont was ever appointed to the position of Clerk of the Court.*[16]

Beaumont fly,

= ie. "go quickly".

As fast as Iris or Jove's Mercury.

567: the references are to the famous messengers of the gods; ***Iris***, most well-known as the goddess of the rainbow, served Juno, the queen of the gods, while ***Mercury*** served Jove, the king. In the *Iliad*, Homer describes Iris as "swift-footed as the wind",[17a] and Hermes (the Greek name for Mercury) as "swift as the gale over the ocean waves and boundless earth".[17b]

Beau. It shall be done, my gracious lord.

[*Exit Beaumont.*]

K. Edw. Lord Mortimer, we leave you to your charge. = office or duty.
Now let us in, and feast it royally. = "let us go in".
Against our friend the Earl of Cornwall comes, = in preparation for.
We'll have a general tilt and tournament; = jousting.
And then his marriage shall be solemnized;
For wot you not that I have made him sure = know. = "engaged him to be married"
Unto our cousin, the Earl of Gloucester's heir?

577-9: Edward means his niece Margaret. *As a matter of history, Gaveston married Margaret the year of Edward's ascension to the throne, 1307.*

Lanc. Such news we hear, my lord.

K. Edw. That day, if not for him, yet for my sake,
Who in the triumph will be challenger,
Spare for no cost; we will requite your love.

583-5: "on the day of the tournament (***triumph***), in which Gaveston, for whom I know you don't want to do anything, intends to be the challenger, please, for my sake, spare no expense to make the program successful, and I will repay your efforts!" (Bevington, p. 147).[14]

War. In this, or aught your highness shall command us.

= anything.

K. Edw. Thanks, gentle Warwick. Come, let's in and revel.

= common adjective used to signal kindly feelings or affection to the addressee.

[*Exeunt all except the Mortimers.*]

The Wallingford Tournament of 1307: *late in this year, Gaveston sponsored a tournament to celebrate his marriage to Margaret, and perhaps to ingratiate himself a bit with the nobles. In the early 14th century, the main event was what was called a* ***melee****, in which two teams of knights charged at each other, trying to unhorse their opponents, and then continuing to fight on foot as necessary.*

Unfortunately, Gaveston's team, which was made up of younger knights, appears to have decisively defeated their higher-ranking and older opponents, which only served to increase the barons' antipathy towards the Frenchman (Warner, The Tournament of Wallingford, 1307).[31]

E. Mort. Nephew, I must to Scotland: thou stayest here.
Leave now t' oppose thyself against the king:
Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,
And, seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,
Let him without controlment have his will.

= cease.

= restraint. = "do as he pleases."

The mightiest kings have had their miniöns:

600-3: Mortimer alludes to a number of rulers who have had close male friends, the relationships often considered to cross the line into homosexuality.

Great Alexander loved Hephaestiön,

599: ***Hephestion*** was ***Alexander the Great's*** lifelong friend and greatest subordinate general.

The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept,

600: we have already met ***Hylas*** in line 196 of the play's opening scene.

And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.

601: after ***Achilles*** withdrew from the fighting against the Trojans, he could usually be found lounging with his bosom-buddy ***Patroklos***. It was only after Hector slew Patroklos that the enraged Achilles rejoined the fight, leading to the climactic events of the *Iliad*.

And not kings only, but the wisest men:
The Roman Tully loved Octavius;

603: ***Tully*** is Cicero, the famous Roman orator. Cicero supported Julius Caesar's great-nephew ***Octavian***, who called Cicero "father", in the wars against Mark Antony, in the period after the assassination of Caesar; unfortunately, when the second triumvirate was formed between Octavian, Antony and Lepidus, Octavian allowed Cicero to be included on the list of proscribed individuals, and he was accordingly killed on 7 December 43 B.C.[35]

Grave Socrates wild Alcibiades.

604: ***Alcibiades*** was the greatest, and most controversial, of Athens' generals, in the 5th century B.C. He had been a student of ***Socrates***, and the two fought together in the Peloponnesian War, each supposedly having saved the life

		of the other at some point.[35]
	Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,	= ie. the king. = easily molded or guided, complaisant.[1]
606	And promiseth as much as we can wish,	
	Freely enjoy that vain lightheaded earl;	
608	For riper years will wean him from such toys.	608: "when he is older, he will no longer occupy himself with such trifles (***toys***)."
610	***Y. Mort.*** Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me;	= frivolous or lewd inclinations.
	But this I scorn, that one so basely born	= ie. Gaveston.
612	Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert,	= impertinent.
	And riot it with the treasure of the realm,	= ie. "and dissipate the kingdom's wealth through his extravagance".
614	While soldiers mutiny for want of pay.	= lack.
	He wears a lord's revénue on his back,	615: Gaveston's clothes cost more than a wealthy noble could expect to earn in rent from his lands; the desire to wear the extravagant fashions favoured by the Elizabethans led more than one man to sell his lands so that he could afford to be stylish.[6]
616	And, Midas-like, he jets it in the court,	616: ***Midas-like*** = allusion to the proud mythical king whose touch turned everything, including his wardrobe, to gold. ***jets it*** = struts.
	With base outlandish cullions at his heels,	617: foreign rogues, referring to the sycophantic retinue which follows Gaveston around.[8] Briggs notes that the English nobility, which still spoke French in the 14th century, would not have likely felt the same bias against foreigners as the later Elizabethans did.[6]
618	Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show,	= uniforms or outfits.
	As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.	= famous "old man of the sea", a sea-god who famously could change himself into any shape or form, especially when a human tried to restrain him.
620	I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk;	620: "I have never seen any knave (***Jack***) so finely dressed (***brisk***)[2];" ***dapper*** is used contemptuously here.
	He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,	621-3: the Elizabethans frequently mocked the continental fashions affected by courtiers.
622	Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap	= lined.[1]
	A jewèl of more value than the crown.	
624	Whiles other walk below, the king and he	= usually emended to the later quartos' ***while others***.
	From out a window laugh at such as we,	
626	And flout our train, and jest at our attire.	= "mock our retinues".
	Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.	= irate;[2] *Mortimer's complaints seem to be historically*
628		*accurate: though Gaveston had proven himself to be a good soldier and skilled servant of England, his impossibly overbearing attitude was the ultimate cause of his downfall. More than one commentator has written that, if only Gaveston had made an effort to win the favour of the nobles, the lives of both he and the king would more likely have been spared.*
	E. Mort. But, nephew, now you see the king is changed.	
630		

Y. Mort. Then so am I, and live to do him service:
But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,
I will not yield to any such upstart.
You know my mind: come, uncle, let's away.

[*Exeunt.*]

632-3: the scene essentially ends, as was often the case in Elizabethan drama, with a rhyming couplet.

636: the Elder Mortimer makes no further appearances in our play; *however, the real Lord of Chirk went on to fight at Bannockburn in 1314, in Scotland again in 1319 and 1320, and also fought with his nephew in the Despenser Wars of 1321-2.*

Gaveston's 1309 Return from Exile: *the king deserves much actual credit for engineering the return of his favourite after Gaveston was forced out of England in mid-1308. Edward successfully pursued a strategy of winning over his noble opponents one at a time, by doing them favours and bestowing gifts on them.*

For example, Edward: (1) confirmed the Earl of Gloucester's inheritance of the stewardship of England; (2) sided with the Archbishop of Canterbury in a dispute with the Florentine Frescobaldi family; and (3) gave Scarborough Castle as a gift to Henry Percy (who does not appear in our play).

Edward also dismissed several of his disliked counselors, and convinced the pope to drop the church's threat to excommunicate Gaveston should he return to England.

Gaveston arrived home in July 1309, when he was received by Edward at Chester in western England (Hutchison, p. 62-63).[5]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A hall in the Earl of Gloucester's mansion.

Scene I: the Earl of Gloucester has just died.

Enter Young Spenser and Baldock.

Entering Characters: ***Young Spenser*** is ***Hugh le Despenser, the younger***, a baron who is portrayed here as a retainer of the just-deceased Earl of Gloucester. ***Baldock*** is an educated man who also serves the Gloucesters, but more in the way of a household servant.

Hugh le Despenser, the younger*, (d. 1326) was married to Eleanor, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Gloucester. Contrary to Marlowe's portrayal of him as a partisan of Edward's in the Gaveston years, Despenser was a member of the opposition barons' party until long after Gaveston's demise. However, he never served Gloucester.*

Robert de Baldock *(d. 1327) was a reasonably well-connected cleric who also never worked for Gloucester. The real Baldock instead attached himself to Edward's court as early in his career as possible, believing this was the fastest way to gain power and status for himself. Indeed, he grew wealthy as he was granted multiple ecclesiastical positions, also becoming Edward's Chancellor (Secretary) in 1323. His fortune was closely tied to that of the Despensers.*

Bald. Spenser,
Seeing that our lord the Earl of Gloucester's dead,
Which of the nobles dost thou mean to serve?

1-3: As the scene opens, we learn that the Earl of Gloucester has died, and Spenser and Baldock must decide to whom they should turn their loyalties.

The real Gloucester did not die until the post-Gaveston era, which ran from 1307 to 1312.

Spen. Not Mortimer, nor any of his side,
Because the king and he are enemies.
Baldock, learn this of me: a factious lord
Shall hardly do himself good, much less us;
But he that hath the favour of a king,
May with one word advance us while we live:
The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man
On whose good fortune Spenser's hope depends.

= faction.

= rebellious.[2]

= ie. "promote us" or "raise us in status".

= generous.

11-12: out of pure self-interest, Spenser suggests he will seek to join the king's party by becoming a retainer of Gaveston's.

Bald. What, mean you then to be his follower?

= a feudal notion, in which one gains protection and patronage from another of superior status in return for services rendered.

Y. Spen. No, his companion; for he loves me well,
And would have once preferred me to the king.

= recommended; the line suggests Spenser was once a close friend of Gaveston's.

Bald. But he is banished; there's small hope of him.

Y. Spen. Ay, for a while; but, Baldock, mark the end.
A friend of mine told me in secrecy
That he's repealed and sent for back again;

= ie. "just see what will happen"

= recalled; it seems unlikely, given the joyous reconciliation between the barons and the king at the end of the last scene, that Gaveston's recall was much of a secret.

And even now a post came from the court
With letters to our lady from the king;
And as she read she smiled, which makes me think
It is about her lover Gaveston.

Bald. 'Tis like enough; for, since he was exíled,
She neither walks abroad, nor comes in sight.
But I had thought the match had been broke off,
And that his banishment had changed her mind.

Y. Spen. Our lady's first love is not wavering;
My life for thine, she will have Gaveston.

Bald. Then hope I by her means to be preferred,

Having read unto her since she was a child.

Y. Spen. Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off,
And learn to court it like a gentleman.
'Tis not a black coat and a little band,
A velvet-caped cloak, faced before with serge,
And smelling to a nosegay all the day,
Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
Or saying a long grace at a table's end,
Or making low legs to a nobleman,
Or looking downward with your eyelids close,
And saying, "Truly, an't may please your honour,"
Can get you any favour with great men;
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then stab, as occasion serves.

Bald. Spenser, thou know'st I hate such formal toys,
And use them but of mere hypocrisy.
Mine old lord whiles he lived was so precise,
That he would take exceptions at my buttons,
And being like pins' heads, blame me for the bigness;

= ***our lady*** is Margaret de Clare, Gloucester's sister; she had been pegged to become Gaveston's wife ever since her uncle, our King Edward II, ascended the throne.

30: she never goes out, instead remaining hidden and alone.

= "I'll bet my life against yours".

= advanced or promoted in rank.

38: Baldock has attended university, which would have made him exceptionally able in reading and writing; this education is referred to, both directly and indirectly, multiple times throughout our play. Baldock here is indicating he too will follow the king's party.
read unto her = "tutored her".[14]

40*f*: in this speech, Spenser teases the educated Baldock for his modest dress, academic ways and fastidious manners, and instructs him on how to behave if he wants to advance at court. Learned characters in Elizabethan drama were frequently portrayed as bookish and embarrassingly unfashionable. Briggs suggests the targets here are Puritans, whose unstylish habits and overnice manners would have overlapped with those of a scholar.

42: ***black coat*** = traditional outerwear of a scholar (Ribner, p. 303).[3]
little band = a modest collar or ruff which fit closely around the neck. The engraving of Shakespeare by Droesheut shows the poet wearing one. The unfashionable Baldock will have to learn to dress in the colorful and outlandish styles which were so favoured by members of the (Elizabethan) court.

= trimmed. = a woolen fabric, worn mostly by the poor.[1]
= bouquet of flowers or herbs.
= handkerchief.
= a monosyllable here.
= deep bows.
= ie. in extreme modesty and obsequiousness.
= if it.

52: "and occasionally kill somebody if necessary."

= superficialities.

= ie. Gloucester. = fastidious.

= ie. "even when they were as tiny as pins' heads".

Which made me curate-like in mine attire,

= "which made me look like a cleric - or Puritan? - in my appearance", because of the unfashionable simplicity of his dress. Churchmen in general were expected to dress in black or other such somber colours.

Though inwardly licentiöus enough,
And apt for any kind of villainy.
I am none of these common pedants, I,
That cannot speak without *propterea quod*.

60-63: Baldock contrasts his true inner character with how he was forced to behave as a servant of Gloucester: though he is innately immoral (***licentious***) enough - actually capable of performing any discreditable act - he is still more of a "regular guy" than a typical academic who can only communicate by speaking in the overly-formal and artificial style taught in universities (a ***pedant***).

propterea quod = Latin for "because": Verity[11] suggests the sense of the line is that pedants "cannot speak without giving a reason for everything they say", emphasizing the degree to which such pedants are married to their sophistry.

Y. Spen. But one of those that saith, *quandoquidem*,

= also Latin for "because". The exact meaning of the exchange is unclear. Briggs suggests that of the two Latin synonyms, the former was more formal and out of favor (hence Baldock's sneering use of the phrase), while the latter reflected a more casual approach to language (p. 136).[6] Spenser's point may be that despite Baldock's attempt to distance himself from the language of the pedants, he still retains a hint of affected speech.

And hath a special gift to form a verb.

= "say exactly the right thing", or "turn a phrase neatly."[9] Spenser continues to mildly tease Baldock for his learning.

Bald. Leave off this jesting, here my lady comes.

Enter King Edward's Niece (Margaret).

Entering Character: *Margaret de Clare* (1293-1342), like her brother the Earl of Gloucester, was the issue of Edward's sister Joan of Acre and her husband, the now-deceased 7th Earl of Gloucester, and hence the king's niece.

Marg. The grief for his exíle was not so much,
As is the joy of his returning home.
This letter came from my sweet Gaveston: −
What needst thou, love, thus to excuse thyself?
I know thou couldst not come and visit me:
[*Reads*] "*I will not long be from thee, though I die*."
This argues the entire love of my lord;
[*Reads*] "*When I forsake thee, death seize on my heart*."
But rest thee here where Gaveston shall sleep.

= as great.

75: "why do you feel the need to ask for my forgiveness?"

78: "this is evidence of how unqualified is Gaveston's love for me."

= ie. near her bosom; see line 82.

[*Puts the letter into her bosom*.]

Now to the letter of my lord the king. −
He wills me to repair unto the court
And meet my Gaveston? Why do I stay,
Seeing that he talks thus of my marriage-day? −
Who's there? Baldock!
See that my coach be ready, I must hence.

= commands or desires. = go.
= hesitate or delay.
= common exclamation used to call for a servant.
89: ***coach*** = an anachronism: early editors have long pointed out that coaches, referring to enclosed carriages, were not introduced into England until Elizabeth's time.[7,8]
hence = ie. go from here.

Bald. It shall be done, madam.

Marg. And meet me at the park pale presently.

= boundary (***pale***) of our estate's grounds (***park***)".[1] Note also the double-alliteration in this line.

[*Exit Baldock*.]

Spenser, stay you and bear me company,
For I have joyful news to tell thee of;

97-98: an interesting mix of address forms: Margaret uses the polite ***you*** in 97, but the informal ***thee*** in 98, suggesting an additional degree of intimacy, as she is excited to share her happy gossip with him.[7]

My lord of Cornwall is a-coming over,
And will be at the court as soon as we.

99: ***a-coming*** = the ancient prefix ***a-*** acts as an intensifier.[1]
over = ie. over the water, to England from Ireland.

Y. Spen. I knew the king would have him home again.

Marg. If all things sort out, as I hope they will,
Thy service, Spenser, shall be thought upon.

= work out.
105: ie. "your service to me will be remembered."

Y. Spen. I humbly thank your ladyship.

Marg. Come lead the way, I long till I am there.

= feel a yearning.

[*Exeunt*.]

Gloucester's death and Margaret's marriage*: *Marlowe has hopelessly (and presumably deliberately, for dramatic efficiency) mangled the chronology of events: Margaret, the niece of Edward, actually married Gaveston in 1307, the year Edward ascended the throne, and the year before he was exiled to Ireland. The Earl of Gloucester, sister of Margaret and thus nephew of Edward, did not die until 1314 at the Battle of Bannockburn.

ACT II, SCENE II.

Before the castle at Tynemouth in northern England.

Scene II: the royal party awaits the return of Gaveston from Ireland at Tynemouth on England's north-east coast.

Gaveston, returning from Ireland in 1309, was met by the king at Chester in western England, logically enough; yet here Edward and the court are awaiting Gaveston's return by sea from Ireland on England's north-east shore, about as circuitous a trip as one can make from the Emerald Isle.

The reason for this is that Marlowe is now beginning to fold into his plot the events that occurred after Gaveston was exiled yet a third time in 1311, specifically the nobles' open revolt against Edward and his favourite, the main action of which took place in and around Tynemouth in 1312.

Enter King Edward, Queen Isabella, Kent, Lancaster, Young Mortimer, Warwick, Pembroke, and Attendants.

K. Edw. The wind is good, I wonder why he stays;

= is delayed.

I fear me he is wracked upon the sea.

= common formula for "I fear". = ie. wrecked.

Q. Isab. Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is,
And still his mind runs on his miniön!

= sorrowful;[8] the line is likely spoken out of the king's hearing.

Lanc. My lord. –

K. Edw. How now! what news? is Gaveston arrived?

Y. Mort. Nothing but Gaveston! What means your grace?
You have matters of more weight to think upon;
The king of France sets foot in Normandy.

13: Mortimer is concerned that France is looking to regain control of this English province. *France and England had always vied for supremacy in major swaths of what is now western France.*

K. Edw. A trifle! We'll expel him when we please.

= ie. "I'll"; Edward employs the royal "we".

But tell me Mortimer, what's thy device,

= Edward has commanded the nobles to each come up with a ***device*** - a design or painting on a shield, usually accompanied by a motto - to be presented as part of the festivities celebrating Gaveston's return.[6]

Against the stately triumph we decreed?

= ie. made in preparation for. = pageant or tournament.[1]

Y. Mort. A homely one, my lord, not worth the telling.

= modest.[2]

K. Edw. Prithee let me know it.

= please, an abbreviated form of "I pray thee".

Y. Mort. But seeing you are so desirous, thus it is:

= ie. desirous to know.

A lofty cedar-tree, fair flourishing,
On whose top-branches kingly eagles perch,
And by the bark a canker creeps me up,

26: "and up the bark creeps a caterpillar (***canker***)".
creeps me up = a grammatical form known as the "ethical dative"; the redundant ***me*** behaves as an intensifier, indicating extra interest on the part of the speaker. The ethical dative could also be employed by a poet simply to get an extra syllable into a line to help it fit the meter, without otherwise changing the line's meaning.

And gets unto the highest bough of all.
The motto: *Æque tandem*.

= Latin: "Equal in the end."
24-28: The symbolism of the tableau is not lost on Edward: the king himself is the tree, up which the ***canker*** - clearly Gaveston - climbs higher and higher until it has reached parity with, and even surpassed in status, the nobles themselves (represented by the ***eagles***); this is at least how Edward will interpret the painting.

K. Edw. And what is yours, my lord of Lancaster?

Lanc. My lord, mine's more obscure than Mortimer's.

= abstract, ambiguous.[1]

Pliny reports there is a flying fish
Which all the other fishes deadly hate,
And therefore, being pursued, it takes the air:
No sooner is it up, but there's a fowl
That seizeth it: this fish, my lord, I bear,
The motto this: *Undique mors est*.

33-37: the ***flying fish*** represents Gaveston.

= Latin for "Death is on all sides".[9]
32-38: there is no such description of ***flying fish*** in Pliny the Elder's famous *Naturalis historia*; Tancock observes the source of this bit of trivia was the *Principle Navigations*, or *Hakluyt's Voyages* (1584), English writer Richard Hakluyt's compendium of the voyage-narratives of the great English maritime travelers of the 16th century. The story of John Hawkin's second voyage (1564-5) describes the flying fish of Florida, which leap out of the water to escape the bonito

fish, their natural enemy, only to be caught in mid-air by a certain sea-fowl, which enjoys a meal of both the flying fish and the bonitos.[26]

*The Roman **Pliny the Elder** (A.D. 23-70) was a life-long student of history and nature, and is most well-known today for having written the "Naturalis historia", a monumental ten-volume encyclopedia of what is still called natural history. The work is most well-known for its incredibly fanciful descriptions of "known facts" regarding animals, such as that "coupling is performed back to back by the elephant, the camel, the tiger, the lynx, the rhinoceros, the lion, the dasy-pus, and the rabbit"* (Bostock, 9.43).[19]

K. Edw. Proud Mortimer! ungentle Lancaster!
Is this the love you bear your sovereign?
Is this the fruit your reconcilement bears?
Can you in words make show of amity,
And in your shields display your rancourous minds!
What call you this but private libelling
Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother?

= ie. full of ill-will or animosity.

= ie. still meaning Gaveston.

40-46: Dyce assigns this speech to Kent, based on the use of ***my brother*** in the last line. He may be right to do so.

Q. Isab. Sweet husband, be content; they all love you.

= ie. "be not so agitated."

K. Edw. They love me not that hate my Gaveston.
I am that cedar; shake me not too much;
And you the eagles; soar ye ne'er so high,
I have the jesses that will pull you down;

= a term from falconry: a ***jess*** was a strap attached to the leg of a hawk, to which a leash could be attached.[4]

And *Æque tandem* shall that canker cry
Unto the proudest peer of Brittany.

54-55: Gaveston will be the one to exclaim "equal in the end", with reason, to all the nobles of England.

Brittany = common term for Britain.

Though thou compar'st him to a flying fish,
And threatenest death whether he rise or fall,
'Tis not the hugest monster of the sea,
Nor foulest harpy that shall swallow him.

58-59: there is not a sea-creature (ie. nobleman) or ***harpy*** large enough to swallow (ie. destroy) Gaveston.

harpies = disgusting mythical monsters, often pictured as birds with the heads of maidens, who were wont to drop filth on food, rendering it inedible.[20] Their mention in this line is not really apropos.

Y. Mort. If in his absence thus he favours him,
What will he do whenas he shall be present?

= when.

Lanc. That shall we see; look, where his lordship comes!

Enter Gaveston.

= Gaveston was actually exiled twice during Edward II's reign: the first time from the spring of 1308 to July 1309 - this was when Gaveston when to Ireland - the second time from October 1311 to only November or December. The first exile ended when Edward received Gaveston at Chester; the second ended less publicly, as Gaveston seems to have snuck back into England before Christmas.

After this second exile, Edward in early 1312 officially proclaimed the return of his favourite. The nobles responded by openly taking arms against the king (as is portrayed later in this scene).

Edward and Gaveston fled north, first to Newcastle (about a dozen miles up the River Tyne), then to the castle at Tynemouth, at the mouth (naturally) of the Tyne.

Marlowe has essentially omitted the details of the second exile; the situating of the scene at Tynemouth puts us in 1312, after Gaveston's final return to England.

K. Edw. My Gaveston!
Welcome to Tynemouth! Welcome to thy friend!

= ***friend*** was an ambiguous word, as it was frequently used to mean "lover", in addition to its normal sense.

It appears the entire court has travelled to the north of England to meet Gaveston. ***Tynemouth*** is on the shore of north-east England, facing the North Sea.

Thy absence made me droop and pine away;

= "languish" and "waste away with suffering". Marlowe was partial to using the two verbs together.

For, as the lovers of fair Danaë,
When she was locked up in a brazen tower,

71-72: a reference to the popular myth of ***Danae***: Acrisius, the king of Argos, received an oracle that the future son of his daughter Danae would grow up to kill him. To prevent this event, Acrisius kept Danae locked away in a bronze (***brazen***) tower or underground apartment. Zeus visited her in the form of a shower of gold, which impregnated her, resulting in the birth of the Greek hero Perseus.

Desired her more, and waxed outrageöus,

= grew wild or unrestrained.[2] There is no mythological basis for suggesting that Danae had any lovers, ***waxing outrageous*** or not.[6]

So did it fare with me: and now thy sight

= ie. like the yearning of Danae's invented lovers, Edward's desire to see Gaveston only increased when he was not permitted to see him during his exile. Edward is hardly flattering himself in comparing himself to the desperate suitors of a maiden.

The first quarto actually prints "*So it did **sure** with me*"; editors generally accept Dyce's emendation of ***sure*** to ***fare***, the word which appeared in the 1622 edition.

Is sweeter far than was thy parting hence
Bitter and irksome to my sobbing heart.

Gav. Sweet lord and king, your speech preventeth mine,

= anticipateth.

Yet have I words left to express my joy:
The shepherd nipped with biting winter's rage
Frolics not more to see the painted spring

= brightly colourful or decked with flowers.[1,11]

Than I do to behold your majesty.

K. Edw. Will none of you salute my Gaveston?

Lanc. Salute him? Yes; welcome, Lord Chamberlain!

86-92: the nobles are no doubt unenthusiastic, or sarcastic, in their welcomes, which may even be accompanied by rude gestures or the turning of their backs.

The scene is based on a noted incident in which the Earl of Lancaster, meeting Edward in the north of England in 1311, insultingly refused to salute Gaveston.

Y. Mort. Welcome is the good Earl of Cornwall!

War. Welcome, Lord Governor of the Isle of Man!

Pemb. Welcome, master Secretary!

Kent. Brother, do you hear them?

K. Edw. Still will these earls and barons use me thus? = treat.

Gav. My lord, I cannot brook these injuries. = endure. = wrongs, insults.

Q. Isab. [*Aside*] Ay me, poor soul, when these begin to jar! = quarrel.

K. Edw. Return it to their throats, I'll be thy warrant.

102: ***Return it to their throats*** = early version of the expression "throw it back in their faces".
I'll be thy warrant = "I will be your surety against any harm that may be forthcoming as a result of anything you say in response." Gaveston gladly takes Edward up on his offer to insult the peers.

Gav. Base, leaden earls, that glory in your birth, = worthless, ie. an antonym for "golden".[1]
Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef;
And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low = soaring.
As to bestow a look on such as you.

Lanc. Yet I disdain not to do this for you.

104-110: note that both Gaveston and Lancaster use ***you*** to address each other, keeping the thinnest veneer of formality in the exchange; at 120, however, Gaveston switches to ***thee***, an unambiguous demonstration of contempt.

[*Draws his sword and offers to stab Gaveston.*] = threatens or attempts; the stage directions here and at lines 124 and 130 were added by Dyce.

K. Edw. Treason, treason! Where's the traitor?

114: Bevington notes that it was considered treasonous to draw a weapon in the presence of the monarch.

Pemb. [*Pointing to Gaveston*] Here, here!

116: the stage direction was suggested by Bevington.

K. Edw. Convey hence Gaveston; they'll murder him. = "get Gaveston out of here."

Gav. The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace. = remedy, make up for.

Y. Mort. Villain! thy life unless I miss mine aim. = ie. "you are dead".

[*Wounds Gaveston.*]

124: *no such event ever actually took place.*
Here is as good a place as any to mention Gaveston's entertaining, but unfortunately fatal, habit of giving insulting nicknames to the nobles he should have been wooing instead of provoking: Warwick, for example, he called "the black hound of Ardern", Lancaster was "the fiddler", and Gloucester "whoreson". Gaveston's continuing inability to recognize how beneficial it would have been for him to mollify the barons is, for us looking back, highly frustrating.

Q. Isab. Ah! furious Mortimer, what hast thou done?

126: the queen's use of ***thou*** to Mortimer, in contrast with that of Gaveston and the barons, is an affectionate one.

Y. Mort. No more than I would answer, were he slain. = ie. answer for.

[*Exit Gaveston with Attendants.*]

K. Edw. Yes, more than thou canst answer, though he live;
Dear shall you both abye this riotous deed.
Out of my presence! Come not near the court.

133: "you both (Lancaster and Mortimer) shall pay dearly for (***abye***) this disorderly (***riotous***) deed."[23]

136	***Y. Mort.*** I'll not be barred the court for Gaveston.	= ie. barred from. = ie. because of.
138	***Lanc.*** We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.	= ie. where he would be beheaded.
140	***K. Edw.*** Look to your own heads; his is sure enough.	= safe.
142	***War.*** Look to your own crown, if you back him thus.	= "support or stand behind Gaveston like this."
144	***Kent.*** Warwick, these words do ill beseem thy years.	144: Warwick was only in his 30's at the time, hardly old; alternatively, Kent can simply be commenting on such poor judgment being shown by a supposed adult.
146	***K. Edw.*** Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus;	= thwart.
	But if I live, I'll tread upon their heads	
148	That think with high looks thus to tread me down. –	
	Come, Edmund, let's away, and levy men;	= raise an army.
150	'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.	
152	[*Exit King Edward, Queen Isabella, and Kent.*]	
154	***War.*** Let's to our castles, for the king is moved.	= angry.
156	***Y. Mort.*** Moved may he be, and perish in his wrath!	
158	***Lanc.*** Cousin, it is no dealing with him now;	= ie. there.
	He means to make us stoop by force of arms;	= bow down, ie. submit.
160	And therefore let us jointly here protest,	= vow (to each other).
	To prosecute that Gaveston to the death.	= pursue.
162	***Y. Mort.*** By Heaven, the abject villain shall not live!	= contemptible.
164	***War.*** I'll have his blood, or die in seeking it.	
166	***Pemb.*** The like oath Pembroke takes.	
168	***Lanc.*** And so doth Lancaster.	
170	Now send our heralds to defy the king;	= renounce (our) allegiance to.[1]
	And make the people swear to put him down.	
172	[*Enter a Messenger.*]	
174	***Y. Mort.*** Letters! From whence?	
176	***Mess.*** From Scotland, my lord.	
178	[*Giving letters to Mortimer.*]	
180	***Lanc.*** Why, how now, cousin, how fare all our friends?	
182	***Y. Mort.*** My uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.	= at Act I.iv.593, the Elder Mortimer announced he was going north to join the war against the Scots. *There is no historical basis for this development.*
184	***Lanc.*** We'll have him ransomed, man; be of good cheer.	185: prisoners of rank were typically held for ransom.
186	***Y. Mort.*** They rate his ransom at five thousand pound.	187: according to the Bank of England's online inflation calculator, the modern value of the Elder Mortimer's ransom is 5 million pounds.[34]

Who should defray the money but the king,
Seeing he is taken prisoner in his wars?
I'll to the king.

190: "I'll go to the king." Note that the word of action (***go***) is omitted here, where a word of intent (***will***) is present, a common grammatical construction. The effect is repeated immediately below in lines 195, 217 and 225.

Lanc. Do, cousin, and I'll bear thee company.

War. Meantime, my lord of Pembroke and myself
Will to Newcastle here, and gather head.

195: ***will to*** = will go to.

Newcastle = Newcastle is about a dozen miles up the River Tyne; Tynemouth, where the court is at the moment, is at the mouth of the river.

gather head = raise an army; such a force would be made up of like-minded nobles and the knights who owe them a feudal obligation of military service.

Y. Mort. About it then, and we will follow you.

Lanc. Be resolute and full of secrecy.

War. I warrant you.

201: "I guarantee it."

[*Exit Warwick with Pembroke.*]

Y. Mort. Cousin, and if he will not ransom him,
I'll thunder such a peal into his ears,
As never subject did unto his king.

= if. = ie. Edward.
= discharge or volley.[1]

Lanc. Content, I'll bear my part – Holla! who's there?

209: ***content*** = "good", or "don't worry".

Holla! who's there? = Lancaster calls for one of the king's guards to take him and Younger Mortimer to see Edward.

Enter Guard.

Y. Mort. Ay, marry, such a guard as this doth well.

213: ***marry*** = an oath, derived from the name of the Virgin Mary.

such…well = Bevington suggests the guard may consist of several men; Mortimer thus is pointing out that the king has done smartly to protect himself so well.

Lanc. Lead on the way.

Guard. Whither will your lordships?

217: "to where (***wither***) do your lordships wish to go?"

Y. Mort. Whither else but to the king?

Guard. His highness is disposed to be alone.

Lanc. Why, so he may, but we will speak to him.

Guard. You may not in, my lord.

Y. Mort. May we not?

Enter King Edward and Kent.

229: the scene moves to inside Tynemouth Castle;[8] the audience is to understand that Lancaster and Mortimer have forced their way into the fortress.

K. Edw. How now!

What noise is this? who have we there, is't you?

[*Going*.]

Y. Mort. Nay, stay, my lord, I come to bring you news;
Mine uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.

K. Edw. Then ransom him.

Lanc. 'Twas in your wars; you should ransom him.

241: considering their recent treatment of Gaveston, the nobles can hardly expect the king to be responsive to their request.

Y. Mort. And you shall ransom him, or else −

= according to the OED, this was the first time in English literature that this phrase, with its still current use as an implied threat, was employed.[1]

Kent. What! Mortimer, you will not threaten him?

K. Edw. Quiet yourself, you shall have the broad seal,
To gather for him thoroughout the realm.

247-8: Edward means Mortimer will be given royal sanction to travel around England to collect alms (***gather for him***) to pay his uncle's ransom - an insult to Mortimer indeed, who would expect the king to hand over 5000 pounds.

The ***broad seal*** is the Great Seal of England, whose wax impression on a document is proof of the authenticity of a document; there were severe laws against vagabonds, but a royal license to beg would immunize one against punishment.[6]

thoroughout = ie. throughout, a common alternate form.

Lanc. Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.

250: "this was Gaveston's idea", or "Gaveston taught you to treat us this way."

Y. Mort. My lord, the family of the Mortimers
Are not so poor, but, would they sell their land,

= "if they were to".

Would levy men enough to anger you.
We never beg, but use such prayers as these.

= Dyce emends ***Would*** to a later quarto's ***T'would***.

[*Striking his sword*.]

= patting or putting his hand to.[1] The stage direction is Briggs'.[6]

K. Edw. Shall I still be haunted thus?

Y. Mort. Nay, now you're here alone, I'll speak my mind.

Lanc. And so will I, and then, my lord, farewell.

Y. Mort. The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,

= foolish. = ie. masques, brief plays.

And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston,

= wasteful.

Have drawn thy treasure dry, and made thee weak;

= ie. treasury.

The murmuring commons, overstretchèd, break.

268: "the inhabitants of England, who are complaining under their breaths, have been bled dry by taxes, and are at their breaking point."

break = the quartos end the sentence with ***hath***, suggesting a concluding sentence to the speech may have been lost; we accept Dyce's emendation of ***hath*** to ***break***.

Mortimer's complaint is historical: the chronicles describe Gaveston's large-scale embezzlement of the wealth of England, which was of such a degree that, as the National

Biography wrote, the "commons groaned under the exactions of (Edward's) purveyors and collectors."

270 ***Lanc.*** Look for rebellion, look to be deposed;

270-6: Lancaster lists a number of foreign policy disasters that have occurred under Edward's neglectful watch.

Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
272 And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates.

271: *in 1324, the French king began to attack English possessions in western France; see the later note at Act III.ii.99.*

The wild Oneyl, with swarms of Irish kerns,
274 Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.

273-4: the reference is to the ***O'Neills*** of Ireland, who sent aid to the Bruces (Robert and his brother Edward) of Scotland when the Scots, buoyed by their spectacular success at Bannockburn, invaded Ireland in 1315, perhaps to begin a general Celtic uprising against the English, or to use Ireland as a staging ground for attacking England from the west. Edward Bruce, with the consent of O'Neill of Tyrone, was even crowned king in Dublin in 1317.[35] The quixotic adventure ended when Edward was killed in battle in 1318, and Robert had returned home to protect his own borders.

kerns = Irish foot-soldiers, understood to be made up of the scum of society.[8,10]

the English pale = the ***Pale*** was used to describe those parts of Ireland under English control, primarily in the region of Dublin.[1,6]

Unto the walls of York the Scots make road,
276 And unresisted draw away rich spoils.

275-6: for ***make*** and ***draw***, the quartos actually printed ***made*** and ***drave*** (a past tense form of "drive") respectively, but because the clauses should be in the past tense, we accept Dyce's emendation of the words to ***make*** and ***draw***.

275: ***road*** = inroads; Lancaster is describing extensive raiding of northern England by the Scottish.

275-6: *Whereas Edward's father was known as the "Hammer of the Scots", our Edward might appropriately have earned the nickname "Washcloth of the Scots". Two invasions of Scotland (1307, 1310) during the Gaveston years (1307-1312) accomplished nothing. A third invasion led to one of the greatest defeats in English history, the Battle of Bannockburn, in 1314. Edward spent most of two later years (1318-1320) leading troops in Scotland, but the natives avoided battle, and, led by Robert Bruce, managed to raid England regularly behind Edward's army.*

One last expedition in 1322 was a further failure, but it did result finally in a 13-year truce with the Scots. In the intervening years the Scots continued to raid northern England regularly, and a weak Edward combined with unsupportive barons did little to stop them.

278 ***Y. Mort.*** The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigged.

278: ***haughty*** = arrogant.

narrow seas = the phrase referred to both the English Channel and that part of the Irish Sea directly west of England.[1,7]

There is no historical foundation for this claim about the Danish, though it is true that the Danes were among the dominant sea-faring powers in Marlowe's own day.[6]

280 ***Lanc.*** What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?

= note that the nobles, in their disdain for Edward, address him using the inappropriate and highly insulting ***thee***, rather than the expected, respectful ***you***.

Y. Mort. Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?

= crew.

Lanc. Thy gentle queen, sole sister to Valois,
Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn.

= Isabella was the lone daughter of King Philip IV of France; Isabella also had three brothers, all kings of France: Charles IV, Philip V, and Louis X.

To avoid overcomplicating the plot, Marlowe basically has Charles IV as the king of France throughout the events of the play, though he did not actually come to the throne until 1322, a decade after the final removal of Gaveston from England.

Unfortunately, Marlowe repeatedly refers to Charles IV as ***Valois***, confusing him with his (and Isabella's) uncle ***Charles of Valois*** and her ***cousin Philip V of Valois***, who ascended the throne in 1328, after the events of the play (except for the last scene).

Y. Mort. Thy court is naked, being bereft of those
That make a king seem glorious to the world;
I mean the peers, whom thou shouldst dearly love:
Libels are cast again thee in the street;
Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.

288-290: briefly, England's nobles no longer appear at court, their natural hangout.

= defamatory leaflets or pamphlets.[7] = against.[8]

Lanc. The northern borderers, seeing the houses burnt,
Their wives and children slain, run up and down,
Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.

= those inhabitants of England living near enough to the Scottish border to be victims of Scottish raids.

Y. Mort. When wert thou in the field with banner spread,
But once? and then thy soldiers marched like players,

298-9: ***When wert…once?*** = as shown by the details in the note above at lines 275-6, this criticism of Edward is not quite fair: Edward tried multiple times during his reign to bring the Scots to heel. He just wasn't very good at it.

players = actors.

With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,

= garishly adorned; Mortimer describes Edward's sole journey to Scotland with an army as a joke and a lark. His description is based on a passage in one of the chronicles.

Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.

= helmet covered with gold sparkles.
= tokens of love.[11] = ribbons.[22]

Lanc. And thereof came it, that the fleering Scots,
To England's high disgrace, have made this jig;

= mocking or sneering.
= satirical song or ditty;[9] the following bit of doggerel actually appears in one of the ancient chronicles.[10]

"*Maids of England, sore may you mourn, –*
For your lemans you have lost at Bannocksbourn, –

309: ***lemans*** = sweethearts.[2]

Bannocksbourn = the ***Battle of Bannockburn*** occurred in 1314, two years after the final removal of Gaveston from the court. At Bannockburn, 6000 Scots, led by Robert Bruce, crushed an army of 15,000 English infantry supported by 2500 heavy cavalry (Hutchison, p. 79).[5]

With a heave and a ho!
What weeneth the king of England

311: "what was Edward thinking"; to ***ween*** is to imagine.[23]

So soon to have woon Scotland? –

= ***won***, an alternate form; contemporary evidence suggests ***woon*** could be pronounced to rhyme with ***soon***.

With a rombelow!"

= a nonsense word, used in the refrains of songs.[1]

Y. Mort. Wigmore shall fly, to set my uncle free.

= ie. Mortimer's castle at Wigmore will be sold to raise funds to free his uncle.[8] Young Mortimer himself had the title of the *eighth Lord of Wigmore*.

Lanc. And when 'tis gone, our swords shall purchase more.

= "get us even more money" , ie. by force.

If ye be moved, revenge it as you can;

= aroused to anger. = "if", or "as best as".

Look next to see us with our ensigns spread

= standards.

[*Exit Lancaster with Young Mortimer.*]

K. Edw. My swelling heart for very anger breaks!
How oft have I been baited by these peers,
And dare not be revengèd, for their power is great!

325: a line with 12 syllables, known as an *alexandrine*.

Yet, shall the crowing of these cockerels

= young cocks.[2]

Affright a lion? Edward, unfold thy paws,

= symbolizing the king, Edward.

And let their lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger.
If I be cruël and grow tyrannous,
Now let them thank themselves, and rue too late.

= regret it.

Kent. My lord, I see your love to Gaveston
Will be the ruin of the realm and you,
For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars;
And therefore, brother, banish him forever.

K. Edw. Art thou an enemy to my Gaveston?

Kent. Ay, and it grieves me that I favoured him.

K. Edw. Traitor, begone! Whine thou with Mortimer.

Kent. So will I, rather than with Gaveston.

K. Edw. Out of my sight, and trouble me no more!

Kent. No marvel though thou scorn thy noble peers,

= ie. "it's no surprise that".

When I thy brother am rejected thus.

[*Exit Kent.*]

350: *as mentioned earlier, Edward's half-brother Edmund, first Earl of Kent, born in 1301, was too young to play any part in the Gaveston drama.*

K. Edw. Away! −
Poor Gaveston, that hast no friend but me,
Do what they can, we'll live in Tynemouth here;
And, so I walk with him about the walls,

= ie. "so long as".

What care I though the earls begirt us round? −

= "surround us".

Here comes she that is cause of all these jars.

Enter Queen Isabella with King Edward's Niece (Margaret de Clare), two Ladies-in-Waiting, Gaveston, Baldock, and Young Spenser.

Entering Characters: ***Margaret*** has brought her family's servants ***Baldock*** and ***Young Spencer*** with her to introduce to the king.

Q. Isab. My lord, 'tis thought the earls are up in arms.

K. Edw. Ay, and 'tis likewise thought you favour 'em.

Q. Isab. Thus do you still suspect me without cause?

Marg. Sweet uncle! speak more kindly to the queen.

Gav. My lord, dissemble with her, speak her fair.

371: Gaveston likely speaks this line as an aside to the king.

K. Edw. Pardon me, sweet, I [had] forgot myself.

Q. Isab. Your pardon 's quickly got of Isabel.

K. Edw. The younger Mortimer is grown so brave,
That to my face he threatens civil wars.

Gav. Why do you not commit him to the Tower?

380: a bit of foreshadowing.

K. Edw. I dare not, for the people love him well.

Gav. Why, then we'll have him privily made away.

= secretly made to disappear, with all that connotes.

K. Edw. Would Lancaster and he had both caroused
A bowl of poison to each other's health!
But let them go, and tell me what are these.

= if only. = toasted and drank.

388: "but forget about them for now; tell me who are these two", referring to Young Spenser and Baldock.

Marg. Two of my father's servants whilst he lived, −
May't please your grace to entertain them now.

= employ. The request, made as it is by Edward's niece, is not out of line.

K. Edw. Tell me, where wast thou born? what is thine arms?

393: ***arms*** = coat of arms, which offered status to the bearer.

Bald. My name is Baldock, and my gentry

= rank of gentleman; ***gentry*** is tri-syllabic here: *GEN-te-ry*.

I fetch'd from Oxford, not from heraldry.

396: the rank of ***gentleman*** was not a clearly defined one in Elizabethan times; if one could raise one's wealth and status to a level wherein one did not have to work manually for a living, one could claim gentleman status. The rank could automatically be assumed if the College of Arms granted one a coat of arms (as the Shakespeares received in the 1590's), but was also claimed by those who attended college.

The name ***Oxford***, as applied to the university, did not enter the English language until the 15th century.[1]

We have seen in an earlier scene how Baldock is assigned the role of the "educated" character.

K. Edw. The fitter art thou, Baldock, for my turn.

= needs. Baldock will be appointed Edward's Chancellor, or secretary, thanks to his literacy.

Wait on me, and I'll see thou shalt not want.

399: "if you serve me, I will see to it that you will not be lacking", ie. he will be well taken care of.

Bald. I humbly thank your majesty.

K. Edw. Knowest thou him, Gaveston?

403: Edward now regards Young Spenser.

Gav. Ay, my lord;
His name is Spenser, he is well-allied.

= of a good family.[6]

For my sake, let him wait upon your grace;
Scarce shall you find a man of more desert.

= ie. more deserving.

K. Edw. Then, Spenser, wait upon me. For his sake

= ie. Gaveston's.

I'll grace thee with a higher style ere long.

Spen. No greater titles happen unto me,
Than to be favoured of your majesty!

K. Edw. Cousin, this day shall be your marriage-feast; –

And, Gaveston, think that I love thee well,
To wed thee to our niece, the only heir
Unto the Earl of Gloucester late deceased.

Gav. I know, my lord, many will stomach me,
But I respect neither their love nor hate.

K. Edw. The headstrong barons shall not limit me;
He that I list to favour shall be great.
Come, let's away; and, when the marriage ends,
Have at the rebels, and their 'complices!

[*Exeunt.*]

= greater title. *In 1313, after Gaveston's removal, Young Despenser was appointed the king's Chamberlain, but by the barons, not the king.*

= "by". Note the rhyming couplet of 413-4.

= ie. meaning Margaret; ***cousin*** was a generic form of address for any of one's kin.

418-9: *Gloucester actually had three sisters who shared his immense estate: the earl had properties "extending over twenty-three English counties, to say nothing of his immense possessions in Wales and Ireland." Needless to say, there was plenty of wealth for everybody.*

= resent.
= value, care for.[1]

= choose.
= ie. "when the marriage ceremony is over".
= the phrase ***to have at*** (***someone***) was used to signal a desire to begin a confrontation.

ACT II, SCENE III.

The neighbourhood of Tynemouth Castle.

Enter Kent, Lancaster, Young Mortimer, Warwick, Pembroke, and others.

Entering Characters: ***Kent***, having broken with his brother the king, looks to join up with the nobles who have already declared themselves Edward's enemies.

Kent. My lords, of love to this our native land
I come to join with you and leave the king;
And in your quarrel and the realm's behoof
Will be the first that shall adventure life.

Lanc. I fear me, you are sent of policy,
To undermine us with a show of love.

War. He is your brother; therefore have we cause
To cast the worst, and doubt of your revolt.

Kent. Mine honour shall be hostage of my truth:
If that will not suffice, farewell, my lords.

Y. Mort. Stay, Edmund: never was Plantagenet
False of his word, and therefore trust we thee.

Pemb. But what's the reason you should leave him now?

Kent. I have informed the Earl of Lancaster.

= for.

= "for the good of the realm".
= "risk my".

6-7: Lancaster, not unreasonably, worries Kent has been sent to spy on them on behalf of the king.
of policy = in deceit.[9]

10: ***cast*** = think, ie. believe.[8]
doubt of your revolt = "suspect the legitimacy of your supposed turning against your brother."

= a pledge for.[11]
13: if Kent's word is not good enough, then he will not be interested to pursue a relationship with the other men.

= the ***Plantagenet*** line ruled England for over three centuries, beginning with Henry II in 1154, and ending with Richard III in 1485.

Lanc. And it sufficeth. Now, my lords, know this,
That Gaveston is secretly arrived,
And here in Tynemouth frolics with the king.
Let us with these our followers scale the walls,
And suddenly surprise them unawares.

= "that's good enough for me."

23: there is an inconsistency: in Act II.ii.66*ff*, all the nobles were present to welcome Gaveston to Tynemouth.

Y. Mort. I'll give the onset.

= ie. signal to attack.

War. And I'll follow thee.

Y. Mort. This tottered ensign of my ancestors,

= tattered.

Which swept the desert shore of that dead sea
Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,

33-34: the name of ***Mortimer*** could be traced back to the family's origins in Normandy and the village of Mortemer,[35] but Young Mortimer, more romantically, asserts the name can be traced to an ancestor's heroic participation in one of the Crusades to the Levant along the Dead Sea - *mer mort* in French.

Will I advance upon this castle['s] walls. −

= the quartos print ***this castle walls***; an alternative emendation would be ***these castle walls***.

Drums, strike alarum, raise them from their sport,

36: ***alarum*** = the call to arms.
raise…sport = "let's rouse the king and his companions from their leisure activities"; no doubt Mortimer is hinting at the king's lewd relationship with his favourite.

And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston!

= ie. death knell.

Lanc. None be so hardy as to touch the king;
But neither spare you Gaveston, nor his friends.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II, SCENE IV.

Inside Tynemouth Castle.

[*Alarums*.]

= stage direction added by Bevington, to indicate the battle has commenced.

Enter severally King Edward and Young Spenser.

= individually, ie. from opposite directions.

K. Edw. O tell me, Spenser, where is Gaveston?

Spen. I fear me he is slain, my gracious lord.

K. Edw. No, here he comes; now let them spoil and kill.

= plunder; Edward again displays emotional detachment from the rebellion of the barons - so long as Gaveston is safe, the attackers can do as they wish.

Enter Queen Isabella, King Edward's Niece, Gaveston, and Nobles.

= ie. Margaret, now Gaveston's husband.

Fly, fly, my lords, the earls have got the hold;
Take shipping, and away to Scarborough.

= flee, ie. "run away!" = castle.
= "escape by sea"; Tynemouth Castle is on a small peninsula jutting into the North Sea.

12	Spenser and I will post away by land.	= hurriedly ride.
14	***Gav.*** O stay, my lord, they will not injure you.	
16	***K. Edw.*** I will not trust them; Gaveston, away!	
18	***Gav.*** Farewell, my lord.	
20	***K. Edw.*** Lady, farewell.	
22	***Marg.*** Farewell, sweet uncle, till we meet again.	22: Margaret will accompany her husband Gaveston by boat to the castle at Scarborough, about 70 miles south of Tynemouth.
24	***K. Edw.*** Farewell, sweet Gaveston; and farewell, niece.	
26	***Q. Isab.*** No farewell to poor Isabel thy queen?	
28	***K. Edw.*** Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake.	
30	***Q. Isab.*** Heaven can witness I love none but you.	
32	[*Exeunt all but Queen Isabella.*]	32: *historically speaking, Edward and Gaveston fled by boat together to Scarborough; from there Edward went alone to York, hoping to divert the army of the nobles in order to save Gaveston.*
34	From my embracements thus he breaks away.	
	O that mine arms could close this isle about,	
36	That I might pull him to me where I would!	= ie. want to.
	Or that these tears, that drizzle from mine eyes,	
38	Had power to mollify his stony heart,	
	That, when I had him, we might never part.	38-39: a rhyming couplet.
40		
	Enter Lancaster, Warwick, Young Mortimer,	41-42: the barons enter Tynemouth Castle.
42	*and others. Alurums within.*	
44	***Lanc.*** I wonder how he scaped!	
46	***Y. Mort.*** Who's this? The queen!	
48	***Q. Isab.*** Ay, Mortimer, the miserable queen,	
	Whose pining heart her inward sighs have blasted,	= tormented. = brought to grief.
50	And body with continual mourning wasted:	
	These hands are tired with haling of my lord	= ie. attempting to drag.[2]
52	From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,	
	And all in vain; for, when I speak him fair,	= ie. kindly to Edward.
54	He turns away, and smiles upon his miniön.	
56	***Y. Mort.*** Cease to lament, and tell us where's the king?	
58	***Q. Isab.*** What would you with the king? Is't him you seek?	= ie. "do you want with".
60	***Lanc.*** No, madam, but that cursèd Gaveston.	
	Far be it from the thought of Lancaster	
62	To offer violence to his sovereign!	
	We would but rid the realm of Gaveston:	
64	Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.	
66	***Q. Isab.*** He's gone by water unto Scarborough;	
	Pursue him quickly, and he cannot 'scape;	

The king hath left him, and his train is small.

= retinue.

War. Forslow no time, sweet Lancaster; let's march.

= "let us not delay"; ***forslow*** = an awesome and ancient verb, meaning "to be slow".[1]

Y. Mort. How comes it that the king and he is parted?

Q. Isab. That this your army, going several ways,
Might be of lesser force, and with the power
That he intendeth presently to raise,
Be easily suppressed; therefore be gone!

= separate.
= army.

74-77: Edward's strategy, as described by Isabella, is to hope that the barons will split up their army to hunt for the king and Gaveston separately, and that in the meantime Edward can raise an army which will defeat the smaller barons' armies in detail.

Y. Mort. Here in the river rides a Flemish hoy;
Let's all aboard, and follow him amain.

= small passenger vessel used mainly along a coast.[7]
= quickly;[2] Mortimer suggests they all go after Gaveston.

Lanc. The wind that bears him hence will fill our sails:
Come, come, aboard, 'tis but an hour's sailing.

= from here.
= their little sailboat would have to go impossibly fast to make it to Scarborough 70 miles away in ***an hour***.

Y. Mort. Madam, stay you within this castle here.

Q. Isab. No, Mortimer; I'll to my lord the king.

Y. Mort. Nay, rather sail with us to Scarborough.

Q. Isab. You know the king is so suspiciöus,
As if he hear I have but talked with you,
Mine honour will be called in questiön;
And therefore, gentle Mortimer, be gone.

Y. Mort. Madam, I cannot stay to answer you,
But think of Mortimer as he deserves.

97: Mortimer speaks of himself in the third person.

[*Exeunt all except Queen Isabella.*]

Q. Isab. So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer,
As Isabel could live with thee forever.
In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston.
Yet once more I'll impórtune him with prayer:
If he be strange and not regard my words,
My son and I will over into France,

= beg.
= distant, aloof.
107: ***My son*** = here is the play's first mention of Edward's oldest son, the future Edward III.
over = ie. go over.

And to the king my brother there complain,
How Gaveston hath robbed me of his love:
But yet I hope my sorrows will have end,
And Gaveston this blessèd day be slain.

= ie. end.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II, SCENE V.

The open country at or near Scarborough.

Enter Gaveston, pursued.

Entering Character: the barons have landed at Scarborough, and are in pursuit of Gaveston.

Gav. Yet, lusty lords, I have escaped your hands,
Your threats, your larums, and your hot pursuits;

= insolent.[1]
= calls to arms.

And though divorcèd from king Edward's eyes,
Yet liveth Pierce of Gaveston unsurprised,

= ie. separated.
= ie. not yet caught unawares by those chasing him.

Breathing, in hope (*malgrado* all your beards,
That muster rebels thus against your king),
To see his royal sovereign once again.

= "notwithstanding anything you do";[1] ***malgrado*** is Italian for "in spite of"; the Anglo-Norman word ***maugre*** was the normal word to use in this expression, ie. "maugre your beard".

Enter Warwick, Lancaster, Pembroke, Young Mortimer, Soldiers, James, and other Attendants of Pembroke.

= ***James*** is one of Pembroke's men.

War. Upon him, soldiers, take away his weapons!

13: *Gaveston actually surrendered voluntarily to the barons from within Scarborough Castle in return for a promise of his safety on 19 May 1312.*

Y. Mort. Thou proud disturber of thy country's peace,
Corrupter of thy king; cause of these broils,
Base flatterer, yield! and were it not for shame,
Shame and dishonour to a soldier's name,
Upon my weapon's point here should'st thou fall,
And welter in thy gore.

= this turmoil.
= give up.
17-18: note the rhyming couplet.
= soak. Mortimer's reticence to personally slay Gaveston reflects a common concern amongst honourable Elizabethan characters, who do not wish to be seen as having debased themselves by clashing with or killing one of inferior rank or otherwise low background.

Lanc. Monster of men!
That, like the Greekish strumpet, trained to arms
And bloody wars so many valiant knights;

23-24: Lancaster unflatteringly compares Gaveston to a woman, Helen of Troy, whom he blames for causing the decade-long Trojan War. He calls Helen a whore (***strumpet***) for having run off with the Trojan prince Paris at the time she was queen to Menelaus, King of Sparta.
trained = lured.[2]

Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death!
Kind Edward is not here to buckler thee.

= Dyce emends to ***Kind*** to ***King***. = protect.

War. Lancaster, why talk'st thou to the slave? −
Go, soldiers, take him hence, for, by my sword,
His head shall off: − Gaveston, short warning
Shall serve thy turn: it is our country's cause,
That here severely we will execute
Upon thy person. − Hang him at a bough.

= come off.
= needs.
32: ***severely*** = strictly or ironhandedly (in punishment).[1]
execute = carry out or perform, but also grimly punning on ***execute's*** more obvious meaning.

Gav. My lord! −

War. Soldiers, have him away; −
But for thou wert the favourite of a king,
Thou shalt have so much honour at our hands −

= take.
= because.[7]
39: Warwick probably gestures a hanging; in the next line (line 41), Gaveston ***perceives*** the signal.[6] With ***so much honour***, Warwick is sarcastic.

Gav. I thank you all, my lords: then I perceive
That heading is one, and hanging is the other,

= ie. beheading.

And death is all.

33-43: the last part of the conversation alludes to the custom of executing persons of high rank by beheading, while members of the lesser classes were dispatched by hanging; the hanging of nobles was generally reserved for traitors, and in a sense was meant to express societal scorn towards the victim; in other words, if one who was liable to be hanged was granted execution by beheading, it was seen as the bestowing of a favour. Thus, even at the moment of death, Englishmen were honour- and class-conscious!

Enter Earl of Arundel.

Entering Character: *Edward Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel* *(1285-1326). The earl was actually a bitter enemy of Gaveston, and a full-throated supporter of Gaveston's capture and dispatching. His role here as the king's messenger is fictional*.

Lanc. How now, my lord of Arundel?

Arun. My lords, King Edward greets you all by me.

War. Arundel, say your message.

Arun. His majesty,
Hearing that you had taken Gaveston,

54: note the extreme Compression of Time: the king is many miles away, yet he has already received the news of Gaveston's capture, which took place on stage only a moment ago, and he has even sent a messenger who has already arrived!

Entreateth you by me, yet but he may
See him before he dies; for why, he says,
And sends you word, he knows that die he shall;
And if you gratify his grace so far,
He will be mindful of the courtesy.

= "begs you through me". = that.
= because.[8]
= "grant the king just this one request".
59: "he will remember your kindness in this matter." The humiliating subservience of Edward towards the barons is cringe-worthy.

War. How now!

Gav. Renowmèd Edward, how thy name
Revives poor Gaveston!

= "renowned", a common early form.

War. No, it needeth not; −

66: the sense is, "don't even bother being revived - there is no chance any favour will be done on your behalf."

Arundel, we will gratify the king
In other matters: he must pardon us in this. −
Soldiers, away with him!

67-68: a polite formula: "we would be happy to indulge the king in other matters, but not this one."

Gav. Why, my lord of Warwick,
Will not these delays beget my hopes? −

72: the sense may be, "you don't think that delaying my execution just to say good-bye to the king actually will give me an expectation (***hope***) that I will somehow escape my fate?" Dyce and Cunningham[10] comment on the lack of clarity of the line.

I know it, lords, it is this life you aim at,
Yet grant King Edward this.

73-74: Having spoken sarcastically to Warwick, Gaveston addresses the other lords more soberly.[7]

Y. Mort. Shalt thou appoint
What we shall grant? − Soldiers, away with him: −
Thus we'll gratify the king,
We'll send his head by thee; let him bestow

His tears on that, for that is all he gets
Of Gaveston, or else his senseless trunk.

Lanc. Not so, my lord, lest he bestow more cost
In burying him than he hath ever earned.

Arun. My lords, it is his majesty's request,
And in the honour of a king he swears,
He will but talk with him, and send him back.

War. When? can you tell? Arundel, no; we wot,

He that the care of realm remits,
And drives his nobles to these exigents

For Gaveston, will, if he seize him once,
Violate any promise to possess him.

Arun. Then if you will not trust his grace in keep,
My lords, I will be pledge for his return.

Y. Mort. 'Tis honourable in thee to offer this;
But for we know thou art a noble gentleman,

We will not wrong thee so,
To make away a true man for a thief.

Gav. How mean'st thou, Mortimer? that is over-base!

Y. Mort. Away, base groom, robber of king's renowm!

Question with thy companiöns and mates.

Pemb. My Lord Mortimer, and you, my lords, each one,
To gratify the king's request therein,
Touching the sending of this Gaveston,

76-77: ***Shalt thou…grant?*** = "do you think you can instruct us on what favours we shall grant?"

= a morbidly humorous line: Gaveston's head will be sent back to Edward to satisfy his wish to see the Frenchman one more time!

= ie. Gaveston's headless body, which would be without possession of any of the physical senses.

= "no, we should not do this". = ie. Edward.

84: ***him*** and ***he*** refer to Gaveston; Lancaster in these lines adds more dark humour to the proceedings.

= ie. on.[8]

90: ***When? Can you tell?*** = phrase expressing the scornful rejection of a request.[6]

Arundel = the preferred pronunciation of ***Arundel*** is unclear; half the time, Arundel's location in a sentence suggests its second syllable is stressed (*a-RUN-del*), as here, and the other half, the first syllable (*A-run-del*).

wot = know.

91-92: "anybody who, like Edward, slackens (***remits***)[22] in ruling his kingdom, and forces his nobles to pursue these extreme measures (***exigents***)".

= the quartos print ***zease***, a word which appears nowhere else in literature; ***sease*** (the likely intended spelling), however, was an alternate form of ***seize***; some editors, probably incorrectly, emend ***zease*** to ***sees***.

= custody.[6]

97: Arundel takes on himself responsibility for returning Gaveston to the barons; the pledge of one's honour was taken seriously in old England.

= but because.

101-2: the sense seems to be, "we will not allow you to injure your own honour by allowing you to depart (***make away***) with a thief in your company, as if he were an honest (***true***) man."

= too low, ie. beyond the pale.

= servant. = Mortimer explains why he referred to Gaveston as a thief - he has "stolen", ie. sullied, the king's good reputation (***renowm*** = renown).

= ie. "you can debate the issue with".[1]

= concerning.

Because his majesty so earnestly
Desires to see the man before his death,
I will upon mine honour undertake
To carry him, and bring him back again;
Provided this, that you my lord of Arundel
Will join with me.

War. Pembroke, what wilt thou do?
Cause yet more bloodshed? is it not enough
That we have taken him, but must we now
Leave him on "had I wist," and let him go?

= a phrase of regret for a reckless deed: literally, "if I had only known".[8]

Pemb. My lords, I will not over-woo your honours,
But, if you dare trust Pembroke with the prisoner,
Upon mine oath, I will return him back.

124: "well, I'm not going to beg you".

Arun. My lord of Lancaster, what say you in this?

Lanc. Why, I say, let him go on Pembroke's word.

130: as Pembroke is a proven member of the anti-Gaveston faction, he is more to be trusted than the king's man, Arundel.

Pemb. And you, lord Mortimer?

Y. Mort. How say you, my lord of Warwick?

War. Nay, do your pleasures, I know how 'twill prove.

= ie. "this will turn out." Warwick is dubious about the wisdom of letting Gaveston out of their hands, even temporarily.

Pemb. Then give him me.

Gav. Sweet sovereign, yet I come
To see thee ere I die.

War. [*Aside*] Yet not perhaps,
If Warwick's wit and policy prevail.

= strategy; Warwick lets the audience know he has a plan.

Y. Mort. My lord of Pembroke, we deliver him you:
Return him on our honour. − Sound, away!

= "to you."
= an order to a trumpeter to signal a call to march.[1]

[*Exeunt all except Pembroke, Arundel, Gaveston, James, and other of Pembroke's men.*]

149-150: the scene now changes to southern England, somewhere along the journey of Pembroke's party to London.

Pemb. My lord, you shall go with me.

= Dyce emends the beginning of this short line to ***My lord of Arundel***.

My house is not far hence; out of the way
A little, but our men shall go along.

= ie. ahead.

We that have pretty wenches to our wives,
Sir, must not come so near and baulk their lips.

155-6: the sense is, "for those of us with pretty wives, it would be wrong to pass by so closely to home without dropping in to see them."
wenches = ***wench*** was usually a playful term, without its modern negative connotation.
to our wives = ie. "for our wives."
baulk = ignore, avoid; or, disappoint.[1]

Arun. 'Tis very kindly spoke, my lord of Pembroke;
Your honour hath an adamant of power

159-160: "your offer is powerful enough to attract even a

To draw a prince.

king."[14]

adamant = oft-referred to fabled stone with great magnetism.

Pemb. So, my lord. − Come hether, James:
I do commit this Gaveston to thee.

= hither, ie. here, a common alternate form.

163: Pembroke will actually leave Gaveston alone with his guards, and go visit with his wife, who is staying nearby.

Be thou this night his keeper; in the morning
We will discharge thee of thy charge: be gone.

= "relieve you of your responsibility"; note the light word-play with ***discharge*** and ***charge***.

Gav. Unhappy Gaveston, whither goest thou now?

= unlucky.

[*Exit with James and the other men of Pembroke.*]

= Gaveston stays momentarily behind and is addressed by the boy in the next line.

Horse-Boy. My lord, we'll quickly be at Cobham.

171: ***Cobham***, near London, is presumably the party's destination for the evening.

[*Exeunt Horse-boy and Gaveston.*]

Pembroke's Departure: a*s a matter of history, Pembroke indeed was responsible for escorting Gaveston from Scarborough to London, where the Frenchman had been promised an opportunity to plead for his life before Parliament. After traveling for three weeks, Pembroke's party entered the village of Deddington, where Gaveston was deposited under the care of Pembroke's men acting as his guards. Pembroke abandoned his responsibility in order to visit his wife, who was at Bampton, about a dozen miles away from their present location at Deddington (Hutchison, p. 70).*[5]

The result of this negligent decision was disastrous for Gaveston, Pembroke, and the kingdom.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Another part of the open country.

The Scene: *historically speaking, this scene took place in Deddington Castle; Marlowe, typically, gives no clear indication as to his intentions in this regard.*

Enter Gaveston mourning, James, and the other men of Pembroke's.

= obviously grieving.

Gav. O treacherous Warwick! thus to wrong thy friend!

1*ff*: we now learn the contents of Warwick's plan, to which he had alluded above at line 144 of the last scene: he and his personal soldiers have launched an assault to capture Gaveston away from Pembroke's men! Gaveston notes how Warwick's behavior is directly undermining the honour of Pembroke (***thy friend***), who had promised the Frenchman safe conduct.

Warwick, who had been following Pembroke and Gaveston as they traveled from Scarborough to London, took advantage of Pembroke's absence to enter the castle at Deddington and capture Gaveston.

James. I see it is your life these arms pursue.

Gav. Weaponless must I fall, and die in bands?

= bonds, shackles.

O! must this day be period of my life?

= the end.

Centre of all my bliss! And ye be men,

7: ***Centre of all my bliss!*** = Schelling suggests Gaveston is identifying Edward as the focal point of all that is joyful to him, and contrasting this thought to the notion that this is to be the last day of his life.[9]

And ye be men = "if you are real men"; ***ye*** is the plural form of ***you***.

Speed to the king.

8: ie. "hurry (***speed***) to the king and get help!"

Enter Warwick and his Soldiers.

War. My lord of Pembroke's men,
Strive you no longer − I will have that Gaveston.

12: Warwick addresses Gaveston's guards.
= "give up your defense of the prisoner", ie. "put down your weapons."

James. Your lordship doth dishonour to yourself,
And wrong our lord, your honourable friend.

= ie. Pembroke, his employer.

War. No, James, it is my country's cause I follow. −

18-22: in this speech, Warwick addresses James, his own soldiers, James again, and finally Gaveston, in that order; the dashes indicate changes in addressee.

Go, take the villain; soldiers, come away.
We'll make quick work. − Commend me to your master,
My friend, and tell him that I watched it well. −

21: ***My friend*** = meaning Pembroke, repeating James' use of ***your...friend*** to refer to Pembroke at line 16.
watched = kept a watch on or protected his ***country's cause*** (line 18).[1]

Come, let thy shadow parley with king Edward.

= spirit, ghost or soul.[4,24] = talk.

Gav. Treacherous earl, shall I not see the king?

War. The king of Heaven perhaps, no other king.
Away!

[*Exeunt Warwick and his Soldiers, with Gaveston.*]

29: Pembroke's men remain on stage.

Warwick brought Gaveston to his castle at Warwick (only 25 miles from Deddington) and tossed him into the dungeon (Hutchison, p. 70).[5]

James. Come, fellows, it booted not for us to strive,
We will in haste go certify our lord.

= "was of no use".
= ie. "inform (***certify***) our master, Pembroke, of what has happened."[2]

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE II.

Near Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire.

Scene II: Edward, we remember, had gone north in the hopes of drawing the barons' army away from their pursuit of Gaveston.

Scene ii operates as a transition scene: till now, our play has been concerned with the earliest years of Edward's reign (ie. the Gaveston years), comporting roughly with the events of 1307-1312; after this scene, the play will focus on the events of the last years of Edward's reign (1322-7).

Enter King Edward and Young Spenser, Baldock, and Noblemen of the King's side, and Soldiers with drums and fifes.

K. Edw. I long to hear an answer from the barons
Touching my friend, my dearest Gaveston.
Ah! Spenser, not the riches of my realm
Can ransom him! ah, he is marked to die!
I know the malice of the younger Mortimer.
Warwick I know is rough, and Lancaster
Inexorable, and I shall never see
My lovely Pierce, my Gaveston again!
The barons overbear me with their pride.

= regarding.

= oppress, are overbearing.[1]

Y. Spen. Were I King Edward, England's sovereign,
Son to the lovely Eleanor of Spain,

= ie. ***Eleanor of Castile***, Edward's mother, who had married Edward I in 1254, and died in 1290.

Great Edward Longshanks' issue, would I bear

= ***Longshanks*** was a nickname given to Edward I in recognition of his great height - measured at 6 feet 9 inches during an excavation.[1]

These braves, this rage, and suffer uncontrolled
These barons thus to beard me in my land,

= shows of defiance, insults.[3,24] = tolerate.
= openly oppose.[2]

In mine own realm? My lord, pardon my speech:

= Spenser recognizes that he is talking a a bit out of turn to Edward in this speech, but he no doubt realizes he need little fear any retribution from the weak king.

Did you retain your father's magnanimity,
Did you regard the honour of your name,
You would not suffer thus your majesty

= "if you had possessed".[1] = courage.[9]
= "if you had any concern for".

Be counterbuffed of your nobility.
= "to be insulted by".[9]

Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles!
= see the note at Act I.i.155.

No doubt, such lessons they will teach the rest,
As by their preachments they will profit much,

23: so that from the rebelling barons' severed heads' sermons,
the citizens will learn the lesson well.

And learn obedience to their lawful king.

K. Edw. Yea, gentle Spenser, we have been too mild,
Too kind to them; but now have drawn our sword,
And if they send me not my Gaveston,
We'll steel it on their crest[s], and poll their tops.

30: ***steel it*** = the phrase has caused much confusion for earlier editors; its likely meaning is "harden it" or "temper it", as Shakespeare used the verb ***steel*** in this manner multiple times.[1]
crest = helmet.
poll their tops = the image is of trimming off the top of a tree, suggesting "cut off their heads"; ***poll*** alone means to cut the head or top off of something.[22]

Bald. This haught resolve becomes your majesty,
= high, lofty.[8] = well suits.

Not to be tied to their affectiön,
= ill-will or caprice.[1,6]

As though your highness were a schoolboy still,
And must be awed and governed like a child.

33-34: in a rather daring speech to the king, Baldock tells Edward he should not allow himself to be intimidated by the nobles, as if he were a small child.

The Ordinances of 1311: *in this year the barons forced Edward to accept a set of rules for running the kingdom, whose primary effect was to put the governance of England into the hands of 21 Ordainers, a committee made up of the leading nobles of England. The humiliation of Edward was complete. The entire subsequent history of Edward's reign can be viewed in the subtext of a struggle between Edward and the nobles over the legitimacy of the Ordinances.*
Edward was noted in the chronicles to complain "that he was treated like an idiot" (Tancock, p. 140).[7]
Marlowe chose to completely ignore the existence of the Ordinances in our play.

[*Enter the Elder Spenser, an old man, with his truncheon and Soldiers.*]

Entering Character: *Hugh Despenser*, *later Earl of Winchester (1262-1326), and father of Hugh Despenser the younger, fought with Edward I in numerous campaigns. The Elder Despenser took part in Edward II's coronation ceremony, and alone amongst the higher nobility took the latter Edward's side in the disagreements over Gaveston.*
truncheon = a short and thick stick, like a club.[1]

E. Spen. Long live my sovereign, the noble Edward −
In peace triumphant, fortunate in wars!

K. Edw. Welcome, old man: com'st thou in Edward's aid?
= in 1312, the year Gaveston was eliminated by the barons, the Elder Spenser would have been 50 years old, the king only 28.

Then tell thy prince of whence and what thou art.
= ie. king. = from where. = who.
That the Elder Spenser was unknown to Edward is a fiction; see the note above at line 36.

E. Spen. Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,

45-48: Spenser has brought a small army with him to fight on Edward's side.
Lo = behold.

bowmen = the importance of the famous English longbow may have been recognized as early as in Edward I's reign.[18]

pikes = the ***pike*** was the quintessential medieval polearm, a simple but long - generally up to 4 meters in length - thrusting spear.[25] Both ***pikes*** here and ***brown bills*** in the next line refer specifically to men armed with those weapons.

Brown bills and targeteers, four hundred strong,

46: ***brown bills*** = the ***bill*** was a shorter pole-arm, comprised of a pole with a combination of spear, blade, and hook (for pulling down cavalry) attached at one end. It was often painted brown.[25]

targeteers = infantry carrying small round shields (***targets***).

Sworn to defend king Edward's royal right,
I come in person to your majesty,
Spenser, the father of Hugh Spenser there,
Bound to your highness everlastingly
For favours done, in him, unto us all.

49-51: Spenser couches the reason for his service to Edward as gratefulness for the king's generous treatment of his son.

K. Edw. Thy father, Spenser?

Y. Spen. True, an it like your grace,

= if it pleases.

That pours, in lieu of all your goodness shown,
His life, my lord, before your princely feet.

= who. = in return for.[2]

K. Edw. Welcome ten thousand times, old man, again.
Spenser, this love, this kindness to thy king,
Argues thy noble mind and disposition.

= is evidence of.

Spenser, I here create thee Earl of Wiltshire,

= *actually, Edward granted the Elder Despenser the title of Earl of Winchester in 1322, ten years after the time of the present scene. Young Spenser never received an earldom.*

And daily will enrich thee with our favour,
That, as the sunshine, shall reflect o'er thee.

= like.

Beside, the more to manifest our love,

= demonstrate.

Because we hear Lord Bruce doth sell his land,
And that the Mortimers are in hand withal,
Thou shalt have crowns of us t' outbid the barons:

66-68: the reference is to an actual sale of land made by a marcher noble, Lord William de Bruce, who, while arranging to unload some property in part to the Mortimers, was compelled to sell that land to the Younger Despenser, who obtained the king's help and influence to make the purchase.[7]

in hand withal = negotiating for the purchase of the land.[14]

crowns = coins worth five shillings.[11]

of (line 68) = from.

And, Spenser, spare them not, but lay it on. −

= ie. "pile them up with money".

Soldiers, a largess, and thrice-welcome all!

= Edward announces a gift of cash to Spenser's soldiers.

Y. Spen. My lord, here comes the queen.

Enter Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, and Levune.

Entering Characters: *Prince Edward*, the king's eldest son, was born on 13 November 1312, after Gaveston's removal; here he is a young lad already.

Levune is a Frenchman and a messenger of the queen's. He appears to be a non-historical character.

K. Edw. Madam, what news?

Q. Isab. News of dishonour, lord, and discontent.
Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust,
Informeth us, by letters and by words,
That Lord Valois our brother, king of France,

81: again, Marlowe incorrectly refers to King Charles IV of France as ***Valois***, which was the name given to his and Isabella's uncle ***Charles of Valois***.

Because your highness hath been slack in homage,
Hath seizèd Normandy into his hands.

83: *the disagreement was not over Normandy; see the note below at line 99.*

These be the letters, this the messenger.

81-83: English homage: the English had always possessed, to one degree or another, various provinces in western France as their fiefdoms; the French kings were naturally eager to be seen as having granted these lands to the English sovereigns as feudal gifts, in return for which they frequently requested that the English kings pay them ***homage***, or fealty, in acknowledgement of the French kings' superior status with respect to those lands. The English kings, just as naturally, and as monarchs in their own right, were reluctant to be viewed as subservient in any way to their French counterparts.

K. Edw. Welcome, Levune. −Tush, Sib, if this be all,
Valois and I will soon be friends again. −
But to my Gaveston: shall I never see,
Never behold thee now? − Madam, in this matter,
We will employ you and your little son;
You shall go parley with the king of France. −
Boy, see you bear you bravely to the king,
And do your message with a majesty.

= term of address for a kinswoman,[1] though an earlier editor suggested ***Sib*** is an endearing nickname for ***Isabella***.[9]

= discuss terms, negotiate.

= yourself.

Pr. Edw. Commit not to my youth things of more weight
Than fits a prince so young as I to bear,

95-96: at the time of the event referred to here (see the note below at line 99), Prince Edward was about 12 years old.

And fear not, lord and father, Heaven's great beams
On Atlas' shoulder shall not lie more safe,
Than shall your charge committed to my trust.

= squared timber, as a metaphor for the "structure" of the heavens.[1]

= ***Atlas*** was the Titan god responsible for carrying the heavens on his shoulders.

= command or responsibility.

The incident alluded to here in lines 81-99 occurred in 1323-5, when Charles, as a newly installed monarch, demanded that Edward perform homage to him for Aquitaine and Ponthieu, two provinces in France held by the English (Edward had formally paid such homage to Charles' brother and predecessor on the throne for the same lands in 1320).

Tensions rose when, in November 1323, English troops in Gascony (in south-west France) attacked a French force building a fort in Saint Sardos. In April 1324, Edward sent his brother the Earl of Kent as an ambassador to negotiate with Charles, but he did such a poor job of it that Charles invaded Gascony.

Kent was then appointed to lead the English troops in defense against the French, but he failed at this too, and was forced to surrender at the city of La Réole in September 1324.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! this towardness makes thy mother fear
Thou are not marked to many days on earth.

= willingness (to perform this duty).[1]

102: Isabella's fears were misplaced: young Edward would go on to live to the age of 64, ruling England for a full half-century, from 1327 to 1377.

K. Edw. Madam, we will that you with speed be shipped,
And this our son; Levune shall follow you
With all the haste we can dispatch him hence.
Choose of our lords to bear you company;
And go in peace; leave us in wars at home.

= command.

= from here.

Q. Isab. Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their king;
God end them once! My lord, I take my leave,
To make my preparatiön for France.

= defy.

= ie. once and for all.[7]

[*Exit Queen Isabella with Prince Edward.*]

114: The Queen's Departure from England: *in March 1325, Isabella, as sister of the French king, was sent to diffuse the crisis. A solution was reached when Charles and Edward accepted a proposal made by both a papal representative and Isabella that Gascony be given to Edward's son, and that the prince cross to France to perform homage. This the prince did in September.*

The consequences of this visit were tragic for the king, and severely changed the course of English history.

Enter Arundel.

K. Edw. What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?

= ie. without Gaveston.

Arun. Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

K. Edw. Ah, traitors! Have they put my friend to death?
Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,
Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?

= ie. "did he die before you got there".

Arun. Neither, my lord; for, as he was surprised,
Begirt with weapons and with enemies round,
I did your highness' message to them all;
Demanding him of them, entreating rather,
And said, upon the honour of my name,
That I would undertake to carry him
Unto your highness, and to bring him back.

= surrounded.
= ie. gave, presented.
= from. = "well, pleading, actually".

= take.

K. Edw. And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?

Y. Spen. Proud recreants!

136: "arrogant traitors![7]

K. Edw. Yea, Spenser, traitors all!

Arun. I found them at the first inexorable;
The Earl of Warwick would not bide the hearing,
Mortimer hardly; Pembroke and Lancaster
Spake least: and when they flatly had denied,
Refusing to receive me pledge for him,

= unyielding.[1]
= ie. "listen to me".

= note how Arundel employs archaic language, using words such as ***spake***, ***bespake***, ***strake*** and ***bare***.
= my.

The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake;
"My lords, because our sovereign sends for him,
And promiseth he shall be safe returned,
I will this undertake, to have him hence,
And see him re-delivered to your hands."

= gently. = spoke.

146-9: while not an exact quote of Pembroke's words at Act II.v.112-5, it is an accurate enough paraphrase.

K. Edw. Well, and how fortunes [it] that he came not?

= "does it happen".

Y. Spen. Some treason, or some villainy, was cause.

= ie. was the cause.

Arun. The Earl of Warwick seized him on his way;
For being delivered unto Pembroke's men,

156: "since Pembroke's men had been put in charge of guarding Gaveston".

Their lord rode home thinking his prisoner safe;
But ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay,
And bare him to his death; and in a trench
Strake off his head, and marched unto the camp.

= ie. returned.

160: ***strake*** = this ancient word for "struck" appears frequently in late 16th century literature.[1]

The Death of Gaveston: *after Gaveston was kidnapped and brought to Warwick Castle, the earls Arundel, Lancaster and Hereford arrived, and they agreed with Warwick that the Frenchman should be executed immediately. Gaveston was brought to Blacklow Hill, about two miles north of Warwick, and beheaded. Warwick, in order to distance himself from the event, remained in his castle as Gaveston was killed, while the other nobles watched the murder from a distance (Hutchison, p. 71).*[5]

Y. Spen. A bloody part, flatly 'gainst law of arms.

= role, referring to the deed.[14] = absolutely.

K. Edw. O shall I speak, or shall I sigh and die!

Y. Spen. My lord, refer your vengeance to the sword
Upon these barons; hearten up your men;
Let them not unrevenged murther your friends!
Advance your standard, Edward, in the field,

169: Edward has quickly managed to raise an army, following the strategy described by Isabella at Act II.iv. 74-77.

standard = banner or military flag.

Historically, after Gaveston was killed, Edward returned to London, and secured the city against the approaching troops of the barons, shutting the capital's gates against them.

And march to fire them from their starting holes.

170: a hunted animal might be forced out of its hiding place (***starting hole***) by means of ***fire***.

K. Edw. [*Kneeling*] By earth, the common mother of us all

172-5: Edward utters an extraordinary series of vows, swearing on a host of valuable objects, promising to avenge the death of Gaveston.

By Heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,

173: a reference to the Ptolemaic view of the universe, in which the earth, sitting in the center of the cosmos, is surrounded by nine or ten spheres (***orbs***), each containing one planet, or the moon or the sun, and one holding all the stars, each of which revolves around the earth.

By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
I will have heads, and lives for him, as many
As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers! –

[*Rises*.]

Treacherous Warwick! traitorous Mortimer!
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same,
That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursèd traitorous progeny,

You villains that have slain my Gaveston! −
And in this place of honour and of trust,
Spenser, sweet Spenser, I adopt thee here:

And merely of our love we do create thee
Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain,
Despite of times, despite of enemies.

= ie. the lives of many men will be taken in exchange for the life of Gaveston.

187-8: "my revenge on you (will be so terrible that it) will be remembered forever by your descendants, who will bear a permanent stain from your crime."

191: ie. Young Spenser will take Gaveston's place in the king's heart and at his right hand.

= "purely out of my love to you".[9]

192-3: *though Young Despenser was married to Eleanor, the last of the Earl of Gloucester's three daughters, Despenser himself was never given the title of earl (interestingly, his great-grandson Thomas would be invested Earl of Gloucester in 1397).*

Despenser was, however, made Edward's Chamberlain - the head of the household - in 1313, but he was appointed by Parliament, not the king, and was still hostile to the king at that point.

Y. Spen. My lord, here is a messenger from the barons
Desires accéss unto your majesty.

= a disyllable: *MESS'N-ger*.
= ***access*** is typically stressed on its second syllable.

K. Edw. Admit him near.

Enter the Herald from the barons, with his coat of arms.

= messenger.
= could mean simply a shield, not necessarily displaying a heraldic device.[1,14]

Her. Long live king Edward, England's lawful lord!

K. Edw. So wish not they, I wis, that sent thee hither.
Thou com'st from Mortimer and his 'complices,
A ranker rout of rebels never was.
Well, say thy message.

= surely. = to here.
= more foul mob.[2] Note the fine alliteration in the line.

Her. The barons up in arms, by me salute
Your highness with long life and happiness;
And bid me say, as plainer to your grace,
That if without effusiön of blood
You will this grief have ease and remedy,
That from your princely person you remove
This Spenser, as a putrifying branch
That deads the royal vine, whose golden leaves
Empale your princely head, your diadem,

= a complainant.[1]

215: "you will remedy this complaint of the lords".

= kills.
= encircles.

Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim,

= dangerous. = because Spenser came out of nowhere to suddenly become the king's favourite, he is an ***upstart***.

Say they; and lovingly advise your grace,

= the herald is careful to make sure Edward knows he is only repeating the words of others; such messengers were generally immune from punishment for the insults they were officially sanctioned to carry between parties.

To cherish virtue and nobility,
And have old servitors in high esteem,

223: "and bring into your household more experienced and well-regarded advisors".

And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers:

224: "and get rid of your glib (***smooth***) false-faced sycophants."

This granted, they, their honours, and their lives,
Are to your highness vowed and consecrate.

= dedicated.[11]

Y. Spen. Ah, traitors! will they still display their pride?

= always. = arrogance.

K. Edw. Away, tarry no answer, but be gone!

= "don't bother waiting for an answer".

Rebels, will they appoint their sovereign

= decide for.

His sports, his pleasures, and his company?

= entertainment.

Yet, ere thou go, see how I do divorce
Spenser from me. −

[*Embraces Young Spenser.*]

Now get thee to thy lords,
And tell them I will come to chastise them
For murthering Gaveston; hie thee, get thee gone!

= "hurry!"

Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels.

[*Exit Herald.*]

My lord[s], perceive you how these rebels swell? −

= grow arrogant.[1]

Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,
For now, even now, we march to make them stoop.

= a monosyllable: *e'en*. = "bow down before (us)".

Away!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF PART ONE: thus ends the unofficial first half of the play, the saga of Gaveston (1307-1312). The remainder of the play comprises the story of the last years of the reign of Edward, followed by the period of usurpation by the Younger Mortimer.

THE INTERVENING YEARS (1312-1322): *the decade after the capture of Gaveston did not bring great improvement to the administration of the English government or the lives of the English lords or common citizens.*

Reconciliation (1312-1313). *The Earl of Pembroke, outraged by the embarrassing abduction and execution of Gaveston after he had promised Gaveston's safety on his own honour, permanently broke with Lancaster. When Archbishop Winchelsea died in May 1313, the barons' party was further weakened, and after many long months of negotiations, largely mediated by Gloucester, the nobles submitted to Edward, a pardon was granted to all, and an uneasy peace was restored.*

Bannockburn and the Lancaster Years (1314-1317). *The devastating loss to the outnumbered Scottish at Bannockburn (23-24 June 1314) signaled an opportunity for the barons to reassert their preeminence in governing England. Several of Edward's favourites, including the Elder Despenser, were removed from the court, and Lancaster was appointed both chief of the ruling Council and commander-in-chief of the armies facing the Scots. Edward was forced to reconfirm the Ordinances (see the note at line 34 earlier in Act III.ii), and was even placed on an allowance of 10£ per day.*

Rise of the Middle Party (1317-1320). *At this time a large faction formed, centered around Pembroke, Arundel, the Elder Despenser, the Mortimers, and Bishop Langton. This Middle Party acted as a counterweight to Lancaster, who had a habit of raising his own armies and refusing to attend parliaments. On the other hand, though generally supportive of Edward, the Middle Party forced Edward to reconfirm the Ordinances, and caused the removal of his most hated advisors.*

Beginning of the Despenser Years (1320). *Despite his portrayal in our play, the Younger Despenser had until 1320 been a member of the barons' party; it was they who had appointed Despenser the king's Chamberlain in 1313. By 1320, though, Young Despenser had become Edward's new favourite, and the Younger and Elder Despensers together became the de facto rulers of the kingdom. Insatiably greedy, the Despensers used their positions as a means to accumulate property and wealth, which, like Gaveston had done years earlier, they parked much of in safekeeping outside of England. The pair became feared because of their power and hated because of their rapaciousness.*

The Marcher Wars (1321). *A land dispute led to a war between the marcher lords and the Younger Despenser; civil strife raged through much of Wales and western England. The Middle Party broke up, as most of its members, in hatred of the Despensers, joined the marcher lords, while Edward naturally supported Despenser (Pembroke and Arundel notably remained with the king). The barons' army ravaged the Despensers' home territory of Glamorgan in south Wales, then marched on London, and forced Edward to submit once again to their demands, which included exiling the Despensers in August 1321. The Elder Despenser, cooperative, went to the Continent, but the Younger Despenser became a dangerous pirate on the English Channel!*

Reemergence of Edward (October 1321). *In this month a strange event occurred, in which Isabella, traveling to Canterbury, was not permitted to enter her own castle at Leeds to spend the night. The castle was occupied by the wife of Baron Badlesmere, an enemy of the king, and Lady Badlesmere had even fired on the royal party when Isabella ordered her guards to attack the castle. This slap in the face of royal authority was just what the doctor ordered, and Edward, reasserting his authority, raised an army which quickly grew to 30,000 strong. After capturing Leeds Castle, he marched west, and, in the most impressive episode of his life, chased the marcher lords up the Severn Valley.*

With Edward in the ascendant, the Despensers were called back from their brief exiles.

Surrender of Mortimers (January 1322). *With Edward's forces closing in around the barons, the Mortimers - both senior and junior - surrendered to Edward near Shrewsbury, and were sent to the Tower. The remaining noble armies fled north.*

Final Blow to the Barons: the Battle of Boroughbridge (March 1322). *With the barons' forces reduced, the royal army began to chase the fleeing army of Lancaster as he retreated north with the remaining rebellious barons, probably to find safety in Scotland. On March 16, Lancaster reached the village of Boroughbridge, only to find his way across the bridge blocked by a small loyalist army led by Sir Andrew Harclay. With elements of Edward's army on his tail, Lancaster had no choice but to force the bridge.*

This is where we are now in our play. *In a very slick bit of plotting, Marlowe brilliantly took advantage of the fact that a decade earlier the king was already in Yorkshire when Gaveston surrendered at Scarboro, by bringing Edward directly to Boroughbridge immediately thereafter, and in doing so he seamlessly advances the plot from 1312 to 1322.*

ACT III, SCENE III.

Boroughbridge, the battlefield.

Scene III: we follow Cunningham in making this a separate scene.

Alarums, excursions, a great fight, and a retreat sounded within.

= groups of soldiers cross back and forth across the stage, simulating battle.

Enter King Edward, the Elder Spenser, the Younger Spenser, and Noblemen of the King's side.

= likely including Arundel and the Bishop of Winchester, who enters again and speaks his first lines in the opening scene of Act V.[14]

K. Edw. Why do we sound retreat? upon them, lords!
This day I shall pour vengeance with my sword
On those proud rebels that are up in arms,
And do confront and countermand their king.

= oppose.[2]

Y. Spen. I doubt it not, my lord, right will prevail.

E. Spen. 'Tis not amiss, my liege, for either part
To breathe a while; our men, with sweat and dust
All choked well near, begin to faint for heat;
And this retire refresheth horse and man.

= both sides.
= rest.
= withdrawal.[2]

Y. Spen. Here come the rebels.

Enter Young Mortimer, Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, and others.

Y. Mort. Look, Lancaster, yonder is Edward
Among his flatterers.

= ***Edward*** may be tri-syllabic here: *ED-er-ward.*

Lanc. And there let him be
Till he pay dearly for their company.

War. And shall, or Warwick's sword shall smite in vain.

K. Edw. What, rebels, do you shrink and sound retreat?

26*ff*: as he did in the *Tamburlaine* plays, Marlowe gives his opposing factions a chance to exchange insults and jeers before (or in this case, during) a battle.

Y. Mort. No, Edward, no; thy flatterers faint and fly.

= flee; from this point forward, each side addresses the other with ***thou*** as a way to express their contempt.

Lanc. Thou'd best betimes forsake them and their trains,
For they'll betray thee, traitors as they are.

30: ***betimes*** = at once.[2]
trains = strategems.[8]
30: the quarto reads, "***Th'ad*** *best betimes forsake* ***thee*** *and their trains*," but we accept Briggs' emendation as making more sense.

Y. Spen. Traitor on thy face, rebellious Lancaster!

= ie. "back at you in your face", ie. "you are the traitor, not me!"

Pemb. Away, base upstart! Brav'st thou nobles thus?

= insults.

E. Spen. A noble attempt and honourable deed,

37: Spenser puns weakly on ***noble***. His response in this short speech is ironic.

Is it not, trow ye, to assemble aid,
And levy arms against your lawful king!

= ie. "do you suppose".

K. Edw. For which, ere long, their heads shall satisfy,
T' appease the wrath of their offended king.

= make repayment, atone.[1]

Y. Mort. Then, Edward, thou wilt fight it to the last,
And rather bathe thy sword in subjects' blood,
Than banish that pernicious company?

= villainous.[1]

K. Edw. Ay, traitors all, rather than thus be braved,
Make England's civil towns huge heaps of stones,
And ploughs to go about our palace-gates.

= defied.
= ie. "I will make". = municipal.[1]
50: ie. because the developed lands will be, by their destruction, turned back into farmland.

War. A desperate and unnatural resolution!
Alarum! − to the fight!
Saint George for England, and the barons' right!

54: common battle cry for the English, but an anachronistic one: ***George*** did not become England's patron saint until later in the 14th century. The earliest known literary use of ***St. George*** in a battle cry was 1442.[1]

K. Edw. Saint George for England, and King Edward's right!

[*Alurums. Exeunt the two parties severally.*]

The Battle of Boroughbridge (22 March 1322): *with the royalist command of the Earls of Surrey and Kent not far behind him, Lancaster tried to force the bridge at Boroughbridge, which was defended on the far side by another small army led by Sir Andrew Harclay. Harclay's longbowmen shattered the attack, and Lancaster was decisively repulsed. His second in command, the Earl of Hereford, was killed outright, impaled by a spear thrust up between the planks of the bridge. Lancaster surrendered the next day.*

ACT III, SCENE IV.

Another part of the battlefield at Boroughbridge.

Enter King Edward and all his followers, with the Barons and Kent captives.

Entering Characters: the noble captives include Mortimer, Lancaster and Warwick, and Edward's brother Edmund, the Earl of Kent. Notably, Pembroke is missing from the scene; in fact, Pembroke makes no further appearances in the play.

K. Edw. Now, lusty lords, now not by chance of war,
But justice of the quarrel and the cause,
Vailed is your pride; methinks you hang the heads,
But we'll advance them, traitors: now 'tis time

= insolent.[1] = luck.
= lowered, ie. humbled.[4] = ie. your.
= promote their heads - by cutting them off and raising them on poles.

To be avenged on you for all your braves,
And for the murther of my dearest friend,
To whom right well you knew our soul was knit,
Good Pierce of Gaveston, my sweet favourite.
Ah, rebels! Recreants! you made him away!

= insults.[9]
= traitors. = ie. killed him.

Kent. Brother, in regard of thee, and of thy land,
Did they remove that flatterer from thy throne.

= in consideration of, ie. for the good of.

K. Edw. So, sir, you have spoke; away, avoid our presence!

[*Exit Kent.*]

= Kent actually fought on his brother Edward's side throughout the wars with the barons.

Accursèd wretches, was't in regard of us,
When we had sent our messenger to request
He might be spared to come to speak with us,
And Pembroke undertook for his return,
That thou, proud Warwick, watched the prisoner,
Poor Pierce, and headed him 'gainst law of arms?

= the king scornfully repeats Kent's phrase of line 11.
= a disyllable again: *MESS'N-ger*.
= ie. took responsibility.
= ie. guarded Gaveston, an ironic comment.
= ie. beheaded. = against the established, if unofficial, rules of warfare.

For which thy head shall overlook the rest,

24: another grimly humorous reference to the placing of the rebels' heads on poles and set high up on London Bridge.

As much as thou in rage outwent'st the rest.

= outdid.

War. Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces;
It is but temporal that thou canst inflict.

= worldly (punishment); Warwick's point is that Edward can harm their bodies, but not their souls (Ribner, p. 324).[3]

Lanc. The worst is death; and better die to live
Than live in infamy under such a king.

= ie. in Heaven.
= shame or disgrace.[9]

K. Edw. Away with them, my lord of Winchester!
These lusty leaders, Warwick and Lancaster,
I charge you roundly − off with both their heads!
Away!

= ie. the Elder Spenser, whom Edward actually created Earl of Wiltshire at Act III.ii.62.

The Despensers, having been exiled in August 1321, were recalled in mid-January 1322. The Elder Despenser was made Earl of Winchester by Parliament in May of the same year.

War. Farewell, vain world!

= idle, worthless.

Lanc. Sweet Mortimer, farewell!

Y. Mort. England, unkind to thy nobility,
Groan for this grief, behold how thou art maimed!

K. Edw. Go, take that haughty Mortimer to the Tower,
There see him safe bestowed; and for the rest,
Do speedy execution on them all.
Begone!

45: *The Mortimers were not at the Battle of Boroughbridge; both had surrendered to Edward in January in south-west England, and were already in the Tower of London at the time of the battle.*

The reader may wonder why, as a matter of dramatic consistency, Marlowe does not have Edward execute Mortimer as he does the other rebels; the answer can be found in the note at the end of this scene.

Y. Mort. What, Mortimer? Can raggèd stony walls
Immure thy virtue that aspires to Heaven?
No, Edward, England's scourge, it may not be;
Mortimer's hope surmounts his fortune far.

= roughly finished.[6]
= "confine your power".[2]
= "expectations surpass".

[*The captive Barons are led off.*]

K. Edw. Sound drums and trumpets! March with me, my friends,
Edward this day hath crowned him king anew.

= ie. himself.

[*Exuent all except Young Spenser, Levune, and Baldock.*]

Y. Spen. Levune, the trust that we repose in thee,
Begets the quiet of King Edward's land.
Therefore be gone in haste, and with advice
Bestow that treasure on the lords of France,
That, therewith all enchanted, like the guard
That suffered Jove to pass in showers of gold
To Danaë, all aid may be denied

63-72: Spenser charges Levune with the responsibility of informing the King of France that Edward is once again in firm control of his realm; he is further to try to convince Charles not to give aid to his sister Queen Isabella, who has refused to return to England after having settled the homage question with Charles. Finally, the Frenchman is instructed to bribe Charles' advisors into also pressing their king to drop his support of Isabella.

Levune has been assigned this mission in response to rumours which are now circulating that Isabella is plotting the overthrow of the king.

= ie. which may potentially bring peace to.
= wisely[1] or judiciously.[14]

67-69: ***That…Danae*** = another reference to the maiden who was locked in a tower to prevent her from meeting up with any men, only to have the king of the gods (***Jove***) impregnate her while visiting her as a shower of gold.

Marlowe has added a ***guard*** to the story, which he describes as being ***enchanted*** by Jove to admit him into the castle, just as Levune is with his bribes to ***enchant*** Charles' counselors.

suffered = allowed.

To Isabel, the queen, that now in France
Makes friends, to cross the seas with her young son,
And step into his father's regiment.

= ie. with the intention of crossing back into England.
72: ie. take over royal rule (***regiment***) from the king.

Lev. That's it these barons and the subtle queen

Long leveled at.

= "have been aiming at;" ***leveled*** = aimed.

Bald. Yea, but, Levune, thou seest
These barons lay their heads on blocks together;

78: Baldock engages in word play: the barons had put their ***heads together*** (1) figuratively to plot the king's overthrow, and (2) literally on the chopping block.

What they intend, the hangman frustrates clean.

= executioner.[1] = cleanly, ie. completely.

Lev. Have you no doubts, my lords, I'll clap [so] close

= strike, stick or work so secretly.[3,9] ***Clap*** has many shades of meaning, and previous editors have interpreted the phrase differently.

Among the lords of France with England's gold,
That Isabel shall make her plaints in vain,

= complaints.

And France shall be obdúrate with her tears.

84: ie. the French king shall respond to Isabella's tearful pleas with stubborn refusal.
obdurate = usually stressed as here on the second syllable.

81-84: *the Holinshed chronicle tells how several barrels of silver, sent by the Despensers and intended for distribution amongst the French king's counselors, were captured by pirates, and eventually found their way to Hainaut, where the queen took up residence after leaving France.*[6]

Spen. Then make for France amain − Levune, away!
Proclaim King Edward's wars and victories.

= right away.[2]

[*Exeunt.*]

Edward's Victory Over the Barons: *Edward showed a rare streak of vindictiveness in the aftermath of the victory at Boroughbridge: the Earl of Lancaster was tried in a kangaroo court and summarily beheaded at his own property, Pontefract Castle, and the peers Badlesmere, Clifford, and Mowbray, along with dozens of other knights, were hanged.*

The Parliament that met in May 1322 revoked the Ordinances, and the Despensers were recalled. Edward's victory was complete, and he was now fully and officially in charge his kingdom.

Marlowe's Failure to have Edward Execute Mortimer: *as a matter of internal logic, it makes no sense for Edward to execute Lancaster and all the other peers, but not Young Mortimer, who, in the play, acted with at least the same level of treason as Lancaster (in addition to the fact that he was allegedly adulterously involved with Isabella); of course, Mortimer has to remain alive as a historical matter - he will become the primary villain in this drama, but as Briggs pointed out, Marlowe has failed to provide an explanation for this inconsistency* (p. 164).[6]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

London, near the Tower.

Enter Kent.

= for his role in the rebellion, Kent was not executed, but banished from the court.

The note at Act III.ii.99 described how Kent went to France in April 1324 to discuss the homage issue with Charles; after his failure as a negotiator and his surrender of the English troops resisting Charles' invasion of Gascony, Kent stayed in France. Isabella arrived in Paris in March 1325, and, having successfully brokered a peace between Edward and Charles, remained in France, to be joined by her son the prince in September.

Mortimer and Kent soon joined the queen in Paris.

Kent. Fair blows the wind for France; blow gentle gale,
Till Edmund be arrived for England's good! −

1*ff*: Kent is still in London. In lines 1-2, he apostrophizes to the wind to blow gently and towards France, so that he may escape England more easily.

Nature, yield to my country's cause in this. −

3: personified ***Nature*** is also invited to lend a helping hand, since to help him (Kent) is to help England.

A brother? no, a butcher of thy friends!
Proud Edward, dost thou banish me thy presence?

4: Kent alludes to the execution of the barons.
= arrogant. = ie. "from thy".

But I'll to France, and cheer the wrongèd queen,
And certify what Edward's looseness is.

= "inform (her)". = immoral or unrestrained conduct.[1,7]

Unnatural king! to slaughter noblemen
And cherish flatterers! − Mortimer, I stay

= await.

Thy sweet escape: − stand gracious, gloomy night,
To his device.

10-11: ***stand gracious…device*** = a sort-of prayer, asking for favour from the Night for Young Mortimer's success in his attempt to escape imprisonment from the Tower.
device = plan or scheme.

Enter Young Mortimer, disguised.

Y. Mort. Holla! who walketh there?
Is't you my lord?

Kent. Mortimer, 'tis I;
But hath thy potion wrought so happily?

19: Mortimer escaped the Tower by arranging to give his guards wine laced with sedatives.
wrought = worked.

Y. Mort. It hath, my lord; the warders all asleep,

= guards.

I thank them, gave me leave to pass in peace.
But hath your grace got shipping unto France?

= permission.

Kent. Fear it not.

[*Exeunt.*]

Mortimer's Escape: *Young Mortimer's escape from the Tower took place on 1 August 1323 - over a year after his imprisonment began. With the assistance of confederates within the Tower, Mortimer drugged the wine of his guards, who were celebrating the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula,*

knocking them out, and exited his cell through a hole cut into its wall; passing through the kitchen of the king's apartment, Mortimer made it to the roof, from which he left the fortress by means of a rope ladder. Additional accomplices on the outside were ready and waiting to whisk him away by boat on the Thames (Hutchison, p. 129).[5]

The Elder Mortimer died in the Tower in 1326, perhaps of starvation.

The Reassertion of the Despensers (1322-1326): *after the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322, Edward found himself, perhaps for the first time in his reign, without any strong opposition. With Lancaster, Hereford, and most other leaders of the opposing barons dead (Warwick had died of illness in 1315), and the Mortimers in the Tower, the Despensers resumed their arrogant and greedy ways - although it may be said that the Younger Despenser proved himself otherwise to be an able administrator of the kingdom.*

The Despensers' Big Mistake - Making an Enemy of Isabella: *despite Edward's lack of interest in his wife (especially during the Gaveston years - though it must be granted that Isabella was only in her mid-teens at the time), Isabella had generally been treated well over the years, with a sizable household of her own, and plenty of income to do with as she wished.*

However, the Despensers, hoping to keep the king as isolated from others' influence as much as possible, convinced Edward in 1324 of the need to sequester the queen's lands, on the theory that she might be furtively plotting with the King of France; in a further humiliation, the Younger Despenser's wife was installed as the queen's housekeeper, where she was officially charged with reviewing all of Isabella's correspondence. Deprived of her land and servants, and reduced to an allowance of 20 shillings a day, Isabella's hatred of the Despensers grew complete.

In hindsight, it became clear that the greatest tactical blunder committed by the Despensers was allowing Isabella to leave England and travel to France in March 1325, escaping their control; had she been kept in England, the subsequent disasters to Edward and the Despensers might never had happened.

ACT IV, SCENE II.

Paris.

Enter Queen Isabella and Prince Edward.

Scene II: it is now 1325. Having completed her mission in France - a settling of the conflict over Edward's homage to Charles IV - Isabella decided to stay in Paris, refusing to return to an England run by the Spensers.

Eventually Isabella was joined by Young Mortimer, the disgraced Earl of Kent, several bishops and a growing number of disaffected nobles.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! our friends do fail us all in France:
The lords are cruël, and the king unkind;
What shall we do?

= ***unkind*** is used to describe one's mistreatment of one's own kin. Chares is ***unkind*** because he will not support his sister Isabella in her scheming.

Pr. Edw. Madam, return to England,
And please my father well, and then a fig

= a strong expression of contempt, accompanied by a rude gesture, usually the placing of one's thumb between the first two fingers of a fist, or into one's mouth.[24]

For all my uncle's friendship here in France.

7: the prince sarcastically curses the failure of Charles IV (his uncle through his mother Isabella) to give them any further aid.

The National Biography suggests that the French king grew further embarrassed of Isabella's presence in his country because of her shameful affair with Mortimer.

I warrant you, I'll win his highness quickly;
'A loves me better than a thousand Spensers.

= guarantee. = ie. "win over the king".
= he.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy, thou art deceived, at least in this,
To think that we can yet be tuned together.
No, no, we war too far. Unkind Valois! −

= be made harmonious, a musical metaphor.
= "our disagreements are too great to repair." Dyce emends ***war*** to ***jar***.

Unhappy Isabel! when France rejects,
Whither, oh! whither dost thou bend thy steps?

= ie. "rejects me".
= to where. = direct.

Enter Sir John of Hainault.

Entering Character: ***Sir John of Hainaut*** was the brother of the Count of Hainaut, William II. Hainaut is in modern Belgium.

Sir John. Madam, what cheer?

Q. Isab. Ah, good Sir John of Hainault,
Never so cheerless, nor so far distressed.

Sir John. I hear, sweet lady, of the king's unkindness;
But droop not, madam; noble minds contemn

25-26: ***noble…Despair*** = a common sentiment: great persons do not wallow in despair, but gamely work out a plan to recover what has been lost.
contemn = scorn.

Despair; will your grace with me to Hainault,
And there stay time's advantage with your son? −

= go with.
= the sense is "await the improvement of the situation, which time will surely bring".

How say you, my lord, will you go with your friends,
And shake off all our fortunes equally?

= ie. addressing Prince Edward.
= some editors emend ***shake off*** to ***share of***; a more drastic change that has also been adopted is to emend ***fortunes*** to ***sorrows***.

Pr. Edw. So pleaseth the queen my mother, me it likes.
The King of England, nor the court of France,
Shall have me from my gracious mother's side,
Till I be strong enough to break a staff;
And then have at the proudest Spenser's head.

= pleases.
= ie. "neither the".
= take part in a fight or battle.
= a phrase used to indicate a readiness to begin a fight.

Sir John. Well said, my lord.

Q. Isab. O, my sweet heart, how do I moan thy wrongs,
Yet triumph in the hope of thee, my joy! −
Ah, sweet Sir John! even to the utmost verge
Of Europe, on the shore of Tanais,
We will with thee to Hainault − so we will: −

= bemoan, lament.[1]

41-43: ***even to…Hainault*** = "Hainault, we would go with you, even if it was to the furthest parts of Europe, as represented by the River Tanais."
even = almost always, as here, a monosyllable: *e'en*.
utmost verge = outermost bounderies.[1,2]
Tanais = the Don River of Russia, once considered to be the boundary between Europe and Asia.[21]

The marquis is a noble gentleman:
His grace, I dare presume, will welcome me.

44-45: Isabella is referring to Sir John's brother, William II, the Count of Hainaut. William will indeed welcome Isabella, providing her with money and troops; in return, his daughter will become engaged to Prince Edward, the future king of England!

But who are these?

Enter Kent and Young Mortimer.

Kent. Madam, long may you live,
Much happier than your friends in England do!

Q. Isab. Lord Edmund and lord Mortimer alive!
Welcome to France! The news was here, my lord,
That you were dead, or very near your death.

Y. Mort. Lady, the last was truest of the twain:
But Mortimer, reserved for better hap,
Hath shaken off the thraldom of the Tower,
And lives t' advance your standard, good my lord.

= the two, ie. the two alternatives Isabella just mentioned.
= fortune.
= captivity.
= banner (of the army).

Pr. Edw. How mean you? and the king, my father, lives!
No, my Lord Mortimer, not I, I trow.

= "assure you."[9] Prince Edward understands Mortimer is hinting at an invasion of England to overthrow his father, and wants no part of it.

Q. Isab. Not, son! why not? I would it were no worse.
But, gentle lords, friendless we are in France.

65-66: Isabella only wishes that there were no greater obstacle to their invading England than the prince's hesitation; but what is worse is that they have lost any support for their venture in France.[7]
would (line 65) = wish.

Y. Mort. Monsieur le Grand, a noble friend of yours,
Told us, at our arrival, all the news −
How hard the nobles, how unkind the king
Hath shewed himself; but madam, right makes room

= unknown and uncommented-on personage.

71-72: ***right…want*** = "a righteous cause makes way where weapons fail." (Tancock, p. 147).[7]
shewed = common alternate form of ***showed***.

Where weapons want; and, though a many friends
Are made away, as Warwick, Lancaster,

= ie. many; a variation on the more common, and still surviving, phrase, ***many a***, as in ***many a friend***. We also still say ***a great many friends***.[6]

= have been murdered.

And others of our party and faction;

= ie. "side"; Marlowe uses a figure of speech known as a *pleonasm*, in which two or more words are redundant: ***party*** and ***faction*** mean the same thing.

Yet have we friends, assure your grace, in England
Would cast up caps, and clap their hands for joy,

= "who would toss". Note also the nice alliteration and assonance of ***cast***, ***caps*** and ***clap*** in this line.

To see us there, appointed for our foes.

= armed or equipped (for war).[2]

Kent. Would all were well, and Edward well reclaimed,

= "I wish". = put right, or tamed, a term from falconry.[1]

For England's honour, peace and quietness.

Y. Mort. But by the sword, my lord, 't must be deserved;

= earned.[8]

The king will ne'er forsake his flatterers.

Sir John. My lords of England, sith th' ungentle king

= ancient form of ***since***. = unchivalrous.[1]

Of France refuseth to give aid of arms
To this distressèd queen, his sister here,
Go you with her to Hainault; doubt ye not,
We will find comfort, money, men and friends
Ere long, to bid the English king a base. −

= challenge Edward to an encounter;[4] the reference is to a game called ***prisoner's base*** (or ***bars***), in which two teams, occupying separate areas, try to capture members of the opposing team who enter their side.[1]

How say, young prince? what think you of the match?

= contest, game.[1]

Pr. Edw. I think king Edward will outrun us all.

= ie. "come out on top"; with ***outrun***, the prince glances back to the allusion to the game of prisoner's base.[14]

Q. Isab. Nay, son, not so; and you must not discourage
Your friends, that are so forward in your aid.

= eager.

Kent. Sir John of Hainault, pardon us, I pray;
These comforts that you give our woeful queen
Bind us in kindness all at your command.

Q. Isab. Yea, gentle brother; and the God of Heaven

= brother-in-law, ie. Kent.

Prosper your happy motion, good Sir John.

= plan or proposal.[6]

Y. Mort. This noble gentleman, forward in arms,

= ready to fight.[1]

Was born, I see, to be our anchor-hold. −
Sir John of Hainault, be it thy renown,
That England's queen and nobles in distress,
Have been by thee restored and comforted.

Sir John. Madam, along, and you my lords, with me,

= ie. "go along".

That England's peers may Hainault's welcome see.

111-2: the scene ends with a rhyming couplet.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

An apartment in the king's palace at Westminster.

Enter King Edward, Arundel, the Elder and Younger Spenser, and others.

K. Edw. Thus after many threats of wrathful war,
Triumpheth England's Edward with his friends;
And triumph, Edward, with his friends, uncontrolled!
= ie. Edward is, with his friends, no longer constrained (***controlled***) in his actions.

My lord of Gloucester, do you hear the news?
= ie. Young Spenser.

Y. Spen. What news, my lord?

K. Edw. Why, man, they say there is great execution
= much killing, slaughter; the phrase ***great execution*** was a common one.[1]

Done through the realm; − my lord of Arundel,
You have the note, have you not?
= report.[1]

Arun. From the Lieutenant of the Tower, my lord.

K. Edw. I pray, let us see it.

[*Takes the note*.]

What have we there?
Read it, Spenser.

[*Hands the note to Young Spenser, who reads the names*.]
= ie. of those who were executed; Holinshead's *Chronicles* provides the names for Spenser to read. The entire relevant paragraph appears at the end of this scene (at line 80 below); a director may choose to have Spenser read off as many of the names as her or she wishes.

Why, so; they barked apace a month ago:
Now, on my life, they'll neither bark nor bite.
= ie. embarked (on their enterprise). = swifly.[1]
25: Edward puns on ***barked***.

Now, sirs, the news from France? Gloucester, I trow
The lords of France love England's gold so well
As Isabell[a] gets no aid from thence.
= "am confident".

What now remains? Have you proclaimed, my lord,
Reward for them can bring in Mortimer?

Y. Spen. My lord, we have; and if he be in England,
'A will be had ere long, I doubt it not.
= "he". = captured.

K. Edw. If, dost thou say? Spenser, as true as death,
= ie. "*if* he is in England, you say?"

He is in England's ground; our portmasters
Are not so careless of their king's command.
= on. = harbour-masters.

Enter a Messenger.

How now, what news with thee? from whence come these?

Post. Letters, my lord, and tidings forth of France; −
= news from.

To you, my lord of Gloucester, from Levune.

[*Gives letters to Young Spenser*.]

K. Edw. Read.

Spen. [*Reads*] "*My duty to your honour promised,*
= many editors emend ***promised*** to ***premised***, but a search of early literature shows that ***promised*** is correct: for example,

		from Holinshed's ***Chronicles*** (a commonly used source for Marlowe), we find the following: "*...faithfull* ***promise*** *of his* ***dutie*** *and allegiance...*"
	&c., I have, according to instructions in that behalf,	= "et cetera"; Spenser skips over the letter's formalities.
52	*dealt with the King of France his lords, and effected,*	= ie. "France's".[14]
	that the queen, all discontented and discomforted, is	= vexed.[11]
54	*gone; whither, if you ask, with Sir John of Hainault,*	= to where.
	brother to the marquis, into Flanders. With them are	
56	*gone lord Edmund, and the lord Mortimer, having in*	
	their company divers of your nation, and others; and,	= ie. various persons.
58	*as constant report goeth, they intend to give King*	= consistent.
	Edward battle in England, sooner than he can look for	
60	*them. This is all the news of import.*	50-60: letters in Elizabethan drama are usually written, as here, in prose.
62	*Your honour's in all service, Levune*".	62: *information regarding the treasonous activities of the queen was actually brought to Edward by Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, who had accompanied Prince Edward on his voyage to France.*
64	***K. Edw.*** Ah, villains! hath that Mortimer escaped?	
	With him is Edmund gone associate?	
66	And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?	= a dance in which people move about in a ring.[1]
	Welcome, a God's name, madam, and your son;	= in.
68	England shall welcome you and all your rout.	= mob or rabble.
	Gallop apace, bright Phoebus, through the sky,	69-73: Edward asks both Day and Night to hurry along, as he can barely wait for the day when Isabella and her rebels land on England's shores. 69: Edward apostrophizes to the sun, which in myth was traditionally imagined to be pulled across the sky by a team of horses, driven by Apollo in his guise as the sun-god Phoebus. ***apace*** = swiftly. In these lines, we find another borrowing by Shakespeare, for Juliet's speech in *Romeo and Juliet* at Act III.ii, in which she too asks for Day and Night to pass swiftly: *Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,* *Towards Phoebus' lodging...*
70	And dusky night, in rusty iron car,	70: personified Night's broken-down chariot is contrasted with Apollo's brilliant car that is the sun.
	Between you both, shorten the time, I pray,	
72	That I may see that most desirèd day,	
	When we may meet these traitors in the field.	
74	Ah, nothing grieves me, but my little boy	= young Edward was 14 years old at this time.
	Is thus misled to countenance their ills.	= support. = evil deeds.[11]
76	Come, friends, to Bristow, there to make us strong; −	= Bristol. = build an army.
	And, winds, as equal be to bring them in,	= just.[7]
78	As you injurious were to bear them forth!	77-78: closing out the scene, Edward's prayer to the wind acts as a perfect counterpoise to his brother Edmund's orison to the same wind which opened Scene I of this Act. ***forth*** = ie. "away from England and to the continent."
80	[*Exeunt.*]	**List of Executed Nobles:** excerpted below is the relevant paragraph from 1587's *Chronicles*, Volume 3, which lists those executed following the events at Boroughbridge

(spelling modernized); some of these names may be read out by Spenser at line 22 above.

On the same day, the lord William Tuchet, the lord William fitz William, the lord Warren de Lisle, the lord Henrie Bradborne, and the lord William; Chenie(?) barons, with John Page, an esquire, were drawn and hanged at Pomfret aforesaid, and then shortly after, Roger Lord Clifford, John Lord Mowbraie, and Sir Gosein d' Eeuill barons, were drawn and hanged at York. At Bristow in like manner were executed Sir Henrie de Willington, and Sir Henrie Montfort baronets; and at Glocester, the Lord John Gifford, and Sir William Elmebridge knight; and at London, the lord Henrie Teies baron; at Winchelsy, Sir Thomas Culpepper knight; at Windsor, the Lord Francis de Aldham baron; and at Canterbury, the Lord Bartholomew de Badelismere, and the Lord Bartholomew de Ashbornham, barons. Also at Cardiffe in Wales, Sir William Fleming knight was executed: diverse were executed in their countries, as Sir Thomas Mandit and others.

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

Near Harwich.

Scene IV: ***Harwich*** is a port-town in south-east England.

Enter Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, Kent, Young Mortimer, and Sir John of Hainault.

Q. Isab. Now lords, our loving friends and countrymen,

Welcome to England all, with prosperous winds!
Our kindest friends in Belgia have we left,

To cope with friends at home: a heavy case

When force to force is knit, and sword and glaive

In civil broils make kin and countrymen
Slaughter themselves in others, and their sides

With their own weapons gored! But what's the help?
Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack; −
And, Edward, thou art one among them all,
Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil,
And made the channels overflow with blood.
Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be.
But thou −

Y. Mort. Nay, madam, if you be a warrior,

1-2: Isabella's opening lines allude to the same ***winds*** to which Edward prayed to close out the last scene.

= ie. Belgium, where Hainaut is found. = ie. left behind.

4: ***To cope…home*** = Isabella is referring to herself and her forces that have just landed in England (***home***) to offer battle (***cope***).[1]
a heavy case = a sad situation.

5: ***When force…knit*** = when Englishmen fight against each other.
glaive = lance or other pole-arm, perhaps with a blade at one end.[1,25]

= turmoils.
= when people kill their fellow countrymen in civil war, it is as if they are killing themselves.

= lawless or immoral.[1] = ruin.

= laxness or lewdness.[1,2]
= gutters.
= protector.[11]

You must not grow so passionate in speeches. −

= expressive of emotion; Mortimer's admonishment is a common one: the inability to control one's emotions was viewed as a weakness.

Lords,
Sith that we are by sufferance of Heaven
Arrived, and armèd in this prince's right,
Here for our country's cause swear we to him
All homage, fealty, and forwardness;
And for the open wrongs and injuries
Edward hath done to us, his queen and land,
We come in arms to wreak it with the sword;

19-20: ***Sith…Arrived*** = "since Providence has permitted us to land safely".

= enthusiasm, zeal.[2]

= take revenge on it.[1]

That England's queen in peace may repossess
Her dignities and honours: and withal
We may remove these flatterers from the king,
That havocs England's wealth and treasury.

26-27: ***That England's…honours*** = in Isabella's last years in England, the Despensers had stripped her of her land, servants and money.

= moreover.

= waste or make havoc of; a rare use of ***havoc*** as a verb.[1]

26-29: Mortimer justifies the invasion on two grounds: their desire to restore Isabella's property and position, and their intention to remove Edward's evil counselors.

It was traditional for English rebels - both on stage and in real life - to provide spurious reasons for their actions, dissembling regarding their true and more discomfiting goal, the overthrow of the monarch.

Sir John. Sound trumpets, my lord, and forward let us march.
Edward will think we come to flatter him.

32: ie. "if we continue to stand around talking, Edward will not take our actions seriously."[14]

Kent. I would he never had been flattered more!

34: "it is too bad that this talk of ours is not the most flattery Edward ever received - as opposed to the greater and more damaging flattery heaped on him by his followers for all these years." (Bevington, p. 485).[14]

[*Exeunt.*]

The Rebels Land in England: *Isabella, Mortimer and Prince Edward landed with their army of less than a thousand at the eastern port of Harwich on 24 September 1326. The queen's forces grew quickly as she marched west, while Edward, busily giving commands for the levying of forces that everyone ignored, fled towards Wales with his closest advisors, including both Despensers, Arundel, and Baldock.*

With royal authority now completely absent in London, a mob took over the city, freeing political prisoners from the Tower, and murdering Walter Stapleton, the Bishop of Exeter and supporter of Edward.

ACT IV, SCENE V.

Near Bristol.

Enter King Edward, Baldock, and Young Spenser, flying about the stage.

Y. Spen. Fly, fly, my lord! the queen is over-strong;

1: the prefix ***over-*** was frequently used as an intensifier.

Her friends do multiply, and yours do fail.

2: *Events moved quickly once Isabella landed in England. Most of Edward's followers abandoned him, as did the Council and Parliament.*

Shape we our course to Ireland, there to breathe.

= ie. "where we can finally rest in one place."

3: the members of the royal party decided to make a dash for Ireland to try to save themselves.

K. Edw. What! was I born to fly and run away,
And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind?
Give me my horse, and let's r'enforce our troops:

= reinforce, ie. encourage, give heart too.[9]

And in this bed of honour die with fame.

= metaphor for a grave, per the OED.[1]

Bald. O no, my lord, this princely resolution
Fits not the time: away! we are pursued.

10-11: ***this princely…time*** = "this is the wrong moment to show courage!"

[*Exeunt.*]

13: some editors begin a new scene after the royalists leave the stage, but we may imagine Kent just missing his brother.

Enter Kent alone, with sword and target.

= small, round shield.

Kent. This way he fled, but I am come too late. −

17: Kent, repentant, had hoped to catch up with and rejoin Edward.

In this speech (17-34), Kent explores his regret at having supported the rebels' cause; he likely feels the goal of removing the Spensers is a legitimate one, but that of deposing the king as one that goes too far.[7]

Edward, alas! my heart relents for thee. −
Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase
Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?
Vild wretch! − and why hast thou, of all unkind,

21: ***Vild*** = vile.

thou = Kent now addresses himself.

of all unkind = most unnatural of all, in the sense that he is opposing his own brother.[1]

Borne arms against thy brother and thy king? −
Rain showers of vengeance on my cursèd head,
Thou God, to whom in justice it belongs
To punish this unnatural revolt! −
Edward, this Mortimer aims at thy life!
O fly him, then! − But, Edmund, calm this rage,
Dissemble, or thou diest; for Mortimer

= ie. "you better pretend you have no misgivings".

And Isabel do kiss while they conspire:
And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.

30: Isabella makes an outward show of still being devoted to her husband.

forsooth = truly.

Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate!

= shame.

Edmund, away! Bristow to Longshanks' blood

32-33: ***Bristow…false*** = the king's hopes for support in Bristol have proven illusory.

Longshank's blood = ie. Longshank's issue, referring to our Edward II, whose father Edward I was nicknamed Longshanks.

After leaving London, Edward went straight to Wales, where he appeared next at Tintern Abbey at Monmouthshire by 14 October. The king dispatched the Elder Despenser to

Bristol to try to raise support, but the city freely surrendered to Isabella at her appearance there on 26 October.

Is false: be not found single for suspect:

= Kent admonishes himself not to be caught alone in order to avoid Mortimer's suspicion (***suspect***).[6]

Proud Mortimer pries near into thy walks.

34: Mortimer is keeping a close eye on Kent's activities.

Enter Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, Young Mortimer, and Sir John of Hainault.

Q. Isab. Successful battles gives the God of kings
To them that fight in right and fear his wrath.

39-40: typical complex sentence arrangement: ***the God of kings*** is the sentence's subject, who ***gives successful battles to those who fight etc.***

Since then successfully we have prevailed,
Thanks be Heaven's great architect, and you. −

= ie. God. = ie. Mortimer.

Ere farther we proceed, my noble lords,
We here create our well-belovèd son,

44-46: ***We here…realm*** = that the legitimate king was still alive, though missing, created a puzzling legal situation; the solution was to declare Prince Edward "Keeper of the Realm".

Of love and care unto his royal person,
Lord Warden of the realm, and sith the fates

= since.

Have made his father so infortunate,
Deal you, my lords, in this, my loving lords,
As to your wisdoms fittest seems in all.

Kent. Madam, without offense, if I may ask,
How will you deal with Edward in his fall?

51-52: Edmund hesitantly inquires as to the queen's plans for the king.

Pr. Edw. Tell me, good uncle, what Edward do you mean?

54: Tancock suggests that the prince is indirectly questioning Kent's disrespectful use of the king's name rather than his title, and not actual confusion as to which of the two Edwards he is referring to.[7]

Kent. Nephew, your father: I dare not call him king.

Y. Mort. My lord of Kent, what needs these questiöns?

= "what's the point of".

'Tis not in her controlment, nor in ours,

= control or power, ie. Isabella has nothing to do with this decision.

But as the realm and parliament shall please,
So shall your brother be disposèd of. −
[*Aside to the Queen*]
I like not this relenting mood in Edmund.
Madam, 'tis good to look to him betimes.

63-64: Mortimer senses Kent is going soft, so they should keep an eye on him.
betimes = soon, before it is too late.[1]

Q. Isab. My lord, the mayor of Bristow knows our mind.

= "understands what we want done," ie. "is on our side."

Y. Mort. Yea, madam; and they scape not easily
That fled the field.

Q. Isab. Baldock is with the king.
A goodly chancellor, is he not, my lord?

72: Baldock had been appointed Chancellor, or king's secretary, in 1323.

Sir John. So are the Spensers, th' father and the son.

74: Sir John means the Spensers are also with the king.

Kent. This Edward is the ruin of the realm.

76: Kent, perhaps feebly, tries to appear still anti-Edward. Bevington adds commas to the line as so: "This, Edward, is the ruin of the realm." Kent's line thus becomes a sad

aside, an apostrophizing to the king that the end of the line has been reached.

Enter Rice ap Howell, with the Elder Spenser prisoner, and Attendants.

= Howell is a Welshman who was, until Isabella released him, a prisoner in the Tower of London.[9]

Rice. God save Queen Isabel and her princely son!
Madam, the mayor and citizens of Bristow,
In sign of love and duty to this presence,
Present by me this traitor to the state,
Spenser, the father to that wanton Spenser,

83-84: Rice puns mildly with ***presence*** / ***present***.
= unmanageable or self-indulgent.[1]

That, like the lawless Catiline of Rome,
Revelled in England's wealth and treasury.

86: ***Lucius Sergius Catalina*** (***Cataline***), a disaffected nobleman of Rome, was accused of conspiring against the Republic in the mid-1st century B.C.; his plot exposed by Cicero, Catalina was killed in battle in 62 B.C.
Previous editors have noted that Howell's analogy is a poor one; Catalina never greedily indulged himself in Rome's wealth, as did the Despensers.

Q. Isab. We thank you all.

78-89: **The Capture of the Elder Despenser:** *the senior Despenser, now 64 years of age, was arrested at Bristol at the same time the city handed itself over to Isabella. Rhys Ap Howell was not involved in the capture of Despenser; however, he was sent by Mortimer with the Earl of Leicester to capture the fleeing King Edward.*

Y. Mort. Your loving care in this
Deserveth princely favours and rewards.
But where's the king and th' other Spenser fled?

Rice. Spenser the son, created Earl of Gloucester,
Is with that smooth-tongued scholar Baldock gone,
And shipped but late for Ireland with the king.

= flattering.

Y. Mort. [*Aside*]
Some whirlwind fetch them back, or sink them all. −
They shall be started thence, I doubt it not.

101: ***started*** = a hunting term, meaning "driven from cover".
thence = from there.

Pr. Edw. Shall I not see the king my father yet?

Kent. [*Aside*]
Unhappy's Edward, chased from England's bounds.

= unfortunate is.

Sir John. Madam, what resteth? Why stand ye in a muse?

= "what's to be done?" Isabella presumably appears pensive.

Q. Isab. I rue my lord's ill fortune; but, alas!
Care of my country called me to this war!

110-1: Isabella continues to pretend to worry about her husband the king.

Y. Mort. Madam, have done with care and sad complain;

= anxiety. = ie. complaint; most editors emend ***complain*** to ***complaint***.

Your king hath wronged your country and himself,
And we must seek to right it as we may.
Meanwhile, have hence this rebel to the block. −
Your lordship cannot privilege your head.

= "away with". = ie. for beheading.
117: Spenser should not expect to save his life by appealing to his title as Earl of Gloucester.

E. Spen. Rebel is he that fights against his prince; = ie. king.

So fought not they that fought in Edward's right. 120: "those who fight for Edward fight for a just cause," with the implication that his opponents are to be considered nothing better than mere rebels.

Y. Mort. Take him away; he prates. − = prattles.

[*Exeunt Attendants with the Elder Spenser*.] 124: Despenser met a horrible traitor's death, being hanged and eviscerated before his own dying eyes (Hutchison, p. 136).[5]

You, Rice ap Howell,
Shall do good service to her majesty,
Being of countenance in your country here, = high standing.[2] = ie. Wales or the border region.
To follow these rebellious runagates. − = fugitives or runaways.[1,24]
We in meanwhile, madam, must take advice, = deliberate.[1]
How Baldock, Spenser, and their complices,
May in their fall be followed to their end.

[*Exeunt.*] **Pursuit of Edward:** *the Earl of Leicester, Howell, and another former prisoner of the Tower, one William la Zouch, were sent by Mortimer to find Edward and his comrades.*[6]

ACT IV, SCENE VI.

Within the abbey at Neath. **Scene VI:** by mid-November, Edward and his few remaining followers - including Arundel, Baldock and Younger Spenser - were in hiding at the abbey of Neath in south Wales.

Enter the Abbot, Monks, King Edward, Young Spenser and Baldock (the three latter disguised). = ie. as churchmen.

Abb. Have you no doubt, my lord; have you no fear; = ie. "have no doubt", an imperative.
As silent and as careful will we be
To keep your royal person safe with us,
Free from suspect, and fell invasiön = treacherous intrusion or assault.[1]
Of such as have your majesty in chase, = from.
Yourself, and those your chosen company,
As danger of this stormy time requires.

K. Edw. Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
O! hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
Pierced deeply with [a] sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion of my state. = pity. = condition or situation; note the light wordplay with ***state*** here and ***stately*** at the beginning of the next line.

Stately and proud, in riches and in train, = retinue.
Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp: = once.
But what is he whom rule and empery 15: ***what is he*** = "who is he", ie. "is there anyone". ***empery*** = absolute power, ie. sovereignty.[1]
Have not in life or death made miserable? −
Come, Spenser; come Baldock, come, sit down by me; = the second ***come*** is sometimes omitted for the sake of the meter.
Make trial now of that philosophy, = "now test or try".

That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle. −

19-20: briefly, "that we learned about in our youth"; Edward employs a metaphor of babies nursing, sucking knowledge from their "mothers", the great philosophers.
nurseries of arts = ie. universities.[14]
20: both philosophers praised the virtue of the contemplative life, to which Edward alludes in the next line.

Father, this life contémplative is Heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead!

21-22: Edward now addresses the abbot; medieval philosophy made a big deal of the ancient distinction between living an active life, as most actors on the nation's stage did, and the contemplative life, as a cleric might live.
contemplative = stressed on its second syllable: *con-TEM-pla-tive*.

But we, alas! are chased; and you, my friends,
Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.
Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold, nor fee,
Do you betray us and our company.

= ie. "for neither".
25-26: note the rhyming couplet.

Monk. Your grace may sit secure,
If none but we do wot of your abode.

= ie. rest easy, knowing he is safe.
= know.

Y. Spen. Not one alive, but shrewdly I suspect
A gloomy fellow in a mead below.
'A gave a long look after us, my lord;
And all the land, I know, is up in arms,
Arms that pursue our lives with deadly hate.

= strongly.[7]
= meadow.
= he.

Bald. We were embarked for Ireland; wretched we!
With awkward winds and sore tempests driven
To fall on shore, and here to pine in fear
Of Mortimer and his confederates.

= unfavourable.[1] = severe;[1] ***sore*** is disyllabic: *SO-er*.

37-40: **Failed Sail to Ireland:** *before settling in at the priory, Edward's party attempted to sail to Ireland from Wales, but were blown back into the harbour at Cardiff by an uncooperative wind* (Hutchison, p. 136).[5]

K. Edw. Mortimer! Who talks of Mortimer?
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,
That bloody man? − Good father, on thy lap
Lay I this head, laden with mickle care.
O might I never open these eyes again!
Never again lift up this drooping head!
O nevermore lift up this dying heart!

= loaded. = much.
= usually emended to the later quartos' ***ope'***.

Spen. Look up, my lord. − Baldock, this drowsiness
Betides no good; here even we are betrayed.

= bodes.

Enter, with Welsh hooks, Rice ap Howell, a Mower, and Leicester.

Entering Characters: Howell reappears with men carrying ***Welsh hooks***, weapons comprised of a staff with a curved blade at one end (also called ***Welsh bills***),[1] and a ***Mower***, a man who cuts grass with a scythe.[22]

Mower. Upon my life, these be the men ye seek.

56: the Mower was the one who discovered and turned in the king; presumably Mower was the ***gloomy fellow*** in the meadow noticed by Spenser in line 32, where perhaps he working on the priory's property.

Rice. Fellow, enough. − My lord, I pray, be short;

= Howell asks Edward to come along, and not drag out the scene.

	A fair commission warrants what we do.	59: "we have valid authorization for what we are doing." ***warrants*** = guarantees or vouches for the authenticity of.[1]
60		
	Leic. The queen's commission, urged by Mortimer;	
62	What cannot gallant Mortimer with the queen?	62: "there is nothing that Mortimer cannot convince the queen to do." That is, she is completely under Mortimer's influence.
	Alas! see where he sits, and hopes unseen	
64	T' escape their hands that seek to reave his life.	= take away.[1]
	Too true it is, *Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,*	65-66: from the 1st century A.D. play *Thyestes*, by the Roman philosopher and dramatist Seneca: "Whom the rising sun hath seen high in pride, him the setting sun hath seen laid low."[32]
66	*Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.*	
	But, Leicester, leave to grow so passionate. −	= cease. = emotional or compassionate; Leicester strains to control his emotions.
68	Spenser and Baldock, by no other names,	= Leicester makes a point of refusing to address the pair by their respective titles of *Chamberlain* and *Chancellor*.
	I [do] arrest you of high treason here.	
70	Stand not on titles, but obey th' arrest:	= "don't bother insisting".
	'Tis in the name of Isabel the queen. −	
72	My lord, why droop you thus?	
74	***K. Edw.*** O day the last of all my bliss on earth,	74-75: ***O day…misfortune*** = "Oh, the last day during which I enjoyed all the power and trappings of a king, but now in which I lose everything!" This interpretation is suggested by Tancock.[7]
	Center of all misfortune! O my stars,	
76	Why do you lour unkindly on a king?	= appear dark and threatening.[1] Edward refers to the belief that the position of the stars at one's birth determines one's destiny.
	Comes Leicester, then, in Isabella's name	
78	To take my life, my company from me?	
	Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,	= throbbing or heavily pumping heart.[1]
80	And take my heart in rescue of my friends!	= ie. "in exchange for the lives of".
82	***Rice.*** Away with them!	
84	***Y. Spen.*** It may become thee yet	= "do you honour"; though outwardly formal, Spenser uses ***thee*** in addressing Leicester to signal a bit of scorn.
	To let us take our farewell of his grace.	
86		
	Abb. [*Aside*] My heart with pity earns to see this sight,	= grieves, feels compassion.[23]
88	A king to bear these words and proud commands.	= forced to put up with. = arrogant.
90	***K. Edw.*** Spenser, ah, sweet Spenser, thus then must we part?	
92	***Y. Spen.*** We must, my lord; so will the angry heavens.	= ie. so the angry heavens command.
94	***K. Edw.*** Nay, so will hell and cruël Mortimer;	= command.
	The gentle Heavens have not to do in this.	= ie. nothing.
96		
	Bald. My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.	
98	Here humbly of your grace we take our leaves.	
	Our lots are cast; I fear me, so is thine.	= "our fates have been decided."[1]
100		
	K. Edw. In Heaven we may, in earth ne'er shall we meet: −	= on.

And, Leicester, say, what shall become of us?

= ie. "me" (the royal "we").

Leic. Your majesty must go to Killingworth.

= ie. Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, owned by the Lancasters, now a spectacular ruin.

K. Edw. Must! 'Tis somewhat hard, when kings *must* go.

106: Edward emphasizes ***must*** in ***must go***, lamenting that he has reached a point so low that he, a king, must take orders from others.

Leic. Here is a litter ready for your grace,
That waits your pleasure, and the day grows old.

= a portable bed, carried by others.
= "it is getting late," ie. "let's go already."

Rice. As good be gone, as stay and be benighted.

111: "it is just as well to leave as to stay and be overcome by night." Perhaps proverbial.

K. Edw. A litter hast thou? lay me in a hearse,
And to the gates of hell convey me hence.

= ie. "lay me instead". = coffin.
= from here.

Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,

= Roman god of the underworld. = ie. death knell.

And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore;

116: ***hags*** = the term could refer to any of several infernal beings, such as Furies or departed souls.[14]
Charon's shore = ***Charon*** was the old ferryman who shipped souls across the rivers of the underworld into Hades.

For friends hath Edward none but these, and these,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword.

= ie. the monks on the one hand, and Baldock and Spenser on the other.[6]

Rice. My lord, be going: care not for these,
For we shall see them shorter by the heads.

= ***care*** is disyllabic: *CAY-er*.
121: common and grimly humorous phrase, referring to the anticipated beheading of the captives.

K. Edw. Well, that shall be, shall be: part we must!

= the borrowing of the Italian phrase "que sera, sera" seems to have occurred in the 16th century; in fact, *que sera, sera* was the motto of the Earls of Bedford.[1]

Sweet Spenser, gentle Baldock, part we must!
Hence, feignèd weeds! Unfeignèd are my woes;

= "off with you, deceptive clothing (***weeds***)!"

[*Throws off his disguise*.]

Father, farewell! Leicester, thou stay'st for me,
And go I must. Life, farewell, with my friends.

= waits.

[*Exeunt King Edward and Leicester*.]

132: **Edward's Capture:** *On 16 November 1326, the Welshman Rhys ap Howel led the Earl of Leicester to Edward's hiding place at the priory at Neath.*

Y. Spen. O! is he gone? is noble Edward gone?
Parted from hence? never to see us more?
Rent, sphere of Heaven! And, fire, forsake thy orb!
Earth, melt to air! Gone is my sovereign.
Gone, gone, alas! never to make return.

136: ***Rent*** = "tear yourself to pieces".
sphere of Heaven = another reference to the geocentric, Ptolemaic view of the universe, in which the spheres containing the stars and planets revolve around the earth; the absolute outermost sphere (the ***sphere of Heaven***) was thought to contain the throne of God, the angels, etc.
fire, foresake thy orb = an allusion to the ancient cosmological notion that each of the four elements (air, earth, fire and water) had its own region - in the shape of a

sphere, or orb, in which the earth was at the center - in which it dominated; the ***fiery region*** was the uppermost region.

Bald. Spenser, I see our souls are fleeting hence; = departing from here.[1]
We are deprived the sunshine of our life:
Make for a new life, man; throw up thy eyes, = "prepare for the afterlife".
And heart and hand to Heaven's immortal throne;
Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance: = common phrase referring to death, which all people "owe" to Nature.

Reduce we all our lessons unto this, 145-6: "all of life's lessons boil down to this: we live to die."
To die, sweet Spenser, therefore live we all; ie. the purpose of life is to prepare for the afterlife.
Spenser, all live to die, and rise to fall.

Rice. Come, come, keep these preachments till you = ie. this preaching.

come to the place appointed. You, and such as you are, 150: ***the place appointed*** = euphemism for the execution site.[14]
have made wise work in England; will your lordships away? 150-1: ***You…England*** = Rice is sarcastic: "you and your ilk have done a fantastic job ruling England."

Mower. Your lordship, I trust, will remember me? 154: the Mower uses the usual formula to hint at hopes that he will be rewarded for revealing the king's location to the authorities.

Rice. Remember thee, fellow! What else? Follow me to the town. = "of course!"

[*Exeunt.*] **Edward's Followers:** *Baldock and Young Despenser were captured at the priory alongside Edward; Arundel, who had gotten away, was caught the next day, 17 November. Arundel and Despenser were executed as traitors, receiving the full treatment - hanged until almost unconscious, then castrated and eviscerated.*

The cleric Baldock, interestingly, successfully claimed the "benefit of clergy", which meant that, as a churchman, he was exempt from being tried in a civil court. Baldock's escape was predicated on his being held in house arrest at the home of the unscrupulous Bishop Orleton of Hereford; a mob, however, was encouraged to break in and remove Baldock, tossing him into Newgate Prison after having severely beaten him. Baldock died shortly thereafter.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An apartment in Kenilworth (Killingworth) Castle.

Scene I: immediately after his capture, Edward was imprisoned at the castle at Monmouth in Wales, where he was forced to relinquish the Great Seal of England (whose possessor could now issue documents and orders in the name of the king).

Edward was shortly thereafter brought to Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, to be held under the watchful eye of the Earl of Leicester, who treated the king with leniency.

It is now 20 January 1327.[36]

Enter King Edward, Leicester, the Bishop of Winchester, and Trussel.

Entering Characters: a delegation has arrived at Leicester's Kenilworth Castle to visit the imprisoned Edward.

The Bishop of Winchester was ***John Stratford*** (d. 1348), a native of Stratford-on-Avon. A lifelong cleric, Stratford was consecrated Bishop of Winchester in 1323, despite Edward II's desire to give the position to Robert Baldock; Stratford had obtained a papal bull in his favour, which Edward was compelled to follow. It was by Stratford's persuasion that Edward allowed the queen to travel to France to negotiate with Charles IV. The bishop was the drafter of the six Articles of Deposition for the 1327 Parliament, and was part of the delegation sent to Edward on 20 January - the date of our present scene - to ask for his abdication.

At heart a constitutionalist, Stratford was held in suspicion by Mortimer after Edward's death, but served as Edward III's closest advisor and Chancellor for many years. Inevitably falling out of favour, but eventually reconciled to the king, Stratford spent his last years focusing on his ecclesiastical work, before finally dying in 1348. He had been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1333.

Trussel is the ***Baron Sir William Trussel*** (birth and death dates uncertain), a knight with a record of hostility toward Edward, he having fought with Lancaster at Boroughbridge in 1322. Trussel was the judge who sentenced the Elder Despenser to be hanged after his capture at Bristol. He went on to serve Edward III for many years as an ambassador and negotiator.

Leic. Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament;
Imagine Killingworth castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
Not of compulsion or necessity.

= ie. is.
= stay, remain. = for a while.

K. Edw. Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows;
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;

= would have.

10: ***not*** = ie. "not those".

10-11: ***The forest deer…wounds*** = deer were believed to have an instinctive knowledge of the healing properties of a herb known as dittany.[6]

struck = ie. wounded.

But when th' imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
[And] highly scorning that the lowly earth

= another *pleonasm*.

	Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air.	= rears up, so that his front paws are in the air.
16	And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind Th' ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,	
18	And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,	= ie. because she would harm her husband; ***unnatural*** is used to describe one who lacks the normal protective feeling one has toward one's own family.
	That thus hath pent and mewed me in a prison;	= another pleonasm, as both ***pent*** and ***mewed*** mean "shut up".
20	For such outrageous passions cloy my soul,	= emotions. = fill, satiate.
	As with the wings of rancour and disdain	= that.
22	Full often am I soaring up to Heaven, To plain me to the gods against them both.	= complain;[1] the extra ***me*** is an intensifier, another example of the ethical dative. Edward uses the construction again in line 25.
24	But when I call to mind I am a king, Methinks I should revenge me of my wrongs,	
26	That Mortimer and Isabel have done. But what are kings, when regiment is gone,	= royal authority.
28	But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?	= ie. nothing more than mere shadows. ***perfect*** = utter or pure.[1]
	My nobles rule; I bear the name of king;	
30	I wear the crown, but am controlled by them, By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,	= unfaithful, disloyal.
32	Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;	= stains; Edward alludes to Isabella's now-open adultery with Mortimer.
	Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,	= ie. prison; ***care*** = anxiety; the phrase ***cave of care*** is pleasantly and simultaneously alliterative and assonant.
34	Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,	= "waits on me".
	To company my heart with sad laments,	= ie. accompany.
36	That bleeds within me for this strange exchange. –	= transformation.[2]
	But tell me, must I now resign my crown,	
38	To make usurping Mortimer a king?	
40	***B. of Win.*** Your grace mistakes; it is for England's good, And princely Edward's right we crave the crown.	40-41: Edward is wrong: it is his son, not Mortimer, who will assume the throne.
42		
	K. Edw. No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head;	
44	For he's a lamb, encompassèd by wolves,	= ie. "the prince is". = surrounded.
	Which in a moment will abridge his life.	= ie. at any. = shorten, ie. take.
46	But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown, Heavens turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire!	46-47: an allusion to the ancient Greek dramatist Euripides' play *Medea*, in which the witch Medea, furious over her husband Jason's marriage to the daughter of the king of Corinth, gives the unsuspecting princess a gift of a crown which, when she puts it on, catches fire and burns her to death.[6]
48	Or like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon, Engirt the temples of his hateful head;	48-49: ***Tisiphone*** was one of the avenging female spirits known as the Furies. The ladies were imagined to be dressed in black and with hair of serpents (***snaky wreath***), and sometimes possessing wings. ***Engirt*** = encircle. ***hateful*** = detestable.
50	So shall not England's vine be perishèd,	50: so that the royal family line or name, ie. the house of

But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies.

Plantagenet, is not extinguished.

Leic. My lord, why waste you thus the time away?
They stay your answer; will you yield your crown?

= "they are waiting for"; ***they*** refers to the members of Parliament, which met in January 1327 to select a new king. A delegation from Parliament had visited King Edward at Kenilworth and asked him to attend the session, but Edward had rudely denied their request.[36]

On the 15th, the archbishop announced that Edward had been deposed; then, for three days, magnates from all across England swore their fealty and allegiance to Isabella and Prince Edward (Hutchison, p. 140).

As previously mentioned, the embassy portrayed here took place on 20 January.[36]

K. Edw. Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook

56*ff*: throughout this speech and beyond, Edward experiences extreme mood swings, his emotions shifting violently between acceptance over the loss of his crown, despair, stubborn opposition, and ferocious anger.

weigh = consider.[14]

brook = bear.

To lose my crown and kingdom without cause;
To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss,

= who.

In which extreme my mind here murthered is.
But what the heavens appoint, I must obey!

= ie. fate has predetermined.

Here, take my crown; the life of Edward too;

[*Taking off the crown*.]

Two kings in England cannot reign at once. −
But stay a while, let me be king till night,

67-68: Edward's reversal here from acceptance of his deposition to pathetic pleading for its postponement replicates exactly his vacillation from acceptance of Gaveston's exile to pleading with him to stay; see Act I.iv.212-3.

stay = delay.

That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
So shall my eyes receive their last content,

= ie. moment of contentment.

My head, the latest honour due to it,

= final.

And jointly both yield up their wishèd right.

= ie. Edward's ***eyes*** and ***head***. = desireable.[1]

Continue ever, thou celestial sun;

72-76: having just asked for permission to keep his crown till nightfall, Edward proceeds to entreat nature to stand still, so that the day lasts forever.

Let never silent night possess this clime:

= land.

Stand still, you watches of the element;

‘= "various parts of the heavens", or "celestial spheres" (which, containing the planetary bodies, stars, sun and moon, revolve around the earth). The more common phrase was ***watches of the night***, alluding to the three or so segments into which night was divided, but generally meaning simply "night-time".[1]

All times and seasons, rest you at a stay,

= motionless.[14]

That Edward may be still fair England's king!

72-76: Edward's pleading here contrasts with his petition at Act IV.iii.69-72, when he implored day and night to hurry along!

But day's bright beam doth vanish fast away,
And needs I must resign my wishèd crown.
Inhuman creatures! nursed with tiger's milk!
Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow!
My diadem I mean, and guiltless life.
See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again!

[*Putting on the crown*.]

What, fear you not the fury of your king?
But, hapless Edward, thou art fondly led;

They pass not for thy frowns as late they did,

But seeks to make a new-elected king;
Which fills my mind with strange despairing thoughts,
Which thoughts are martyrèd with endless torments,
And in this torment comfort find I none,
But that I feel the crown upon my head;
And therefore let me wear it yet a while.

Trus. My lord, the parliament must have present news,
And therefore say, will you resign or no?

[*The King rageth.*]

K. Edw. I'll not resign, but whilst I live [be king]!
Traitors, be gone! and join you with Mortimer!
Elect, conspire, install, do what you will: −
Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries.

B. of Win. This answer we'll return; and so, farewell.

[*Going with Trussel*.]

Leic. Call them again, my lord, and speak them fair;
For if they go, the prince shall lose his right.

K. Edw. Call thou them back, I have no power to speak.

Leic. My lord, the king is willing to resign.

B. of Win. If he be not, let him choose.

K. Edw. O would I might! but heavens and earth conspire
To make me miserable! Here, receive my crown;
Receive it? No, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.
He of you all that most desires my blood,
And will be called the murtherer of a king,
Take it. − What, are you moved? pity you me?

Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
And Isabel, whose eyes, been turned to steel,

78 = it is necessary. = ie. desirable.

80 = "are you greedy for".[11]

= innocent.

84 88: ie. "no one is afraid of a stern look from you anymore". ***pass*** = care.

90 = ruined or mutilated;[1] ***martyred*** is tri-syllabic.

96 = immediate.

98 99: Edward begins to angrily storm about.

100

102 = usually omitted for the sake of the meter.

104 = attest to.[14]

106

108 108: the bishop and Trussel begin to walk off the stage.

110 110-1: this threat by Leicester was historical: the delegates threatened to pass the crown to someone outside the royal family if Edward refused to turn it over.

112

114

116

118

120

122

124

125: ***Take it*** = after these words are spoken, a pause likely ensues, as none of those present is actually willing to be the one to physically remove the crown from the king's head. ***moved*** = ie. to pity.

126 = never giving in to compassion.[1]

= often emended to ***being***.

Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
Yet stay, for rather than I will look on them,
Here, here!

[*Gives the crown*.]

Now, sweet God of Heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for aye enthronizèd in Heaven!

Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,
Or if I live, let me forget myself.

B. of Win. My lord −

K. Edw. Call me not lord! away − out of my sight!
Ah, pardon me: grief makes me lunatic.
Let not that Mortimer protect my son;
More safety is there in a tiger's jaws,
Than his embracements. Bear this to the queen,
Wet with my tears, and dried again with sighs;

[*Gives a handkerchief*.]

If with the sight thereof she be not moved,
Return it back, and dip it in my blood.
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed,
Unless it be with too much clemency?

Trus. And thus most humbly do we take our leave.

K. Edw. Farewell;

[*Exeunt the Bishop of Winchester and Trussel with the crown*.]

I know the next news that they bring
Will be my death; and welcome shall it be;
To wretched men, death is felicity.

Enter Berkeley, who gives a paper to Leicester.

129-130: ie. "but wait, I would rather give up my crown than have to see either of them again."

135-6: to assist him in dealing with the loss of his crown, Edward asks God to cause him to scorn his life on earth, and to begin his transition to his everlasting afterlife.

transitory pomp = ie. his temporal and pomp-filled life on earth.[1]

for aye = forever.

140: the quartos call for Berkeley to enter here and speak this line, but we follow the decision of most of the editors to give this line to the bishop, and have Berkeley enter at line 168 below.

= mad.

= ie. be appointed the Protector of; the position would effectively allow Mortimer to rule England so long as young Edward was a minor.[9]

155: Briggs wonders if Edward is referring to his sparing Mortimer, the man who has now deposed him, from execution after the Battle of Boroughbridge.[6]

= happiness.

= the quartos print ***Bartley***, but we go, as do later editors, with the historically correct name of ***Berkeley***.

Berkeley *is* ***Sir Thomas, Lord of Berkeley Castle*** *(d. 1361), which is about 20 miles north-west of Bristol.*

The Berkeleys had never been on the side of Edward. Thomas' grandfather had fought with, and been captured with, Lancaster at Boroughbridge, and his father Maurice fought with the Mortimers in the Marcher wars of 1321-22. Maurice married the Younger Mortimer's daughter Margaret, and surrendered with the Mortimers to Edward in January 1322. He was imprisoned at Wallingford, where he

		died in 1326. Maurice's son, our Thomas, had also been imprisoned by Edward, but released by Isabella at her return to England, and given back his family's estate. *Thus Berkeley has no reason to feel much sympathy for the captured king.*
170	***Leic.*** Another post! What news brings he?	= messenger.
172	***K. Edw.*** Such news as I expect − come, Berkeley, come, And tell thy message to my naked breast.	173: Edward histrionically invites Berkeley to deliver his anticipated message, which could be either a metaphorical or literal stab in the heart.
174		
	Berk. My lord, think not a thought so villainous	
176	Can harbour in a man of noble birth. To do your highness service and devoir,	= duty.[23]
178	And save you from your foes, Berkeley would die.	
180	***Leic.*** [*Reading the paper*] My lord, the council of the queen commands	181-2: Leicester has been ordered to turn custody of Edward over to Berkeley.
182	That I resign my charge.	
184	***K. Edw.*** And who must keep me now? Must you, my lord?	
186	***Berk.*** Ay, my most gracious lord − so 'tis decreed.	
188	***K. Edw.*** [*Taking the paper*] By Mortimer, whose name is written here!	
190	Well may I rent his name that rends my heart!	= tear up.
192	[*Tears it*.]	
194	This poor revenge hath something eased my mind. So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper!	
196	Hear me, immortal Jove, and grant it too!	= ***Jove*** was often used, as here, to mean God.[8] = ie. this.
198	***Berk.*** Your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight.	= "go from here".
200	***K. Edw.*** Whither you will; all places are alike,	= "take me wherever you wish"; Edward is resigned to his fate.
	And every earth is fit for burial.	= piece of land.
202	***Leic.*** Favour him, my lord, as much as lieth in you.	= "treat him well"; Mortimer and Isabella, understandably, are uncomfortable having an ex-king alive and in prison, where he would naturally attract sympathy, and even inspire plots to free him. So, as a first step in dispatching him, they have relieved Leicester, who was too lenient with the former king, of custody, and turned Edward over to Berkeley, perhaps with orders to treat him less kindly.
204	***Berk.*** Even so betide my soul as I use him.	205: "may my soul be rewarded or punished based on how I treat him." ***betide*** = become of or happen to.[1]
206	***K. Edw.*** Mine enemy hath pitied my estate,	= ie. "my jailer", meaning Leicester.[14] = condition.
208	And that's the cause that I am now removed.	= ie. "moved from here to another place."
210	***Berk.*** And thinks your grace that Berkeley will be cruel?	
212	***K. Edw.*** I know not; but of this am I assured,	

That death ends all, and I can die but once.
214 Leicester, farewell!

216 ***Leic.*** Not yet, my lord; I'll bear you on your way.

[*Exeunt.*]

Henry, the Earl of Leicester: *Henry (1281?-1345) was the younger brother of our play's Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, and thus, like Lancaster, a son of Edmund Crouchback, a grandson of Edward I, and a first cousin of Edward II; after that, however, all resemblances between the two powerful lords ends, as Henry, unlike the blustering and incompetent Lancaster, was "courteous and kind-hearted, of sound judgment, religious, and apparently of high principle."*

Henry, though an opponent of the Despensers, did not participate in the treason of his brother; after Lancaster was executed in 1322, however, Kenilworth Castle, which should have passed to Henry, was confiscated by Edward.

Henry eventually succeeded to the titles of Earl of Lancaster, Earl of Leicester, and Steward of England, all of which had been held by his brother (it is only for the sake of clarity in differentiating Henry from Thomas that Henry is referred to in this play as ***Leicester****, rather than the superior title of* ***Lancaster****).*

Fired by revenge for the death of his brother, Leicester joined Isabella's faction upon her landing in England. After capturing the king, he brought him first to his castle at Monmouth, then by January 1327 to his castle at Kenilworth, which had been returned to him.

During the era of the joint reign of Mortimer and Isabella, Leicester, though chief of the Council and guardian of the king, found his power and access to young Edward gradually reduced by Mortimer, leading to his becoming an outspoken enemy of the de facto ruler of England. Open war broke out, and Mortimer's forces raided and destroyed much of Leicester's property.

It was Leicester who primarily encouraged and helped young King Edward to overthrow Mortimer.

Troubled by increasingly poor eyesight, and finally completely blind by 1329, Leicester generally retired, building a hospital for elderly infirm men, before dying in 1345.

ACT V, SCENE II.

An apartment in the royal palace.

Enter Queen Isabella and Young Mortimer.

1 ***Y. Mort.*** Fair Isabel, now have we our desire;
2 The proud corrupters of the light-brained king

2: ***proud corrupters*** = ie. the arrogant Spensers and Baldock.
light-brained = frivolous, lacking gravitas.

Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,

= the *Chronicles* state that the Elder Spenser was hanged on a "*paire of gallowes of fiftie feet in heigth*" (Tancock, quoting Holinshed chronicle, p. 159).[7]

4 And he himself lies in captivity.

Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm.
= common formula for "follow my guidance".

In any case, take heed of childish fear,
For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,
= earlier editors suggest the ***wolf*** in this common proverb is England, not Edward.[7,11]

That, if he slip, will seize upon us both,
= be released.
And gripe the sorer, being griped himself.
= "seize us most viciously".

Think therefore, madam, that imports as much
= "that suggests or signifies"; but ***as*** is usually emended to ***us***, so the meaning of the clause changes to "that it is very important for us".

T' erect your son with all the speed we may,
= place young Edward on the throne, ie. proclaim him king.
And that I be protector over him;
For our behoof will bear the greater sway
Whenas a king's name shall be under writ.
13-14: "for our authority will carry greater weight when (***whenas***) we can have our orders appear over the signature of a king.
behoof = advantage.
will = ie. it will; the later quartos print, and many editors emend to, ***'twill***.
sway = influence, control.
under writ = ie. signed below (past tense of ***underwrite***).[1]

Q. Isab. Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel,
Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,
= assured.[11]
And therefore, so the prince my son be safe,
= ie. so long as.
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
= "decide what to do with".[11]
And I myself will willingly subscribe.
= sign on.

Y. Mort. First would I hear news that he were deposed,
23-24: Mortimer reveals he has not yet heard the result of the embassy to Edward which was acted out in the previous scene.
And then let me alone to handle him.

Enter Messenger.

Y. Mort. Letters! From whence?

Mess. From Killingworth, my lord.

Q. Isab. How fares my lord the king?

Mess. In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.
= sorrow.[1]

Q. Isab. Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief!
= "if only"; Isabella hypocritically expresses concern for the king in front of others.

Enter the Bishop of Winchester with the crown.

Thanks, gentle Winchester.
40: it is not clear what exactly Isabella is thanking the bishop for; perhaps the bishop has handed the crown to the queen.

[*To the Messenger*] Sirrah, be gone.
= common form of address for a servant.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

B. of Win. The king hath willingly resigned his crown.

Q. Isab. O happy news! Send for the prince my son.

B. of Win. Further, ere this letter was sealed, Lord Berkeley came,
So that he now is gone from Killingworth;
And we have heard that Edmund laid a plot
To set his brother free; no more but so.

= Edward.
51-52: rumour has it that Kent, his change of heart complete, is plotting to free his brother Edward.
no more but so = "that is all I know."

The lord of Berkeley is so pitiful
As Leicester that had charge of him before.

53: ***so*** = as; ***so*** is usually emended to ***as***.
pitiful = ie. full of pity for the king, so that the king's imprisonment under Berkeley can be expected to be as mild as it was under Leicester.

Q. Isab. Then let some other be his guardian.

Y. Mort. Let me alone, here is the privy seal.

= "I'll deal with this." = the Great Seal of England.
Edward had been forced to relinquish the Great Seal on 20 November 1326, when he was still at Monmouth Castle. Mortimer's possession of the Seal was significant, as it meant he could now issue official documents with the force of law.

[*Exit the Bishop of Winchester*.]

Who's there? –
[*To Attendants within*]
Call hither Gurney and Matrevis. –
To dash the heavy-headed Edmund's drift,
Berkeley shall be discharged, the king removed,
And none but we shall know where he lieth.

62: Mortimer calls to his servants off-stage.
= off-stage.

= ruin. = dull or stupid.[1] = scheme.
= ie. moved from Berkeley castle.

Q. Isab. But, Mortimer, as long as he survives,
What safety rests for us, or for my son?

Y. Mort. Speak, shall he presently be dispatched and die?

= "Well, tell me what you want".

Q. Isab. I would he were, so it were not by my means.

= "so long as it were not". Marlowe portrays Isabella as not only hypocritical but of weak stomach: she will pretend to be working on Edward's behalf in the presence of others, but is really as happy as Mortimer is to have him dead - so long as she does not have to be the one to "flip the switch".
it were = Dyce emends to ***'twere*** for the sake of the meter.

Enter Matrevis and Gurney.

Entering Characters: *Baron John Maltravers* *(1290?-1365) was knighted in 1306 and fought, and may have been taken prisoner, at Bannockburn in 1314. An early adherent of Lancaster and Mortimer, he fought at Boroughbridge against the king, and fled to Europe after Lancaster's execution. Maltravers joined Mortimer and Isabella in Hainaut, and returned to England as part of their invasion. As co-jailer of Edward at Berkeley Castle, Maltravers was said to have treated the king with great harshness, in contrast to Berkeley's kindlier handling.*
Gurney *is one* ***Sir Thomas Gurney*** *(d. 1333), a knight who had served once in the household of Edward II, but took the side of the barons in the wars of 1321-2; arrested in 1322, Gurney was imprisoned in the Tower of London, but released in 1324* (Warner, *Regicide etc., Part Two*).[33]

Y. Mort. Enough. –
Matrevis, write a letter presently
Unto the lord of Berkeley from ourself

= ie. "me"; Mortimer ostentatiously affects the royal "we", as if he were the king.

That he resign the king to thee and Gurney;
And when 'tis done, we will subscribe our name.

Mat. It shall be done, my lord.

[*Writes*.]

Y. Mort. Gurney.

Gurn. My lord.

Y. Mort. As thou intend'st to rise by Mortimer,
Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please,
Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
And neither give him kind word nor good look.

Gurn. I warrant you, my lord.

Y. Mort. And this above the rest: because we hear
That Edmund casts to work his liberty,
Remove him still from place to place by night,
Till at the last he come to Killingworth,
And then from thence to Berkeley back again;
And by the way, to make him fret the more,
Speak curstly to him; and in any case
Let no man comfort him if he chance to weep,
But amplify his grief with bitter words.

Mat. Fear not, my lord, we'll do as you command.

Y. Mort. So, now away; post thitherwards amain.

Q. Isab. Whither goes this letter? To my lord the king?
Commend me humbly to his majesty,
And tell him that I labour all in vain
To ease his grief and work his liberty;
And bear him this as witness of my love.

[*Gives a ring*.]

Mat. I will, madam.

[*Exeunt Matrevis and Gurney*.]

Y. Mort. Finely dissembled. Do so still, sweet queen.
Here comes the young prince with the Earl of Kent.

Q. Isab. Something he whispers in his childish ears.

Y. Mort. If he have such access unto the prince,
Our plots and stratagems will soon be dashed.

= turn over.
= sign.

92: "if you desire to be promoted by me".

93: personified ***Fortune*** is frequently portrayed as spinning a wheel which arbitrarily raises or lowers individuals' luck and circumstances. Mortimer's *hubris* leads him to conclude that he is now in control of his fate.

94-5: Mortimer requires the king's new keepers to mistreat their prisoner.

= schemes.
= "move Edward continuously".
= the quarto prints ***And*** here, emended as shown by all the editors.

= cursedly, ie. severely, crossly.[8]

104-7: not satisfied with inflicting physical discomfort on the king, Mortimer orders Matrevis and Gurney to psychologically torture him as well.

= "ride out immediately."[1]

= the one Matrevis just wrote.

= "well faked!" = always.

= ie. Kent.

Q. Isab. Use Edmund friendly as if all were well.

= "act towards".

Enter Prince Edward, and Kent talking with him.

Y. Mort. How fares my honourable Lord of Kent?

Kent. In health, sweet Mortimer: how fares your grace?

Q. Isab. Well, if my lord your brother were enlarged.

= freed.

Kent. I hear of late he hath deposed himself.

= ie. resigned his crown.

Q. Isab. The more my grief.

Y. Mort. And mine.

Kent. [*Aside*] Ah, they do dissemble!

149: Kent is not fooled by the pity affected by the ruling couple.

Q. Isab. Sweet son, come hither, I must talk with thee.

Y. Mort. You being his uncle, and the next of blood,
Do look to be Protector o'er the prince.

= ie. "expect to be appointed Protector"; a strong Protector could effectively rule England during a monarch's minority, and as such was in a powerful position.

Kent. Not I, my lord; who should protect the son,
But she that gave him life? I mean the queen.

Pr. Edw. Mother, persuade me not to wear the crown:
Let him be king − I am too young to reign.

= the prince likely refers to his father, the deposed Edward.

Q. Isab. But be content, seeing 'tis his highness' pleasure.

162: Isabella explains it is the ex-king's wish that his son take the crown.

Pr. Edw. Let me but see him first, and then I will.

Kent. Ay, do, sweet nephew.

Q. Isab. Brother, you know it is impossible.

= meaning Kent; ***brother*** was a common form of address for one's brother-in-law,

Pr. Edw. Why, is he dead?

Q. Isab. No, God forbid.

Kent. I would those words proceeded from your heart.

174: wish; Kent reveals his hand.

Y. Mort. Inconstant Edmund, dost thou favour him,
That wast a cause of his imprisonment?

176*ff*: the pretense of friendliness on both sides is dropped; Mortimer switches pronouns, now addressing Kent with the contemptuous ***thee***.
Inconstant = disloyal.
That = ie. "you who were".

Kent. The more cause have I now to make amends.

Y. Mort. [*Aside to Queen Isabella*]
I tell thee, 'tis not meet that one so false
Should come about the person of a prince. −
My lord, he hath betrayed the king his brother,
And therefore trust him not.

= appropriate.
= ie. be allowed to hang around.
= addressing the prince.

Pr. Edw. But he repents, and sorrows for it now.

Q. Isab. Come, son, and go with this gentle lord and me. = ie. Mortimer.

Pr. Edw. With you I will, but not with Mortimer.

Y. Mort. Why, youngling, 'sdain'st thou so of Mortimer? = "do you disdain".
Then I will carry thee by force away.

[*Mortimer grabs Edward*.] 196: stage direction added by Bevington, who suggests Mortimer's seizing of Edward may be meant to be "playful"; Edward does not see it as so.

Pr. Edw. Help, uncle Kent! Mortimer will wrong me. 196: Kent likely steps in to protect the prince.

Q. Isab. Brother Edmund, strive not: we are his friends;
Isabel is nearer than the Earl of Kent. 201: basically, "I am closer in blood (***nearer***) to young Edward than you are - he is my son after all - and so you need not worry that I will harm him."

Kent. Sister, Edward is my charge, redeem him. 203: Kent assumes that since he is the prince's nearest male relative, he has the right to be appointed his Protector.[14]
my charge = ie. "my responsibility"
redeem him = "restore him (to me)."

Q. Isab. Edward is my son, and I will keep him.

Kent. [*Aside*]
Mortimer shall know that he hath wrongèd me! −
Hence will I haste to Killingworth castle,
And rescue agèd Edward from his foes, = Edward was only 43 years old, but the chronicles call him ***old*** as a way to distinguish him from Edward his son.[6]
To be revenged on Mortimer and thee.

[*Exeunt on one side Queen Isabella, Prince Edward,*
and Young Mortimer; on the other Kent.] **Plots to Free Edward:** *though several plots to free the ex-king festered - one even succeeded in freeing him and hiding him for a while at Corfu Castle - Kent had no hand in any such plotting - at least while Edward was still alive.*

ACT V, SCENE III.

Before Kenilworth (Killingworth) Castle.

Enter Matrevis and Gurney and Soldiers,
with King Edward.

Mat. My lord, be not pensive, we are your friends;
Men are ordained to live in misery, 2: Matrevis justifies Edward's treatment with some pop-psychology.
Therefore, come, − dalliance dangereth our lives. = idle delay.[9] = endangers; a rare 16th century use of ***danger*** as a verb.[1]

K. Edw. Friends, whither must unhappy Edward go?
Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest? = ie. grant.
Must I be vexèd like the nightly bird, = tormented. = ie. the owl.
Whose sight is loathsome to all wingèd fowls?
When will the fury of his mind assuage? = abate, diminish.

When will his heart be satisfied with blood?
If mine will serve, unbowel straight this breast,
And give my heart to Isabel and him;
It is the chiefest mark they level at.

Gurn. Not so, my liege. The queen hath given this charge
To keep your grace in safety;
Your passions make your dolours to increase.

K. Edw. This usage makes my misery increase.
But can my air of life continue long
When all my senses are annoyed with stench?
Within a dungeon England's king is kept,
Where I am starved for want of sustenance.
My daily diet is heartbreaking sobs,
That almost rents the closet of my heart;

Thus lives old Edward not relieved by any,
And so must die, though pitièd by many.
O, water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst
And clear my body from foul excrements!

Mat. Here's channel water, as our charge is given;
Sit down, for we'll be barbers to your grace.

K. Edw. Traitors, away! What, will you murther me,
Or choke your sovereign with puddle water?

Gurn. No, but wash your face, and shave away your beard,
Lest you be known, and so be rescuèd.

Mat. Why strive you thus? Your labour is in vain!

K. Edw. The wren may strive against the lion's strength,
But all in vain: so vainly do I strive
To seek for mercy at a tyrant's hand.

[*They wash him with puddle water, and shave off his beard.*]

Immortal powers! that know the painful cares
That wait upon my poor distressèd soul,
O level all your looks upon these daring men,
That wrong their liege and sovereign, England's king!
O Gaveston, 'tis for thee that I am wronged,
For me, both thou and both the Spensers died!
And for your sakes a thousand wrongs I'll take.
The Spensers' ghosts, wherever they remain,

= right now.

13: an archery metaphor: it is the main target (***mark***) they aim (***level***) at.

= ***given***, like most two-syllable words with a medial ***v***, is normally pronounced in a single syllable, with the ***v*** essentially omitted: *gi'en.*

= emoting. = grief.[2]

= treatment.
= ie. breath.
= distressed.[7]

= ie. dying.

= tears apart. = the chamber or sac within which the heart sits.[1,2]

26-27: note the rhyming couplet.

= likely meaning "filth" generally.[7]

= gutter. = "we were instructed to do."
32: ie. they will shave Edward's beard.

37-38: *Edward's keepers moved the king secretly from castle to castle, so as to prevent those who might be planning to rescue him from knowing where he was. One chronicle describes the rough shaving Edward was forced to endure of his beard and hair so as to make it more difficult for anyone to recognize him.*[6]

= "why do you bother to fight us?"

42: ie. even if it is futile to do so.

= anxieties.
= attend.
= aim.

= "I'll suffer a thousand insults."
= reside.

Wish well to mine; then tush, for them I'll die.

Mat. 'Twixt theirs and yours shall be no enmity.
Come, come, away; now put the torches out.
We'll enter in by darkness to Killingworth.

60-61: with the torches extinguished, the ensuing scene with Kent is understood to occur in complete darkness.[14]

Enter Kent.

Gurn. How now, who comes there?

Mat. Guard the king sure: it is the Earl of Kent.

K. Edw. O gentle brother, help to rescue me!

Mat. Keep them asunder; thrust in the king.

= apart. = ie. back into the castle.

Kent. Soldiers, let me but talk to him one word.

Gurn. Lay hands upon the earl for this assault.

Kent. Lay down your weapons, traitors! yield the king!

Mat. Edmund, yield thou thyself, or thou shalt die.

Kent. Base villains, wherefore do you gripe me thus?

= seize.

Gurn. Bind him, and so convey him to the court.

= ie. to Mortimer and Isabella.

Kent. Where is the court but here? here is the king;
And I will visit him; why stay you me?

Mat. The court is where lord Mortimer remains;
Thither shall your honour go; and so farewell.

= resides.
= to there.

[*Exeunt Matrevis and Gurney, with King Edward.*]

91: the soldiers who entered with Matrevis and Gurney remain on stage, holding onto their new prisoner, Kent.

Kent. O, miserable is that commonweal,
Where lords keep courts, and kings are locked in prison!

= nation.[2]

Sold. Wherefore stay we? on, sirs, to the court!

= "why (***wherefore***) do we delay?"

Kent. Ay, lead me whither you will, even to my death,
Seeing that my brother cannot be released.

[*Exeunt.*]

Edward's Mistreatment: *What actually transpired in Berkeley Castle can never be known for sure; stories of the various degrees of psychological mistreatment and physical deprivation heaped on Edward appear in some of the chronicles (sort-of contemporary histories), but may be inventions of the authors, or nothing more than common gossip* (Hutchison, p. 142).[5]

ACT V, SCENE IV.

An apartment in the royal palace.

Enter Young Mortimer, alone.

Y. Mort. The king must die, or Mortimer goes down;
The commons now begin to pity him:
Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death
Is sure to pay for it when his son is of age;

3-4: Mortimer worries that when the prince grows up, he will certainly be obliged to get revenge on the man - whoever it is - who kills the king.

Line 4 is another example of an *alexandrine*, a line with 12 syllables.

And therefore will I do it cunningly.
This letter, written by a friend of ours,
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.

= the Baker chronicle says the king's great enemy, Adam Orleton, the Bishop of Hereford, came up with the idea of the ambiguous letter described here (Hutchison, p. 142).[5]

[*Reads*]
"Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est":
Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die.
But read it thus, and that's another sense:

= ie. "if you read it with different punctuation".

Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est":
Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst.
Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,

6-14: the letter of instruction, written in Latin, is unpunctuated (***unpointed***), and could, depending on how one chooses to read it, be interpreted as an order either to kill the king, or to not; Mortimer expects the jailers to infer the former.

This story of the ambiguous letter is certainly a fiction, but definitely one too good for Marlowe to omit!

That, being dead, if it chance to be found,

= ie. once Edward is dead. = ie. the letter.

Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
And we be quit that caused it to be done.

17: ***we*** = I

quit = ie. acquitted of responsibility.

15-17: Mortimer believes he will be immune from blame for ordering the king's death, because (1) the letter will not be in his handwriting, and (2) it can be reasonably interpreted to say that Edward's life should in fact be saved.

Within this room is locked the messenger
That shall convey it, and perform the rest:
And by a secret token that he bears,

20: the messenger will deliver a ***token*** - some object, such as a ring - to Matrevis and Gurney, to prove the letter and its severe instructions are indeed from Mortimer.

Shall he be murdered when the deed is done. −
Lightborn, come forth!

Enter Lightborn.

24: **Entering Character:** the messenger ***Lightborn*** is fictional.

Art thou so resolute as thou wast?

Light. What else, my lord? and far more resolute.

Y. Mort. And hast thou cast how to accomplish it?

= contrived, figured out.

Light. Ay, ay, and none shall know which way he died.

32: "yes, yes, and nobody shall know how he died", ie. he will murder Edward in a way that will leave no marks or evidence of the crime.

Y. Mort. But at his looks, Lightborn, thou wilt relent.

34: Mortimer tests Lightborn: "oh, I am sure that when you see the pitiful king in person, you will falter."

Light. Relent? ha, ha! I use much to relent.

36: there seems to be a joke here by Lightborn, not commented on by any previous editor, no doubt because of its obscurity: ***relent*** also used to mean dissolve,[1] so he may be chuckling over his practiced skill in dissolving poisons in water, as he describes in his next speech.
use much = ie. "am much accustomed".

Y. Mort. Well, do it bravely, and be secret.

= well. = likely a trisyllable: *SE-cer-et*.

Light. You shall not need to give instructiöns;
'Tis not the first time I have killed a man:

41-48: Lightborn describes the methods he has learned to dispose of another without leaving traceable evidence.

I learned in Naples how to poison flowers;

42-47 the citizens of ***Naples*** had a reputation for being murderers generally and poisoners specifically.[37]

To strangle with a lawn thrust down the throat;

43: the reference is to a weird type of assassination in which a cascade of water, forced down the victim's throat, carried with it a strip of linen (***lawn***), suffocating the poor wretch.[7]
down = the first quarto prints ***through*** here, but the later editions' ***down*** makes more sense.

To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point;
Or, whilst one is asleep, to take a quill

= small tube.[1]

And blow a little powder in his ears:

= ie. poison; Tancock notes the popularity of murder by poison in the 16th century.[7]

Or open his mouth, and pour quicksilver down.

47: ***open*** = emended by Dyce to ***ope'*** for the sake of the meter.
quicksilver = mercury, a highly toxic metal which is liquid at room temperature.

But yet I have a braver way than these.

= "an even better way than these to kill him."

Y. Mort. What's that?

Light. Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall know my tricks.

52: the audience was expected to understand this vague allusion to the notorious manner in which Edward was reported to have been murdered - by having a red-hot poker inserted in his backside.

Y. Mort. I care not how it is, so it be not spied.
Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis.

[*Gives letter*.]

At every ten mile end thou hast a horse.
Take this;

59: there will be a fresh horse waiting for him every ten miles; Mortimer clearly intends for Lightborn to proceed as fast as he can. Berkeley Castle is about 100 miles from London.

[*Gives money*.]

Away! and never see me more!

Light. No!

66: Lightborn is surprised by this last instruction.

Y. Mort. No;
Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death.

Light. That will I quickly do. Farewell, my lord.

[*Exit*.]

Y. Mort. The prince I rule, the queen do I command,

75*f*: Mortimer, alone, reviews his situation: he is finally the undisputed chief man of England.

And with a lowly congè to the ground,
The proudest lords salute me as I pass;

= congee, ie. bow.

I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.

78: ***seal*** = use the great Seal to issue official documents.[1]
cancel = annul legal documents.[1]

Feared am I more than loved; − let me be feared,
And when I frown, make all the court look pale.

= ie. from fear.

I view the Prince with Aristarchus' eyes,
Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy.

81-82: ***Aristarchus*** was a 2nd century B.C. grammarian and schoolmaster who had a reputation for being a severe critic.[11] Mortimer imagines him as a strict instructor, whose glance at a quivering pupil had the same effect as a whipping (***breeching***).

Aristarchus' most lasting legacy was the dividing of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into 24 books each.

They thrust upon me the protectorship,

83: with Kent out of the way, Mortimer became the young king's Protector.

Actually, Mortimer never held any formal positions in young Edward's administration, but all the key posts were held by his lackeys, so that he was the de facto ruler of England.

And sue to me for that that I desire.

84: the king's Council begged Mortimer to be the Protector, which is what he wanted anyway.

While at the council-table, grave enough,

85-88: Mortimer describes the false modesty with which he affected to be unqualified to accept the role of Protector.

And not unlike a bashful Puritan,

86: ***bashful*** = "hypocritically modest", a trait often assigned to Puritans (Briggs, p. 195).[6]

Puritan = the quarto prints ***paretaine***, assumed by all the editors to mean ***Puritan***; the use of ***Puritan*** is of course a gross anachronism; neither the word Puritan, nor the Puritans as a group, appeared in England until after the Reformation, well into the 16th century.

First I complain of imbecility,

= incompetency.[1]

Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum*;

88: Latin: "a most heavy burden."

Till being interrupted by my friends,
Suscepi that *provinciam* as they term it;

= Latin: "I accept that office or position."[6]

And to conclude, I am Protector now.
Now is all sure: the queen and Mortimer

= secure.

Shall rule the realm, the king; and none rule us.

= ie. "and shall also rule, ie. control, young Edward."

Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance;

= promote: Mortimer's followers and dependents held all the key posts in the administration: for example, Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, was Treasurer; and John Hotham, Bishop of Ely, Chancellor.

Officially, a council of twelve lords were assigned to rule England in Edward's name, but it quickly became irrelevant, as Mortimer took over control of the government.

And what I list command who dare control?

= wish to. = object to or criticize.[1,11]

96 *Maior sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere*.

96: Latin: "I am too great for Fortune's power to injure." From Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (Humphries, p. 135).[28]

And that this be the coronation day,
98 It pleaseth me, and Isabel the queen.

97: Edward was crowned on 1 February 1327.

100 [*Trumpets within*.]

100*ff*: the scene now changes to Westminster.[4]

102 The trumpets sound, I must go take my place.

104 *Enter King Edward the Third, Queen Isabella, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Champion and Nobles.*
106

Entering Characters: young ***Edward*** has been crowned king; Bevington suggests Edward should sit on a throne. The ***Champion's*** role is described in his speech at lines 110-3 below.

A. of Cant. Long live King Edward, by the grace of God,
108 King of England and Lord of Ireland!

= ***Lord of Ireland*** had been part of the English king's official title since the days of King John.

110 ***Champ.*** If any Christian, heathen, Turk, or Jew,
Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king,

= assert.

112 And will avouch his saying with the sword,

= make good, back up.[23]

I am the champion that will combat him.

110-3: the ceremonial role of the ***Champion of the King*** is as he describes here; he rides into Westminster Hall while the king is at dinner, throws down his gauntlet, and challenges anyone who disputes the king's right to the crown to single-combat. The king salutes the champion by drinking to him, and sends him a gilt cup filled with wine; the champion drinks the wine and keeps the cup.[29]

114 ***Y. Mort.*** None comes, sound, trumpets.

115: presumably there is a brief pause before this line is spoken.

116 [*Trumpets sound*.]

118 ***Edw. III.*** Champion, here's to thee.

120 [*Gives a purse*.]

122 ***Q. Isab.*** Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge.

123: Isabella suggests Mortimer should now formally assume the role of Protector.[14]

124 *Enter Soldiers with Kent prisoner.*

126 ***Y. Mort.*** What traitor have we there with blades and bills?

127: ***with blades and bills*** = ie. accompanied by soldiers.
blades = swords.[14]
bills = a ***bill*** was a pole-arm with a hook and spikes attached at one end.[25]

128 ***Sold.*** Edmund, the Earl of Kent.

130 ***Edw. III.*** What hath he done?

132 ***Sold.*** 'A would have taken the king away perforce,

= he. = forcibly.

134 As we were bringing him to Killingworth.

136 ***Y. Mort.*** Did you attempt his rescue, Edmund? speak.

138 ***Kent.*** Mortimer, I did; he is our king,
And thou compell'st this prince to wear the crown.

Y. Mort. Strike off his head! He shall have martial law.

= ie. a military trial.
Kent was actually tried and convicted in Parliament.

Kent. Strike off my head! base traitor, I defy thee!

Edw. III. My lord, he is my uncle, and shall live.

Y. Mort. My lord, he is your enemy, and shall die.

Kent. Stay, villains!

= stop.

Edw. III. Sweet mother, if I cannot pardon him,
Entreat my Lord Protector for his life.

Q. Isab. Son, be content; I dare not speak a word.

Edw. III. Nor I, and yet methinks I should command;
But, seeing I cannot, I'll entreat for him −

="beg for his life."

My lord, if you will let my uncle live,
I will requite it when I come to age.

= repay.

Y. Mort. 'Tis for your highness' good, and for the realm's. −
How often shall I bid you bear him hence?

162: to the guards: "how many times do I have to tell you to get him out of here?"

Kent. Art thou king? must I die at thy command?

Y. Mort. At our command. − Once more away with him.

Kent. Let me but stay and speak; I will not go.
Either my brother or his son is king,
And none of both them thirst for Edmund's blood:

= "neither of them".

And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me?

= drag.

[*Soldiers hale Kent away, to be beheaded.*]

Edw. III. What safety may I look for at his hands,
If that my uncle shall be murthered thus?

175-6: Edward addresses Isabella.

Q. Isab. Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes;
Had Edmund lived, he would have sought thy death.
Come, son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.

Edw. III. And shall my uncle Edmund ride with us?

182: Briggs notes the inconsistency of the new king's portrayal: having acted with such maturity till now, would young Edward really speak a line so naïve and childish as this? (p. 199).[6]

Q. Isab. He is a traitor; think not on him; come.

[*Exeunt.*]

Kent's Death: *the true and tragic story of Edmund's downfall is quite different than what Marlowe portrays; long after Edward's death was announced, rumours of his survival persisted (just as many people in modern times believe the announced deaths of Elvis and John F. Kennedy were fabricated); so much so that even Kent came to believe them.*

Tricked by Mortimer into sending correspondence containing plans for springing the supposedly living king from Corfu Castle, Kent was arrested and sentenced to die

on 1 March 1330; however, when he was led to his execution spot in Winchester, no one could be found who was willing to behead him - a testament to the obvious fraud and deceit used to set him up and convict him. Finally, after a whole day of waiting, a condemned criminal was found who was given his pardon for removing Kent's head.

Mortimer, for his part, was said to have admitted privately at a later date that Kent had been framed.

ACT V, SCENE V.

A hall in Berkeley Castle.

Enter Matrevis and Gurney.

Mat. Gurney, I wonder the king dies not.
Being in a vault up to the knees in water,
To which the channels of the castle run,
From whence a damp continually ariseth,
That were enough to poison any man,
Much more a king brought up so tenderly.

channels = sewers.

6: Edward was tall and unusually strong, and seems to have surprised his keepers with his ability to survive the harsh treatment heaped on him.[6]

Gurn. And so do I, Matrevis: yesternight
I opened but the door to throw him meat,
And I was almost stifled with the savour.

meat = food.
savour = smell.

Mat. He hath a body able to endure
More than we can inflict: and therefore now
Let us assail his mind another while.

another while = "again for a bit."

Gurn. Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.

thence = from (in) there.

Mat. But stay, who's this?

stay = hold on.

Enter Lightborn.

Light. My Lord Protector greets you.

[*Gives letter*.]

Gurn. What's here? I know not how to conster it.

conster = construe, ie. interpret; Gurney, reading the letter, is confused by the lack of punctuation.

Mat. Gurney, it was left unpointed for the nonce:
"Edwardum occidere nolite timere."
That's his meaning.

unpointed = unpunctuated. for the nonce = for the occasion, ie. deliberately.

29-30: as Mortimer hoped, Matrevis interprets the letter's meaning as "fear not to kill the king." See Act V.iv.9-14.

Light. Know you this token? I must have the king.

[*Gives token*.]

Mat. Ay, stay awhile, thou shalt have answer straight.
[*Aside to Gurney*]
This villain's sent to make away the king.

stay awhile = "hold on for a moment". straight = right away.
make away = murder.

Gurn. [*Aside*] I thought as much.

Mat. [*Aside*] And when the murder's done,
See how he must be handled for his labour. = dealt with.

Pereat iste! Let him have the king. − = Latin: "Let him perish himself." The Latin instruction is included in the letter, and Matrevis immediately understands its meaning: kill Lightborn after he has disposed of the king.

What else? Here is the keys, this is the lake, 45: ***What else?*** = "Of course!"
Here is the keys = in this era, ***keys*** could be referred to in either the singular or the plural.
lake = dungeon, pit.[1]

Do as you are commanded by my lord. = ie. Mortimer.

Light. I know what I must do. Get you away,
Yet be not far off, I shall need your help;
See that in the next room I have a fire,
And get me a spit, and let it be red-hot.

Mat. Very well.

Gurn. Need you anything besides?

Light. What else? A table and a feather-bed. = mattress filled with feathers.[14]

Gurn. That's all?

Light. Ay, ay; so, when I call you, bring it in.

Mat. Fear not thou that.

Gurn. Here's a light, to go into the dungeon. = torch.

[*Gives a light, and then exit with Matrevis.*] 69: Dyce suggests there is a change of scene to the dungeon where Edward is kept; perhaps Lightborn pulls back a curtain to reveal the miserable quarters of the king.[8] Tancock, on the other hand, posits that Edward climbs up from out of the dungeon, and the scene simply continues.[7]

Light. So now
Must I about this gear; ne'er was there any = business. = anyone.
So finely handled as this king shall be.
Foh, here's a place indeed, with all my heart! 72: Lightborn is impressed by Edward's bleak surroundings!

K. Edw. Who's there? what light is that? wherefore comes thou? = why.

Light. To comfort you and bring you joyful news.

K. Edw. Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.
Villain, I know thou com'st to murther me.

Light. To murther you, my most gracious lord!
Far is it from my heart to do you harm.
The queen sent me to see how you were used, = being treated.
For she relents at this your misery:
And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears,
To see a king in this most piteous state?

K. Edw. Weep'st thou already? list a while to me,
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis', hewn from the Caucasus,

Yet will it melt, ere I have done my tale.
This dungeon where they keep me is the sink
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

Light. O villains!

K. Edw. And there in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space; and, lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king;
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind's distempered, and my body's numbed,
And whether I have limbs or no I know not.
O, would my blood dropped out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tattered robes.
Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,

And there unhorsed the Duke of Clerèmont.

Light. O speak no more, my lord! this breaks my heart.
Lie on this bed, and rest yourself a while.

K. Edw. These looks of thine can harbour nought but death:
I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
Yet stay; awhile forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.

Light. What means your highness to mistrust me thus?

K. Edw. What means thou to dissemble with me thus?

Light. These hands were never stained with innocent blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.

K. Edw. Forgive my thought for having such a thought.
One jewèl have I left; receive thou this.

[*Gives jewel*.]

= listen.

90: Matrevis' heart is as hard as if it had been cut from the Caucasus Mountains.

= finished.

92-93: in a medieval castle, the "toilets" were up against one inner wall, and all the waste would fall to a sewer below. The rebuilt Langley Castle, now a luxury hotel in Northumberland, has such fully restored "water closets" available for inspection.

= for fear that.[1]

= ie. "though I am".[7]

= lack.

= deranged or disturbed.

= "I didn't look like this".

= ie. "jousted (on her behalf)". Actually, Edward did not have much of a penchant for participating in tournaments.

108: the title was of a French noble.

= it is unclear when the feather-bed of line 57 is brought in; Lightborn had previously only asked for it to be made ready. If, at line 69, a curtain is indeed pulled back to "reveal" the dungeon, the bed might already be sitting there; or, as Dyce suggests, the bed was thrust on-stage after the exit of Matrevis and Gurney at line 67.

= nothing.

114: a nice bit of theatrical self-reference.

= ie. at the very moment.[11]

= perhaps the first ***thought*** should be ***fault***: cf. *Henry VI, Part 3*: "*O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!*" (Act III.ii).[6]

Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
O, if thou harbour'st murther in thy heart,
Let this gift change thy mind, and save thy soul.
Know that I am a king: O, at that name
I feel a hell of grief! Where is my crown?
Gone, gone! and do I [still] remain alive?

Light. You're overwatched, my lord; lie down and rest.

K. Edw. But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;
For not these ten days have these eye-lids closed.
Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
Open again. O wherefore sitt'st thou here?

Light. If you mistrust me, I'll be gone, my lord.

K. Edw. No, no, for if thou mean'st to murther me,
Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay.

[*Sleeps.*]

Light. He sleeps.

K. Edw. [*Waking*]
O let me not die; yet stay, O stay a while!

Light. How now, my lord?

K. Edw. Something still buzzeth in mine ears,
And tells me if I sleep I never wake;
This fear is that which makes me tremble thus.
And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?

Light. To rid thee of thy life. − Matrevis, come.

Enter Matrevis and Gurney.

K. Edw. I am too weak and feeble to resist: −
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul!

Light. Run for the table.

K. Edw. O spare me, or dispatch me in a trice.

[*Matrevis brings in a table.*]

Light. So, lay the table down, and stamp his body,
But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body.

[*King Edward is murdered.*]

= ie. "to thee."

= exhausted from being awake too long.[2]

= "if not for the grief that".

= why.

= why.

= quickly.

= Dyce emends to ***on it*** for the sake of the meter.

182: as Edward is lying on the bed, the others lay the upside-down table over his body, and crush or suffocate the king by pressing (***stamping***)[2] on it.

Based on lines 184 below, Edward screams as he is murdered.

What About the Red-Hot Poker? According to the *Chronicles* of Holinshed, the red-hot poker was inserted into

the king's rear even as they were pressing down on him as he lay under a table. We offer for your reading pleasure Holinshed's own words at the end of this scene.

It may have been too much even for Marlowe, the street-wise veteran of Canterbury's hard streets, to put any explicit instruction regarding the poker into the stage-directions. A director may decided how graphic a portrayal of the king's death his or her company should present.

Mat. I fear me that this cry will raise the town,
And therefore, let us take horse and away.

184-5: the Baker chronicle suggests, implausibly, that the king's shrieks were audible to the townsfolk outside the castle (Hutchison, p. 142).[5]

Light. Tell me, sirs, was it not <u>bravely</u> done?

= excellently.

Gurn. Excellent well: take this for thy reward

[*Gurney stabs Lightborn, who dies.*]

Come, let us cast the body in the moat,
And bear the king's to Mortimer our lord.
Away!

[*Exeunt with the bodies.*]

The Chronicle's Report of the Death of Edward: despite Lightborn's instruction that the jailers have a red-hot spit ready to go, there is no stage instruction for its use; a modern director of the play can decide how disturbing he or she wants the murder-scene to be in this regard.

The legend that a glowing poker was inserted into Edward's fundament can be traced back to the *Chronicles* of Holinshed; here following is Holinshed's graphic account of the last days of Edward (spelling slightly modernized to facilitate reading):

"They lodged the miserable prisoner in a chamber over a foule filthie dungeon, full of dead carrion, trusting so to make an end of him, with the abhominable stench thereof: but he bearing it out strongly, as a man of a tough nature, continued still in life ...

Wherevpon when they sawe that such practises would not serve their turn, they came suddenly one night into the chamber where he lay in bed fast asléepe, and with heauie featherbeds or a table (as some write) being cast vpon him, they kept him down and withall put into his fundament an horne, and through the same they thrust vp into his bodie an hot spit, or (as other have) through the pipe of a trumpet a plumbers instrument of iron made verie hot, the which passing vp into his intrailes, and being rolled to and fro, burnt the same, but so as no appearance of any wound or hurt outwardlie might be once perceived.

His crie did move many within the castle and towne of Berkley to compassion, plainelie hearing him vtter a wailefull noise, as the tormentors were about to murther him, so that diuerse being awakened therewith (as they themselues confessed) prayed heartilie to God to receiue his soule, when they vnderstood by his crie what the matter meant."

ACT V, SCENE VI.

An apartment in the royal palace.

Enter Young Mortimer and Matrevis.

Y. Mort. Is't done, Matrevis, and the murtherer dead?

= ie. Lightborn.

Mat. Ay, my good lord; I would it were undone!

= wish.

Y. Mort. Matrevis, if thou now growest penitent
I'll be thy ghostly father; therefore choose,
Whether thou wilt be secret in this,
Or else die by the hand of Mortimer.

= spiritual priest or confessor.
= ***secret*** is tri-syllabic here: *SE-cer-et.*[8]

Mat. Gurney, my lord, is fled, and will, I fear,
Betray us both; therefore let me fly.

Y. Mort. Fly to the savages!

13: ie. "Get the hell out of here!" Tancock wonders if Mortimer is anachronistically referring to America and its Indians here;[7] a search of the era's literature confirms that ***savages*** was usually used to describe native Americans.

Mat. I humbly thank your honour.

[*Exit.*]

Y. Mort. As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree,
And others are but shrubs compared to me.
All tremble at my name, and I fear none;
Let's see who dare impeach me for his death!

= "like an oak tree"; the oak was sacred to Jove.

= accuse.

Enter Queen Isabella.

Q. Isab. Ah, Mortimer, the king my son hath news
His father's dead, and we have murdered him!

26-27: Gurney has already spilled the beans about the king's murder; another example of Compression of Time.

Y. Mort. What if we have? The king is yet a child.

Q. Isab. Ay, ay, but he tears his hair, and wrings his hands,
And vows to be revenged upon us both.
Into the council-chamber he is gone,
To crave the aid and succour of his peers.
Ay me! see where he comes, and they with him.
Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.

= the second ***ay*** may be deleted for the meter's sake.

= assistance; with ***aid***, another pleonasm.

= another bit of ironic self-reference.

Enter King Edward the Third, Lords and Attendants.

38: *the king was murdered in 1327; though Marlowe depicts Edward's revenge against Mortimer as occurring immediately after his father's death, in reality the coup de grace took place three years later, in 1330.*

During the intervening three years, England fought another failed war against Scotland, with whom a "shameful" peace treaty was concluded which recognized Robert Bruce as the king of an independent Scotland; young Edward married Philippa, the daughter of William, Count of Hainaut, in 1328; and a bitter civil war took place between Leicester and Mortimer; all of which Marlowe has skipped over.

1st Lord. Fear not, my lord, know that you are a king.

Edw. III. Villain! −

Y. Mort. How now, my lord! — = "stop!", or "hold!"[8]

Edw. III. Think not that I am frighted with thy words!
My father's murdered through thy treachery;
And thou shalt die, and on his mournful hearse
Thy hateful and accursèd head shall lie
To witness to the world, that by thy means
His kingly body was too soon interred.

Q. Isab. Weep not, sweet son!

Edw. III. Forbid not me to weep; he was my father;
And had you loved him half so well as I,
You could not bear his death thus patiently.
But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer.

1st Lord. Why speak you not unto my lord the king? — 60: addressed to Mortimer, who perhaps has turned his back to Edward.

Y. Mort. Because I think [it] scorn to be accused. — = ie. "beneath me".
Who is the man dares say I murdered him?

Edw. III. Traitor! in me my loving father speaks,
And plainly saith, 'twas thou that murdered'st him.

Y. Mort. But hath your grace no other proof than this?

Edw. III. Yes, if this be the hand of Mortimer. — = handwriting.

[*Showing letter*.] — 70-72: if this is the letter with the ambiguous Latin instruction, then there may be an inconsistency in the play, as that letter was clearly identified as written by a "friend" of Mortimer's. See Act V.iv.6.

Y. Mort. [*Aside*] False Gurney hath betrayed me and himself.

Q. Isab. [*Aside*] I feared as much; murther cannot be hid.

Y. Mort. [I]t is my hand; what gather you by this? — = handwriting.

Edw. III. That thither thou didst send a murtherer. — = to there.

Y. Mort. What murtherer? Bring forth the man I sent.

Edw. III. Ah, Mortimer, thou knowest that he is slain;
And so shalt thou be too − Why stays he here? — = ie. "is Mortimer still here? get him out of here!"
Bring him unto a hurdle, drag him forth; — = cart for transporting the condemned to execution.

Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up; — 87: in addition to being hanged and eviscerated, a traitor's body was subject to the additional insult of being cut into quarters, which were then dispersed to various parts of the kingdom and exhibited as a warning to any who would dare oppose the king, and also as a testament to the king's incontrovertible power.
And bring his head back presently to me.

Q. Isab. For my sake, sweet son, pity Mortimer!

Y. Mort. Madam, entreat not, I will rather die,
Than sue for life unto a paltry boy.

Edw. III. Hence with the traitor! with the murderer!

Y. Mort. Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall? −
Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

Edw. III. What! suffer you the traitor to delay?

[*Young Mortimer is taken away by 1st Lord and Attendants.*]

Q. Isab. As thou received'st thy life from me,
Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer!

Edw. III. This argues that you spilt my father's blood,
Else would you not entreat for Mortimer.

Q. Isab. I spill his blood? no!

Edw. III. Ay, madam, you, for so the rumour runs.

Q. Isab. That rumour is untrue; for loving thee,
Is this report raised on poor Isabel.

Edw. III. I do not think her so unnatural.

2nd Lord. My lord, I fear me it will prove too true.

Edw. III. Mother, you are suspected for his death,
And therefore we commit you to the Tower
Till further trial may be made thereof:
If you be guilty, though I be your son,
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.

Q. Isab. Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived,
Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.

Edw. III. Away with her, her words enforce these tears,

= ask.
= beg.

97-101: Mortimer returns to consideration of, and revises his opinion regarding his ability to control, the Wheel of Fortune; see Act V.ii.92-93.

100-1: having reached the pinnacle of success, why should Mortimer be surprised that the only direction left for him to go was down?

= ie. in the afterlife.

= permit.

= ie. "is evidence".

124: Edward addresses the lords: he wonders whether he is unfair in judging his mother so harshly.
so unnatural = ie. so as to want to kill, or at least favour the death of, Edward; ***unnatural*** was used to describe feelings one has which run counter to those one is expected to have towards family.

128-132: **Isabella's Fate:** *actually, Edward was quite lenient with Isabella, sending her to a "comfortable retirement" at Castle Rising in Norfolk, where she was visited frequently by her son the king. Though deprived of her extensive possessions, the queen was granted a more-than-generous 3000 pounds annual allowance. Isabella lived many more years before finally passing in 1358. She was buried near her beloved Mortimer* (Packe, p. 53-54).[27]

= when.

And I shall pity her if she speak again.

Q. Isab. Shall I not mourn for my belovèd lord,
And with the rest accompany him to his grave?

2nd Lord. Thus, madam, 'tis the king's will you shall hence.

Q. Isab. He hath forgotten me; stay, I am his mother.

2nd Lord. That boots not; therefore, gentle madam, go.

147: "it's useless (***that boots not***) to pursue this any further."

Q. Isab. Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief.

[*Exit with Attendants.*]

Re-enter 1st Lord, with the head of Young Mortimer.

153: severed heads appear frequently on the Elizabethan stage.

1st Lord. My lord, here is the head of Mortimer.

Edw. III. Go fetch my father's hearse, where it shall lie;
And bring my funeral robes.

157: ***hearse*** = a wooden frame used in the funerals of royal and noble persons, on which were placed candles and decorations such as "banners, heraldic devices, and lighted candles" and on which "it was customary for friends to pin short poems or epitaphs." (Skeat, p. 189).[23]

it = perhaps meaning Mortimer's head.[14]

[*Exeunt Attendants*.]

Accursèd head,
Could I have ruled thee then, as I do now,
Thou had'st not hatched this monstrous treachery! −
Here comes the hearse; help me to mourn, my lords.

[*Re-enter Attendants with the hearse and funeral robes*.]

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head;
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,
Be witness of my grief and innocency.

= trickling, often said of tears.[1]

[*Exeunt*.]

FINIS.

Postscript: The Unknowable Story of the Death of Edward and his Jailers: *there will likely never be definitive answers to the questions raised over the circumstances surrounding Edward's death, nor even who exactly was involved. The following summary is adapted from the lengthy analysis of the matter by historian Katherine Warner in her website EdwardtheSecond.blogspot.*

What is known is that Leicester was required to hand custody of the king over to Berkeley and Maltravers on 3 April 1327, and that they were charged with joint responsibility for his keeping. It is possible the pair took turns watching the king, alternating every month. What is more certain is that Maltravers was not even present at Berkeley Castle on the date of the king's death, and Berkeley, who lied about his location at the time, was.

Additionally, at some point Berkeley actually appointed Gurney to watch over the king.

In late March or the first day or so of April, Mortimer supposedly sent one William Ockley with instructions to Edward's jailers to "remedy the situation". A day or so after Ockley's arrival, the king's death was announced. It was Gurney who was sent by Berkeley to inform Parliament of the old king's death. It was stated that Edward died "of natural causes."

After Mortimer's fall in 1330, Gurney, Ockley, and another obscure figure, Sir Simon Bereford, were convicted for the murder of Edward II; Maltravers was condemned to die for his leading role in the trial, conviction and execution of the Earl of Kent, but not Edward's death. Bereford was executed in December 1330.

Gurney and Maltravers escaped to the continent before their sentences could be carried out. Gurney was later discovered and arrested in Spain in 1331, escaped, and was found and arrested again in Naples in 1333. Impoverished and ill, Gurney died before he could be brought back to England.

Maltravers' story is more interesting: never arrested, Maltravers instead ended up working for Edward III in Flanders, eventually submitting to and being received by the king, and even officially pardoned for his role in Kent's death in 1351. His lands returned to him, Maltravers lived out his life in England, dying in 1364.

The fate of Ockley is unknown: if he was executed, no record of the fact is extant. Berkeley was acquitted of all charges, and went on to live until 1361. The great leniency shown by Edward III toward the murderers of his father was exceptional (Warner, Regicide etc., Part Two).[33]

Marlowe's Invented Words.

Like all writers of the era, Christopher Marlowe made up words when he 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 that research suggests first appeared in *Edward II*:

A. Words and Compound Words.

asseize (meaning "seize", unconfirmed)
balk, baulk (meaning to disappoint, unconfirmed)
brisk (meaning finely dressed)
buckler (as a verb)
curate-like
Midas-like
mushroom (referring to an upstart)
my stars (as an expression of surprise)
or else (still the modern phrase implying a threat, unconfirmed)
over-woo
port-master
savage-minded
sword-proof
tanti
targeteer
too-piercing
top-branch(es)
top-flag
torpedo (applied to a person)
tune (figuratively meaning to bring two people or things into harmony)
velvet-caped

B. Expressions and Collocations.

Collocations are words that are commonly, conventionally and familiarly used together (e.g. "blue sky"), but which when used collectively so do not rise to the level of what may be called an expression. All of the following expressions and collocations make their first appearance in *Edward II*, and were subsequently used by later writers, and some even continue to be used this day.

Those collocations in *quotation marks* indicate an exactly worded formula that was reused regularly by later writers. Also, the words ***one***, ***one's***, and ***oneself*** are used as proxies for any pronoun, e.g. the entry "pull one's house down" represents all variations including "pull my house down", "pull your house down", etc.

"advance your standard"
"aims at thy life"
"air of life"
"base flatterer(s)"
"bliss on earth"
"bound everlastingly"
"bowl of poison"
"bowmen and pikes"

"brainsick king"
"calm this rage"
"cause of these broils"
"celestial sun"
"center of one's bliss"
"channel water"
"charming Circe"
"countries yet unknown"
"crownet(s) of pearl"
"death seize"
"desert shore"
"die in bands"
"downfall is at hand"
"dried" with one's "sighs"
"drop down a tear"
"factious lord(s)"
"feast it royally"
"finely dissembled"
"flatly had denied"
"free from suspect"
"full of secrecy"
"full of trust"
"funeral robes"
"gaudy silks"
"grieve and/or storm"
"groaning" at the "gate(s)"
"haughty menaces"
"heart-breaking sobs"
"hewn" from the "Caucasus"
"hooded cloak"
"ignoble vassal(s)"
"immortal throne"
"judge you the rest"
"lame and poor"
"lay hands upon" the "traitor"
"levied troops"
"long grace"
"long life and happiness"
"low legs"
"lowly ground"
"make quick work"
"man of more desert"
"marked to die"
"misgoverned king"
"mounting thoughts"
"mournful hearse"
"new-come soul"
"news of dishonour"
"northern borderer(s)"
"nursery of art"
"one's mind runs on (something)"
"paltry boy"
"period of my life"
"pitied my estate"

"plots and stratagems"
"potion wrought"
"proud command(s)"
"rancorous mind"
"revenged at full"
"rue too late"
"senseless trunk"
"shipwrecked body"
"showers of vengeance"
"sighs and cries"
"so fair a house"
"soaring up to Heaven"
"soldier's hand"
"spangled crest"
"speak men fair"
"stay and speak"
"successful battles"
"tattered robe"
"the day grows old"
"the sunshine of my (our, etc) life"
"timeless sepulchre(s)"
"tottered / tattered ensign"
"unnatural revolt"
"upstart pride"
"vanish fast"
"witness the tears"
a **"declining fall"**
collocation of **garrisons** and **beaten out of**
collocation of **pent** and **mewed**
collocation of **straight** and **expel**
collocation of **lard** and **pearl**
collocation of **peal** and **thunder**
(though not literal thunder)
collocation of **suffer** and **counterbuff**
collocation of **undertake/undertook** and **return**
one's "head shall off"
one's "name revives" one
sword-proof
the expression **"noble minds contemn despair"**
to **"amplify one's grief"**
to **"beget one's hopes"**
to **"begirt one round"**
to **"bewray" one's "baseness"**
to **"brook" the "sight" of something**
to **"charge one roundly"**
to **"cloy the/one's soul"**
to **"countenance one's ill"**
to **"drag" on a "hurdle"**
to **"exasperate one's wrath"**
to **"gratify one's grace"**
to **"grow penitent"**
to **"live uncontrolled"**
to **"make white black"**
to **"post away by"**

to **"run one's horse to death"**
to be **"bedaubed"** with **"gold"**

C. Words and Expressions Incorrectly Credited to Marlowe by the OED.

The OED cites *Edward II* as being the publication containing the earliest use of the following words; however, research has shown that the OED is not correct in giving Marlowe credit for using these words first, ie. all of them appeared in works published before 1590.

gloomy
goat-feet
heavy-headed (meaning stupid)
hooded (used to describe a garment, rather than a person)
Hymen (first use in English literature)
light-brained
manent (as a stage direction, meaning to remain on stage, applied to more than one person)
night-grown
nook and/or corner (a predecessor to nook and cranny)
overdaring
shipwrecked (as an adjective)
smooth-tongued
unfrequented
unrigged
vailing (as a noun)
wait attendance

FOOTNOTES.

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

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