ElizabethanDrama.org  
presents  
the Annotated Popular Edition of  

EDWARD II  
by Christopher Marlowe  
1592  

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EDWARD II
by Christopher Marlowe
1592

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 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 minor modifications taken from William Briggs' Marlowe's Edward II, cited at #6 below.

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.


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

On April 25, 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 the Frenchman 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 partner Gaveston.

BASIC TIMELINE of the PLAY.

Edward II can be basically divided into two halves:

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

**Transitional Scene:** Act III, Scene 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, Scene iii, through Act V, Scene v; the final years of Edward's reign (1322-1327).

**Coda:** Act V, Scene vi, the final scene of the play; the end of the Mortimer era (1330).
ANNOTATIONS in ITALICS.

Those annotations which appear in italics serve two different 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.
EDWARD II
by Christopher Marlowe
1592

The Troublesome Raigne and lamentable death of Edward the second, king of England: with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer.

ACT I.

SCENE I.
[A street in London.]

Enter Gaveston, reading a letter [from the king.]

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.

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

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.
And with the world be still at enmity.  
What need the arctic people love starlight,  
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?

16: "why would the people of the Arctic love starlight". In Tancock's interpretation, the nobles, whom Gaveston hates, are the stars, and Edward is the sun of the next line. Note the rhyming couplet in 16-17.  
= "no longer will I have to servilely bow".  

= ie. the common people, the masses.  
20-21: common allusion to the practice of keeping a fire alive overnight by raking ashes over the glowing coals.  

20-21: common allusion to the practice of keeping a fire alive overnight by raking ashes over the glowing coals.  

Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers!  
My knee shall bow to none but to the king.  
As for the multitude, that are but sparks,  
Raked up in embers of their poverty; –  

Note the rhyming couplet in 16 - 17.

Tanti: I'll fawn first on the wind  
That glanceth at my lips, and flieth away.  
But how now, what are these?

Enter three Poor Men.

Men. Such as desire your worship's service.

Gav. What canst thou do?

1st P. Man. I can ride.

Gav. But I have no horse. What art thou?


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

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

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

Gav. Why, there are hospitals for such as you;  
I have no war, and therefore, sir, be gone.

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

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

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

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.

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.]

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

Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please.
Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,

Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;

My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by,
One like Actaeon peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
And running in the likeness of an hart
By yelping hounds pulled down, shall seem to die —

Such things as these best please his majesty.
Here comes my lord the king, and the nobles
dissemble pleasantly with the poor men; too bad he
will not remember this moment when he is dealing with
the nobles of England!

= "am successful". = hire, take into his service.

66: the Poor Men disappear from the play.

= ie. poets who write about love or sexual desire. 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.

= pliable.

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.
Masques also were not introduced into English society until
the 16th century. Lines 72-73 provide us with another rhyming couplet.

= outside of the palace.

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

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

grazing = strolling or passing over. = grotesquely-performed country dances.
= dressed or disguised as Diana, the Roman goddess of the
hunt and of virginity; until the Restoration, all women's
parts were played by boys.

80: note the wordplay of gilds and glides.
= small crowns, but used here to mean "bracelets".
= playful or merry. = ie. olive branch.

83: oh dear! = himself. = close by.

85-88: the reference is to the famous mythological story of
Actaeon, a young man who accidentally stumbled onto
Diana bathing naked in the woods; the virgin goddess
punished Actaeon by turning him into a stag (hart), and he
was torn apart by his own dogs.
From the parliament. I'll stand aside.

=Gaveston positions himself so that he can hear the ensuing conversation without being seen; it was a major 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.

= Gaveston.

Entering Characters: the king 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.

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.


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? —

[Aside] In spite of them

I'll have my will; and these two Mortimers,

That cross me thus, shall know I am displeased.

E. Mort. If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.

Gav. [Aside] That villain Mortimer! I'll be his death.

Y. Mort. Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself,

Were sworn unto your father at his death,

That he should ne'er return into the realm:

And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,

This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,

Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,

And underneath thy banners march who will,

For Mortimer will hang his armour up.

= the Elder Mortimer. = ie. Lancaster.

= ie. Edward I.

= 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!

= before.

= ie. "that I should be using against England's enemies".

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 contemptuous and insulting "thou".
123: "God's death", a oath in French, introduced into English literature here by Marlowe.\(^1\) With this swear, Gaveston puns on the name of Mortimer.

= regret.

= "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.

= ambitious.\(^1\)

= make smooth.

= ie. an ironic comment, referring indignantly to the refusal of the nobles to bend their knees to the king.

= 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".

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.\(^9\)

140-2: Lancaster overtly threatens rebellion.

= speechless.

= to the point, or irrefutably.\(^3,6\)

= riled, angered.

= challenged, insulted.

= ie. the king's countenance.

146-152: there is no historical basis for this anecdote, though there is a flavour of the quarrel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray during the reign of Richard II, as portrayed in the opening scene of Shakespeare's \textit{Richard II}.\(^6\)

= Kent addresses his half-brother the king.

= 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.

161: probably spoken as an aside.

= double negatives were perfectly acceptable in the 16th century; the second negative intensifies the negation.

164: \textit{Cousin} = Mortimer addresses the king, to whom he was distantly related; \textit{cousin} was used loosely as a term of
And strike off his that makes you threaten us. –
Come, uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king,
And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

E. Mort. Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads.

War. All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.

Lanc. And northward Gaveston hath many friends. –
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,
The glozing head of thy base minion thrown.

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 exile.

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,
Than 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.

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 ruled 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.

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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.

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;
If for these dignities thou be envied,
I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,
Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.
Fear'st thou thy person? thou shalt have a guard:
Wantest thou gold? go to my treasury:
Wouldst thou be loved and feared? receive my seal,
Save or condemn, and in our name command

Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

Gav. It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
As Cæsar riding in the Roman street,
With captive kings at his triumphant car.

Enter the Bishop of Coventry.

---

Enter the Bishop of Coventry.

Entering Character: 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
In June 1305, Langton reproved prince Edward for invading his woods; insults were traded, but the old king Edward I sided with his Treasurer, and banished the prince from the court for six months. Edward did not forget the episode, and the moment he would get his revenge on the prelate has finally arrived.

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?

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

Gav. 'Tis true; and but for reverence of these robes, Thou should' st not plod one foot beyond this place.
Bish. of Cov. I did no more than I was bound to do; And, Gaveston, unless thou be reclaimed, As then I did incense the parliament, So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.

Gav. Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.

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

And in the channel christen him anew.

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

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

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

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

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

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

= Edward calls out for a guard.

278: the exact meaning of this line has been lost to history.

= safely back (again).\(^6\)

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.

Postscript to the life of the Bishop of Coventry: as depicted here, Walter Langton was indeed arrested on his way to arrange for the interment 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.

[Westminster.]

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

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.

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.

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

= spiteful or hateful, or foolish.\(^1,6\)

12: Lancaster appears dejected.

= why.
Lanc. That villain Gaveston is made an earl.

E. Mort. An earl!

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.

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

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

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

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.

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?

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

Y. Mort. Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster! Were all the earls and barons of my mind, We'd hale him from the bosom of the king, And at the court-gate hang the peasant up, Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride, Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

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

Lanc. His countenance bewrays he is displeased.

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
A. of Cant. First, were his sacred garments rent and torn,
Then laid they violent hands upon him; next,
Himself imprisoned, and his goods assize:
This certify the Pope; − away, take horse.

[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?

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

Enter Queen Isabella.

Y. Mort. Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?

Q. Isab. Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
To live in grief and baleful discontent;
For now my lord the king regards me not,
But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck.

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.

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

= 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.

= ie. "of course".
70: though not historically accurate, Edward, in line 266 of Scene i, gave to Gaveston Walter Langton's position of Bishop of Coventry.

Entering Character: born in 1292, Isabella (1292-1358) was the daughter of 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.

= to where.
= a metaphor for "away from the world".
= deadly, malignant.

= pats.
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
And when I come, he frowns, as who should say,
"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."

E. Mort. Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched?

Y. Mort. Madam, return unto the court again:
That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,
Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,
The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,
And courage too, to be revenged at full.

A. of Cant. But yet lift not your swords against the king.

Lanc. No; but we will lift Gaveston from hence.

War. And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.

Q. Isab. Then let him stay; for rather than my lord
Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies,
I will endure a melancholy life,
And let him frolic with his minion.

A. of Cant. My lords, to ease all this, but hear me speak:
—
We and the rest, that are his counsellors,
Will meet, and with a general consent
Confirm his banishment with our hands and seals.

Lanc. What we confirm the king will frustrate.

Y. Mort. Then may we lawfully revolt from him.

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

A. of Cant. At the New Temple.

Y. Mort. Content.

A. of Cant. And in the meantime, I'll entreat you all
To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.

Lanc. Come, then, let's away.

Y. Mort. Madam, farewell.

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

**ACT I, SCENE III.**

[A street.]

*Enter Gaveston and Kent.*

Gav. Edmund, the mighty Prince of Lancaster,
That hath more earldoms than an ass can bear,
And both the Mortimers, two goodly men,
With Guy of Warwick, that redoubted knight,
Are gone towards Lambeth — there let them remain.

[Exeunt.]

**ACT I, SCENE IV.**

[The New Temple, London.]

*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.

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.

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

Enter King Edward, Gaveston and Kent.

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

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

**Pemb.** Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?

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

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

**K. Edw.** Lay hands upon that traitor Mortimer!

**E. Mort.** Lay hands upon that traitor Gaveston!

**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 minion,
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.

[Attendents 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 patient, 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 over daring peers?

Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,
This isle shall fleet upon the ocean,
And wander to the unfrequented Inde.

A. of Cant. You know that I am legate to the Pope;
On your allegiance to the see of Rome,
Subscribe, as we have done, to his exile.

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

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.

A. of Cant. Remember how the bishop was abused!

= the sense is, "we will uphold with our blood if necessary".

= "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. As easily as he fell into despair, Edward regains his fortitude.

= before.

= float.

= probably the southern Indian Ocean. In the mid-sixteenth century, Flemish cartogropher Abraham Ortelius published a book of maps, the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, which Marlowe consulted extensively for his Tambur-laine plays. Ortelius’ map of the world shows the vast area of Antarctica contiguous to the still relatively unknown continent known today as Australia, with the Mar di India labeled just north of it.

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

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). = excommunicate. 7
Either banish him that was the cause thereof,
Or I will presently discharge these lords
Of duty and allegiance due to thee.

---

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

My lord, you shall be Chancellor of the realm;
Thou, Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet;
Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls;
And you, lord Warwick, President of the North;
And thou of Wales. If this content you not,
Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,
And share it equally amongst you all.
So I may have some nook or corner left,
To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.

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

Lanc. Come, come, subscribe.

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.

E. Mort. Urge him, my lord.

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

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

[Subscribes.]

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

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

Lanc. Give it me – I'll have it published in the streets.

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

[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.
Why should a king be subject to a priest?

Proud Rome! that hatchest such imperious grooms,

With these thy superstitious taper-lights,
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,

I'll fire thy crazèd buildings, and enforce

The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground!
With slaughtered priests make Tiber's channel swell,
And banks raised higher with their sepulchres!
As for the peers, that back the clergy thus,
If I be king, not one of them shall live.

Re-enter Gaveston.

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!
The legate of the Pope will have it so,
And thou must hence, or I shall be deposed.
But I will reign to be revenged of them;
And therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.
Live where thou wilt, I'll send thee gold enough;

And long thou shall not stay, or if thou dost,
I'll come to thee; my love shall ne'er decline.

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.
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.

K. Edw. And only this torments my wretched soul,
That, whether I will or no, thou must depart.
Be Governor of Ireland in my stead,
And there abide till fortune call thee home.
Here take my picture, and let me wear thine;

[They exchange pictures.]
O, might I keep thee here as I do this,
Happy were I! but now most miserable!

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

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

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.

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

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.

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!

Enter Queen Isabella.

Q. Isab. Whither goes my lord?

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

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 affections.
But thou must call mine honour thus in question?

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

= "would I be".

= by.

= silent.
= "don't go yet".
= previous editors are split as to whether this word should
be lord or love.

218: Gaveston was actually given until June 25 to leave
England.

= care.

= 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.

= bawd = ie. one who ministers to the king's lust.
affections = inclinations.
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 rob'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. &= languish, be dejected. = waste away with suffering.

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 Circe, 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! 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:

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.

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.

265: Edward is cruelly sarcastic: he may even put an arm around Gaveston as he speaks this line.

273-4: Circe was an enchantress who most 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 Glauce, walks across water on her way to changing her rival for Glauce's affection, the beautiful sea-nymph Scylla, into a monster. Charming is thus meant literally, in the sense of one who employs charms.

277-8: note the rhyming couplet.

279-281: 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.
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.

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

Y. Mort. I know 'tis 'long of Gaveston she weeps.

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.

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.

Q. Isab. O, never, Lancaster! I am enjoined
To sue unto you all for his repeal:
This wills my lord, and this must I perform,
Or else be banished from his highness' presence.

Lanc. For his repeal, madam! he comes not back,
Unless the sea cast up his shipwrecked body.

War. And to behold so sweet a sight as that,
There's none here but would run his horse to death.

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;
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 question,
And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,
'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail;
Nay, for the realm's behalf, and for the king's.
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.

Y. Mort.  My lord of Lancaster, mark the respect.
Lanc.  In no respect can contraries be true.
Q. Isab.  Yet, good my lord, hear what he can allege.
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!

Y. Mort.  Why then, my lord, give me but leave to speak.
E. Mort. But, nephew, do not play the sophister.

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?

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

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

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,
And none so much as blame the murderer,
But rather praise him for that brave attempt,

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

Pemb. He saith true.

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

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,
And fear t’ offend the meanest nobleman.

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

Y. Mort. Then may we with some colour rise in arms;
For howsoever we have borne it out,
'Tis treason to be up against the king;
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 mushroom.

Such a one as my lord of Cornwall is,
Should bear us down of the nobility.
And when the commons and the nobles join,
'Tis not the king can buckler Gaveston;

= 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.

= comes from.

= put right.

= confront; Mortimer suggests Gaveston has enough wealth to raise his own army, one large enough to challenge any of the nobles.

= wherever.\textsuperscript{8}

= consider; Warwick is being persuaded after all.

= bribed or persuaded.

= dagger.

= excellent undertaking; Briggs points out that an Elizabethan audience would not have found assassination as distasteful as a modern theater-goer would (p. 127).\textsuperscript{6}

= 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).\textsuperscript{15}

= a nautical reference: a ship might lower (vail) a sail in a show of respect to another.

= ie. "even the basest".

= ie. "what".

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

= on.

= tolerate. = common word used to describe one who has risen quickly, and usually undeservedly, in status; mushroom is likely tri-syllabic here: MUSH\textsuperscript{e}-room.\textsuperscript{10}

= "maintain such opposition to us", or "go up against us."

= 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.

Lanc. On that condition, Lancaster will grant.

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.

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!

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. This technique, in which events occur off-stage in an impossibly short period of time, as measured by the briefer period which passes on stage, has the effect of speeding up the action and increasing the drama, but is imperceptible to the audience.

Re-enter King Edward, mourning.

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 revenue bring him back,
I would freely give it to his enemies,
And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.

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

K. Edw. My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers.
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.

Ah! had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,

And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead,

When I was forced to leave my Gaveston!

Lanc. Diablo! What passions call you these?

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

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

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

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.

Q. Isab. No other jewels 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!

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.

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 companiôn.

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 embroidery.

Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.

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.

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.

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

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

Whose great achievements in our foreign war
Deserve no common place, nor mean reward,
Be you the general of the levied troops,
That now are ready to assail the Scots.

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 renowned peers.

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

Enter Beaumont with warrant.

Beaumont fly,
As fast as Iris or Jove's Mercury.

Beau. It shall be done, my gracious lord.
K. Edw. Lord Mortimer, we leave you to your charge.
Now let us in, and feast it royally.
Against our friend the Earl of Cornwall comes,
We'll have a general tilt and tournament;
And then his marriage shall be solemnized;
For wot you not that I have made him sure
Unto our cousin, the Earl of Gloucester's heir?

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

[Exeunt all except the Mortimers.]

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.
The mightiest kings have had their miniöns:

Great Alexander loved Hephaestion,
The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept,
And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.

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

= office or duty.
= "let us go in".
= in preparation for.
= jousting.
= know. = "engaged him to be married"

579-581: Edward means his niece Margaret. As a matter of history, Gaveston married Margaret the year of Edward's ascension to the throne, 1307.

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

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).

= cease.
= restraint. = "do as he pleases."

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

604: Briggs notes how unapropos the examples of lines 605 and 606 are as analogies to Edward's unseemly feelings towards Gaveston.6

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

35: "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

= ie. the king. = easily molded or guided, complaisant.1

610: "when he is older he will no longer occupy himself with such trifles (toys)."

= frivolous or lewd inclinations.

= impertinent.

= ie. "and dissipate the kingdom's wealth through his extravagance".

= lack.

617: his 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

618: 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,

Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show,

As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.

I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk;

He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,

Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap

A jewel of more value than the crown.

While others walk below, the king and he

From out a window laugh at such as we,

And flout our train, and jest at our attire.

Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.

622: "I have never seen any knave (Jack) so finely dressed (brisk)." Dapper is used contemptuously here.

623-5: the Elizabethans frequently mocked the continental fashions affected by courtiers.

= "mock our retinues".

= irate: Mortimer's complaints seem to be historically 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.

**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.

634-5: the scene essentially ends, as was often the case in Elizabethan drama, with a rhyming couplet.

638: 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 he 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 counsellors, 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^
ACT II.

SCENE I.
[A hall in the Earl of Gloucester's mansion.]

Enter Young Spenser and Baldock.

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

**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.

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

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

**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;

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

**Entering Characters:** Young Spenser is Hugh le Despenser, the younger, a baron who is portrayed here as a retainer of the Earl of Gloucester's. 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, Despenser was a member of the opposition barons' party until well after the end of the Gaveston years. 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.

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

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

= 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.

= our lady is Margaret de Clare, Gloucester's sister; she had been pegged to become Gaveston's wife ever since
It is about her lover Gaveston.

Bald. 'Tis like enough; for, since he was exiled,
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;
Which made me curate-like in mine attire,

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

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

And hath a special gift to form a verb.

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

Enter King Edward's Niece (Margaret).

Marg. The grief for his exile 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.
[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.

Bald. It shall be done, madam.

Marg. And meet me at the park pale presently.
[Exit Baldock.]

Spenser, stay you and bear me company,
For I have joyful news to tell thee of;
My lord of Cornwall is a-coming over,
And will be at the court as soon as we.

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.

Y. Spen. I humbly thank your ladyship.
Marg. Come lead the way, I long till I am there.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE II.
[Before the castle at Tynemouth in northern England.]

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

K. Edw. The wind is good, I wonder why he stays;
I fear me he is wrecked upon the sea.

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

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.

an additional degree of intimacy, as she is excited to share her happy gossip with him.7

= the ancient prefix a- acts as an intensifier,1 = ie. over the water, to England from Ireland.

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

= feel a yearning.

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.

The Scene: 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.

= is delayed.
= 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 be employed by a poet simply to get an extra syllable into a line to help it fit the meter, without otherwise changing its meaning.

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

13: Mortimer is concerned that France is looking to regain
control of this English province; while France and England had always vied for supremacy in major swaths of what is now western France, during the period of Edward II's reign most of France, including the region of Normandy, was in French hands.

K. Edw.  A trifle! We'll expel him when we please. But tell me Mortimer, what's thy device.

Against the stately triumph we decreed?

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

K. Edw.  Pray thee let me know it.

Y. Mort.  But seeing you are so desirous, thus it is: A lofty cedar-tree, fair flourishing, On whose top-branches kingly eagles perch, And by the bark a canker creeps me up, And gets unto the highest bough of all. The motto: Æque tandem.

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

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

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). = Latin for "Death is on all sides". Gaveston, of course, is the flying fish.

32-37: there is no such description of flying fish in Pliny the Elder's famous Naturalis historia; Tancock observes the source of this natural history 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. = 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. = modest. = please, sometimes written as prithee.
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 rancorous minds!
What call you this but private libelling
Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother?

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

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

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.

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

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

Enter Gaveston.

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

Thy absence made me droop and pine away;
For, as the lovers of fair Danaë,
When she was locked up in a **brazen** tower,

Desired her more, and **waxed outrageous**,  

So did it fare with me: and now thy sight

**Gav.** Sweet lord and king, your speech **preventeth** mine,  
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  
Than I do to behold your majesty.

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

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

**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?  

**Gav.** My lord, I cannot **brook** these **injuries**.

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

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

**Gav.** Base, **leaden** earls, that glory in your birth,  
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  
As to bestow a look on such as you.

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

[Draws his sword and offers to stab Gaveston.]

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

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.

2 There is no basis for Danae having other lovers, waxing outrageous or not.

74: Edward is hardly flattering himself in comparing himself to the desperate suitors of a maiden.

1,11 = brightly colourful or decked with flowers.

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.**
Pemb. Here, here!

K. Edw. Convey hence Gaveston; they'll murder him.

Gav. The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace.

Y. Mort. Villain! thy life unless I miss mine aim.

[Wounds Gaveston.]

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

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

[Exit Gaveston with Attendants.]

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

Y. Mort. I'll not be barred the court for Gaveston.

Lanc. We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.

K. Edw. Look to your own heads; his is sure enough.

War. Look to your own crown, if you back him thus.

Kent. Warwick, these words do ill beseem thy years.

K. Edw. Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus; But if I live, I'll tread upon their heads That think with high looks thus to tread me down. Come, Edmund, let's away, and levy men; 'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.

[Exit King Edward, Queen Isabella, and Kent.]

War. Let's to our castles, for the king is moved.

Y. Mort. Moved may he be, and perish in his wrath!

Lanc. Cousin, it is no dealing with him now; He means to make us stoop by force of arms; And therefore let us jointly here protest, To prosecute that Gaveston to the death.

Y. Mort. By Heaven, the abject villain shall not live!

War. I'll have his blood, or die in seeking it.

Pemb. The like oath Pembroke takes.

124: "get Gaveston out of here."

= remedy, make up for.

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.

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

133: "you both (Mortimer and Isabella) shall pay dearly for (abide) this disorderly (riotous) deed."

= ie. answered for.

= ie. because of.

= ie. where he would be beheaded.

= safe.

= "support or stand behind Gaveston like this."

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.

= thwart.

= raise an army.

= angry.

= bow down, ie. submit.

= vow (to each other).

= pursue.

= contemptible.
Lanc. And so doth Lancaster.
Now send our heralds to defy the king;
And make the people swear to put him down.

[Enter a Messenger.]

Y. Mort. Letters! From whence?

Mess. From Scotland, my lord.

[Giving letters to Mortimer.]

Lanc. Why, how now, cousin, how fare all our friends?

Y. Mort. My uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.

Lanc. We'll have him ransomed, man; be of good cheer.

Y. Mort. They rate his ransom at five thousand pound.

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

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

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

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

Lanc. Be resolute and full of secrecy.

War. I warrant you.

[Exit 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.

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

Enter Guard.

Y. Mort. Ay, marry, such a guard as this doth well.
Lanc. Lead on the way.

Guard. Whither will your lordships?

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?

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.

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

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

Lanc. Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.

Y. Mort. My lord, the family of the Mortimers Are not so poor, but, would they sell their land, 'Twould levy men enough to anger you. We never beg, but use such prayers as these.

[Knocking.]

Striking his sword.

Enter King Edward and Kent.

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.

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Lanc. Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.

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

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

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

= this was the first time in English literature that this phrase, with its still current use as an implied threat, was employed.  

throughout is tri-syllabic: THO-rough-out; thorough was frequently used for through.

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

= "if they were to".
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, And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston, Have drawn thy treasure dry, and made thee weak; The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.

Lanc. Look for rebellion, look to be deposed; Thy garrisons are beaten out of France, And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates. The wild O’neyl, with swarms of Irish kerns.

Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.

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

= foolish. = ie. masques, brief plays.
= wasteful.

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

Note the rhyming couplet of 267-8: although weak and break do not rhyme in modern English, in the 16th century the shared ea vowel-sound would have fallen somewhere between the modern pronunciations of the two words.

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."

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

271: in 1324, the French king began to attack English possessions in western France; see the note of Act II, iii, line 99.

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. 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.

274 = the Pale was used to describe those parts of Ireland under English control, primarily in the region of Dublin.

= 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. His 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: haughty = arrogant. There is no historical foundation
for this claim about the Danish; having said that, the Danes
were among the dominant sea-faring powers in Marlowe's
own day. narrow seas = the phrase referred to both the English
Channel and that part of the Irish Sea directly west of
England.17

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

280: haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigged.

Lanc. What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?

282: thy = thine, that is, Isabella's.

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

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

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.

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

Y. Mort. When wert thou in the field with banner spread,
But once? and then thy soldiers marched like players,
With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
Where women's favours hung like labels down.

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

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.

= defamatory leaflets or pamphlets.7 = against.8

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

299: fleering = mocking or sneering.

301: players = actors.

= 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.

= helmet governed with gold sparkles.
= tokens of love.11 = ribbons.22

= satirical song or ditty;9 this bit of doggerel actually
appears in one of the ancient chronicles.10

= sweethearts.2 = 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

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

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

= 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

= aroused to anger.
= standards.

325: a line with 12 syllables, known as an alexandrine.
= young cocks.2

= regret it.

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.

= "so long as".
= "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.

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.

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?

K. Edw. I dare not, for the people love him well.

Gav. Why, then we'll have him privily made away.

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.

Marg. Two of my father's servants whilst he lived, −
May't please your grace to entertain them now.

K. Edw. Tell me, where wast thou born? what is thine arms?

Bald. My name is Baldock, and my gentry
I fetch'd from Oxford, not from heraldry.

K. Edw. The fitter art thou, Baldock, for my turn.
Wait on me, and I'll see thou shalt not want.

371: Gaveston likely speaks this line as an aside to the king.

380: a bit of foreshadowing.

= secretly made to disappear, with all that connotes.
= drank.
= "who are these two", referring to Young Spenser and Baldock.
= employ. The request, made as it is by Edward's niece, is not out of line.
= coat of arms, which offered status to the bearer.
= rank of gentleman; gentry is likely tri-syllabic here: GEN-try.

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.

= needs. Baldock will be appointed Edward's Chancellor, or secretary, thanks to his literacy.

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?

Gav. Ay, my lord; His name is Spenser, he is well allied. For my sake, let him wait upon your grace; Scarce shall you find a man of more desert.

K. Edw. Then, Spenser, wait upon me. For his sake 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.]

ACT II, SCENE III.
[The neighbourhood of Tynemouth Castle.]

Enter Kent, Lancaster, Young Mortimer, Warwick, Pembroke, and others.

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.

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.

Y. Mort. I'll give the onset.

War. And I'll follow thee.

Y. Mort. This tottered ensign of my ancestors, Which swept the desert shore of that dead sea Whereof we got the name of Mortimer, Will I advance upon these castle's walls. — Drums, strike alarum, raise them from their sport.

And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston!

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.]

Enter severally King Edward and Young Spenser.

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.

Enter Queen Isabella, King Edward's Niece, Gaveston, and Nobles.

Fly, fly, my lords, the earls have got the hold; Take shipping, and away to Scarborough. Spenser and I will post away by land.

Gav. O stay, my lord, they will not injure you.

K. Edw. I will not trust them; Gaveston, away!

Gav. Farewell, my lord.

K. Edw. Lady, farewell.
Marg. Farewell, sweet uncle, till we meet again.

K. Edw. Farewell, sweet Gaveston; and farewell, niece.

Q. Isab. No farewell to poor Isabel thy queen?

K. Edw. Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake.

Q. Isab. Heavèn can witness I love none but you.

[Exeunt all but Queen Isabella.]

From my embracements thus he breaks away.
O that mine arms could close this isle about,
That I might pull him to me where I would!
Or that these tears, that drizzle from mine eyes,
Had power to mollify his stony heart,
That, when I had him, we might never part.

Enter Lancaster, Warwick, Young Mortimer,
and others. Alurums within.

Lanc. I wonder how he scaped!

Y. Mort. Who's this? The queen!

Q. Isab. Ay, Mortimer, the miserable queen,
Whose pining heart her inward sighs have blasted,
And body with continual mourning wasted:
These hands are tired with haling of my lord
From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,
And all in vain; for, when I speak him fair,
He turns away, and smiles upon his miniön.

Y. Mort. Cease to lament, and tell us where's the king?

Q. Isab. What would you with the king? Is't him you seek?

Lanc. No, madam, but that cursèd Gaveston.
Far be it from the thought of Lancaster
To offer violence to his sovereign!
We would but rid the realm of Gaveston:
Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.

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.

War. Forslow no time, sweet Lancaster; let's march.

Y. Mort. How comes it that the king and he is parted?

Q. Isab. That thus 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!

22: Margaret will accompany her husband Gaveston by boat to the castle at Scarborough, about 70 miles south of Tynemouth.

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.


41: the barons enter Tynemouth Castle.

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.
Y. Mort. Here in the river rides a Flemish hoy; Let's all aboard, and follow him amain.

Lanc. The wind that bears him hence will fill our sails: Come, come, aboard, 'tis but an hour's sailing.

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.

[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, 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.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE V.
[The open country at or near Scarborough.]

Enter Gaveston, pursued.

Gav. Yet, lusty lords, I have escaped your hands, Your threats, your larums, and your hot pursuits; And though divorced from king Edward's eyes, Yet liveth Pierce of Gaveston unsurprised, Breathing, in hope (malgrado all your beards, That muster rebels thus against your king), To see his royal sovereign once again.

Enter Warwick, Lancaster, Pembroke, and Gaveston separately, and that in the meantime Edward can raise an army which will defeat the smaller barons' armies in detail.

= small passenger vessel used mainly along a coast.
= quickly; Mortimer suggests they all go after Gaveston.
= from here.
= their little sailboat would have to go impossibly fast to make it to Scarborough 70 miles away in an hour.

97: Mortimer speaks of himself in the third person.

= beg.
= distant, aloof.
= ie. end.

Entering Character: the barons have landed at Scarborough, and are in pursuit of Gaveston.

= insolent.
= calls to arms.
= ie. separated.
= ie. not yet caught unawares by those chasing him.
= Italian for "in spite of", signaling defiance. The Anglo-Norman word maugre became the usual word to use in this situation in Elizabethan drama.
Young Mortimer, Soldiers, James, and other Attendants of Pembroke.

War. Upon him, soldiers, take away his weapons!

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.

Lanc. Monster of men!
That, like the Greekish strumpet, trained to arms
And bloody wars so many valiant knights;

Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death!
King Edward is not here to buckler thee.

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.

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 —

Gav. I thank you all, my lords: then I perceive That heading is one, and hanging is the other, And death is all.

Enter Arundel.

= James is one of Pembroke's men.

13: Gaveston actually surrendered voluntarily to the barons from within Scarborough Castle in return for a promise of his safety on 19 May 1312.

= this turmoil.
= give up.

= 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.

22-23: 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 = come off.
= needs.
= strictly or ironhandedly (in punishment).
= carry out or perform, but also grimly punning on its more obvious meaning.

= because.

39: Warwick probably gestures a hanging; in the next line, Gaveston perceives the signal.

= because.

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!

= ie. beheading.

= because.

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,

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.

**War.** How now!

**Gav.** Renownèd Edward, how thy name
Revives poor Gaveston!

**War.** No, it needeth not; −

Arundel, we will gratify the king
In other matters: he must pardon us in this. −
Soldiers, away with him!

**Gav.** Why, my lord of Warwick,
Will not these delays beget my hopes? −

I know it, lords, it is this life you aim at,
Yet grant King Edward this.

**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.

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 even sent a messenger who has already arrived!

= "begs you through me". = that.
= because. 

= "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.

66: the sense is, "don't even bother being revived - there is no chance any favour will be done on your behalf."

67-68: a polite formula: "we would be happy to indulge the king in other matters, but not this one."

72: the sense may be, "you don't think that delaying my execution just to say goodbye to the king actually will give me an expectation (hope) that I will somehow escape my fate?" Dyce and Cunningham comment on the lack of clarity of the line.

73-74: Having spoken sarcastically to Warwick, Gaveston addresses the other lords more soberly.

76-77: Shalt thou…grant? = "do you think you can instruct us on what favours we shall grant?"

= a morbidly humourous 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.
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 sees 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 renown!

Question with thy companions 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,
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?

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.

Arun. My lord of Lancaster, what say you in this?

Lanc. Why, I say, let him go on Pembroke's word.

Pemb. And you, lord Mortimer?

Y. Mort. How say you, my lord of Warwick?

War. Nay, do your pleasures, I know how 'will prove.

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.

Y. Mort.  My lord of Pembroke, we deliver him you:
Return him on our honour. — Sound, away!

[Exeunt all except Pembroke, Arundel, Gaveston,
James, and other of Pembroke's men.]

Pemb.  My lord of Arundel, you shall go with me.
My house is not far hence; out of the way
A little, but our men shall go along.
We that have pretty wenches to our wives.
Sir, must not come so near and baulk their lips.

Arun.  'Tis very kindly spoke, my lord of Pembroke;
Your honour hath an adamant of power
To draw a prince.

Pemb.  So, my lord. — Come hither, James:
I do commit this Gaveston to thee.
Be thou this night his keeper; in the morning
We will discharge thee of thy charge: be gone.

Gav.  Unhappy Gaveston, whither goest thou now?

[Exit with James and the other men of Pembroke.]

Horse-Boy.  My lord, we'll quickly be at Cobham.

[Exeunt.]

END OF ACT II.

= strategy; in the aside, Warwick speaks to the audience, letting them know his secret thoughts.
= "to you."
= an order to a trumpeter to signal a call to march.¹

149-150: the scene now changes to southern England, somewhere along the journey of Pembroke's party to London.

= ie. ahead.
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 by to see them."
wenches = wench was usually a playful term, without its modern connotation.
to our wives = for our wives.
baulk = ignore, avoid; or, disappoint.¹

= oft-referred to fabled stone with great magnetism.

= here.
163: Pembroke will actually leave Gaveston alone with his guards, and go visit with his wife, who is staying nearby.
= "relieve you of your responsibility"; note the light word-play with discharge and charge.
= unlucky.

= Gaveston stays momentarily behind and is addressed by the boy in the next line.
171: Cobham, near London, is presumably the party's destination for the evening.

Pembroke's Departure: as a matter of history, Pembroke indeed was responsible for escorting Gaveston from Scarborough to London, where the Frenchman had 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.
ACT III.

SCENE I.
[Another part of the open country.]

Enter Gaveston mourning. James, and the other men of Pembroke's.

Gav. O treacherous Warwick! thus to wrong thy friend!

James. I see it is your life these arms pursue.

Gav. Weaponless must I fall, and die in bands? O! must this day be period of my life? Centre of all my bliss! And ye be men.

Speed to the king.

Enter Warwick and his Soldiers.

War. My lord of Pembroke's men, Strive you no longer — I will have that Gaveston.

James. Your lordship doth dishonour to yourself, And wrong our lord, your honourable friend.

War. No, James, it is my country's cause I follow. — 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. — Come, let thy shadow parley with king Edward.

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.]

James. Come, fellows, it booted not for us to strive, We will in haste go certify our lord.

[Exeunt.]
ACT III. SCENE II.
[Near Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire.]

Enter King Edward and Young Spenser, Baldock, and Nobles 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 of Gaveston again!
The barons overbear me with their pride.

Y. Spen. Were I King Edward, England's sovereign,
Son to the lovely Eleanor of Spain,
Great Edward Longshanks' issue, would I bear
These braves, this rage, and suffer uncontrolled
These barons thus to beard me in my land,
In mine own realm? My lord, pardon my speech:
Did you retain your father's magnanimity,
Did you regard the honour of your name,
You would not suffer thus your majesty
Be counterbuffed of your nobility.
Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles!
No doubt, such lessons they will teach the rest,
As by their preachments they will profit much,
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, and poll their tops.

Bald. This haught resolve becomes your majesty,
Not to be tied to their affection,
As though your highness were a schoolboy still,

The Scene: 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).
And must be awed and governed like a child.

The Ordinances of 1311: in that 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).³ Marlowe chose to completely ignore the existence of the Ordinances in his play.

Enter the Elder Spenser, an old man, with his truncheon and Soldiers.

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?

Then tell thy prince of whence and what thou art.

E. Spen. Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,

Brown bills and targeteers, four hundred strong,

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.

K. Edw. Thy father, Spenser?

Y. Spen. True, an it like your grace,
That pours, in lieu of all your goodness shown,
His life, my lord, before your princely feet.

K. Edw. Welcome ten thousand times, old man, again.
Spenser, this love, this kindness to thy king,
Argues thy noble mind and disposition.
Spenser, I here create thee Earl of Wiltshire.

And daily will enrich thee with our favour,
That, as the sunshine, shall reflect o'er thee.
Beside, the more to manifest our love,
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:
And, Spenser, spare them not, but lay it on.
− Soldiers, a largess, and thrice welcome all!

Y. Spen. My lord, here comes the queen.

Enter Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, and Levune.

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,
Because your highness hath been slack in homage,
Hath seizèd Normandy into his hands.
These be the letters, this the messenger.

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.

= is evidence of.
= actually, the 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.

= like.
= demonstrate.
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 caused to sell that land to the Younger
Despenser, who obtained the king’s help and influence
to make the purchase.⁷

= coins worth five shillings.¹¹
= ie. "pile them up with money".
= Edward announces a gift of cash to Spenser’s soldiers.

Entering Characters: Prince Edward, the king’s eldest
son, was born on November 13, 1312, after Gaveston’s
removal; here he is a young lad already, though the king has
not yet heard of Gaveston’s ultimate fate.

Levune is a Frenchman and a messenger of the queen’s.
He appears to be a non-historical character.

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.

83-85: 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.

= term of address for a kinswoman,⁶ 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,
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.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! this towardness makes thy mother fear
Thou are not marked to many days on earth.

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.

Q. Isab. Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their king;
God end them once! My lord, I take my leave,
To make my preparation for France.

[Exit Queen Isabella with Prince Edward.]

Enter Arundel.

K. Edw. What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?

Arun. Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

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.

= 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.

= 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.

= command.

= from here.

= defy.

= ie. once and for all.⁷

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.

= 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).
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?

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.

K. Edw. And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?

Y. Spen. Proud recreants!

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, 
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."

K. Edw. Well, and how fortunes it that he came not?

Y. Spen. Some treason, or some villainy, was the cause.

Arun. The Earl of Warwick seized him on his way; 
For being delivered unto Pembroke's men, 
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.

Y. Spen. A bloody part, flatly 'gainst law of arms.

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 unreavenged murder your friends! 
Advance your standard, Edward, in the field,

= ie. "did he die before you got there".

= surrounded.

= ie. gave, presented.

= from. = "well, pleading, actually".

136: traitors.\(^7\)

= unyielding.\(^1\)

= ie. "listen to me".

= my.

= gently. = spoke.

146-9: while not an exact quote of Pembroke's words at Act II, v, 110-3, it is an accurate enough paraphrase.

= does it happen.

160: strake = this ancient word for "struck" appears frequently in late 16th century literature.\(^1\)

**Death of Gaveston:** after Gaveston was kidnapped and brought to Warwick Castle, the earls Arundel, Lancaster and Hereford arrived, and they agreed with Warwick to have the Frenchman executed. 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, while the other nobles watched the murder from a distance (Hutchison, p. 71).\(^5\)

169: Edward has quickly managed to raise an army, following the strategy described by Isabella at Act II,
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.

170: a hunted animal might be forced out of its hiding place (starting hole) by means of fire.

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.

172-5: the fact that Edward makes his vow on so many objects signals the depth of his emotions.

= ie. the lives of many men will be taken in exchange for the life of Gaveston.

191: ie. Young Spenser will take Gaveston's place in the king's heart and at his right hand.

= purely.²

193-4: 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.}

= more foul mob.² Note the alliteration in the line.
Well, say thy message.

**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 effusion 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,
Whose brightness such *pernicious* upstarts dim,
Say they; and lovingly advise your grace,

To cherish virtue and nobility,
And have old servitors in high esteem,

And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers:
This granted, they, their honours, and their lives,
Are to your highness vowed and *consecrate*. 

**Y. Spen.** Ah, traitors! will they still display their pride?

**K. Edw.** Away, *tarry no answer*, but be gone!
Rebels, will they *appoint* their sovereign
His sports, his pleasures, and his company?
Yet, ere thou go, see how I do divorce
Spenser from me. –

[Embraces Spenser.]

Now get thee to thy lords,
And tell them I will come to chastise them
For murdering Gaveston; hie thee, get thee gone!
Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels.

[Exit Herald.]

My lord, perceive you how these rebels swell? –
Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,
For now, even now, we march to make them *stoop*.
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 this scene), 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, 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 Scarborough, 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.
[Another part of the battlefield.]

Alarums, excursions, a great fight, and a retreat sounded within.

Enter King Edward, the Elder Spenser, the Younger Spenser, and Noblemen of the King's side.

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.

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.

Y. Spen. Here come the rebels.

Enter Young Mortimer, Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, and others.

Y. Mort. Look, Lancaster, yondér is Edward
Among his flatterers.

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?

Y. Mort. No, Edward, no; thy flatterers faint and fly.

Lanc. Thou'd best betimes forsake them and their trains,
For they'll betray thee, traitors as they are.

Y. Spen. Traitor on thy face, rebellious Lancaster!

Pemb. Away, base upstart! Brav'st thou nobles thus?

E. Spen. A noble attempt and honourable deed,
Is it not, trow ye, to assemble aid,
And levy arms against your lawful king!

K. Edw. For which, ere long, their heads shall satisfy,
T' appease the wrath of their offended king.
Then, Edward, thou wilt fight it to the last,  
And rather bathe thy sword in subjects' blood,  
Than banish that pernicious company?

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.

A desperate and unnatural resolution!  
Alarum! – to the fight!  
Saint George for England, and the barons' right!

Saint George for England, and King Edward's right!  

Enter King Edward and all his followers,  
with the Barons and Kent captives.

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

to be avenged on you for all your braves,  
And for the murder 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!

Brother, in regard of thee, and of thy land,  
Did they remove that flatterer from thy throne.

So, sir, you have spoke; away, avoid our presence!

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,

The Battle of Boroughbridge (March 22, 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.

The noble captives include Young Mortimer, Lancaster and Warwick.

= insolent.  
= lowered, ie. humbled.  
= promote their heads - by cutting them off and raising them on poles.  
= the king scornfully repeats Kent's phrase.

= Kent actually fought on his brother Edward's side throughout the wars with barons.

= the king scornfully repeats barons.

= in consideration of, ie. for the good of.
That thou, proud Warwick, watched the prisoner, Poor Pierce, and headed him against law of arms? For which thy head shall overlook the rest, As much as thou in rage outwent'st the rest.  

War. Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces; It is but temporal that thou canst inflict.  

Lanc. The worst is death; and better die to live Than live in infamy under such a king.  

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!  

War. Farewell, vain world!  

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!  

Y. Mort. What, Mortimer? Can ragged 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.  

[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.  

[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

= ie. beheaded. = against the established, if unofficial, rules of warfare.  
24: another grimly humorous reference to the placing of the rebels' heads on poles and set on London Bridge. = outdid.  
= worldly (punishment); Warwick's point is that Edward can harm their bodies, but not their souls (Ribner, p. 324). = ie. in Heaven. = shame or disgrace. = ie. the Elder Spenser. 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. = idle, worthless.  
45: The Mortimers were not at the Battle of Boroughbridge; both had surrendered to Edward in January in southwest England, and were already in the Tower of London at the time of the battle. = roughly finished. = confine.  
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.
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
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.

Lev. That's it these barons and the subtle queen
Long leveled at.

Bald. Yea, but, Levune, thou seest
These barons lay their heads on blocks together;
What they intend, the hangman frustrates clean.

Lev. Have you no doubts, my lords, I'll clap so close

Among the lords of France with England's gold,
That Isabel shall make her plaints in vain,
And France shall be obdurate with her tears.

Spen. Then make for France amain – Levune, away!
Proclaim King Edward's wars and victories.

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 those others, 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).
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, i, 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!
Nature, yield to my country's cause in this.
A brother? no, a butcher of thy friends!
Proud Edward, dost thou banish me thy presence?
But I'll to France, and cheer the wrongèd queen,
And certify what Edward's looseness is.
Unnatural king! to slaughter noblemen
And cherish flatterers! Mortimer, I stay
Thy sweet escape: stand gracious, gloomy night,
To his device.

Enter Young Mortimer, disguised.

Y. Mort. Holla! who walketh there?
Is't you my lord?
Kent. Ay, Mortimer, 'tis I;
But hath thy potion wrought so happily?

Y. Mort. It hath, my lord; the warders all asleep,
I thank them, gave me leave to pass in peace.
But hath your grace got shipping unto France?

Kent. Fear it not.

1ff: Kent is still in London.

4: Kent alludes to the execution of the barons.

= “inform (her)”. = immoral or unrestrained conduct.1,7

= await.

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.

19: Mortimer escaped the Tower by arranging to give his guards wine laced with sedatives; wrought = worked.

= guards.

19-23: 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 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 opposition 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 said 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 the 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 out of their control in March 1325, and travel to France; had she been kept in England, the subsequent disasters to Edward and the Despensers might never have happened.

ACT IV, SCENE II.

[Paris.] Enter Queen Isabella and Prince Edward.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy! our friends do fail us all in France: The lords are cruèl, and the king unkind; What shall we do?

Pr. Edw. Madam, return to England, And please my father well, and then a fig

For all my uncle's friendship here in France.

The Scene: 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 she was joined by Young Mortimer, the disgraced Earl of Kent, several bishops and a growing number of disaffected nobles.

= unkind is used to describe one's mistreatment of one's own kin. Charles is unkind because he will no longer support his sister Isabella in her scheming.

= 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. 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
I warrant you, I'll win his highness quickly; 'A loves me better than a thousand Spensers.

Q. Isab. Ah, boy, thou art deceived, at least in this, To think that we can yet be tuned together. No, no, we jar too far. Unkind Valois! —

Unhappy Isabel! when France rejects, Whither, oh! whither dost thou bend thy steps?

Enter Sir John of Hainault.

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 contempt Despair; will your grace with me to Hainault, And there stay time’s advantage with your son? —

How say you, my lord, will you go with your friends, And shake off all our sorrows equally?

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.

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: — The marquis is a noble gentleman: His grace, I dare presume, will welcome me.

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.

king grew embarrassed of Isabella's presence in his country because of her shameful affair with Mortimer. = guarantee. = ie. King Edward. = he.

= be made harmonious, a musical metaphor. = "our disagreement has been too great to repair." Note the modest rhyme in the phrase. = read as "rejects me". = to where. = direct.

Entering Character: Sir John of Hainault was the brother of the Count of Hainaut, William II. Hainaut is in modern Belgium.

= scorn. = go with. = the sense is "await the improvement of the situation, which time will surely bring". = ie. addressing Prince Edward.

= pleases. = read as "neither the". = ie. take part in a battle. = a phrase used to indicate a readiness to begin a fight.

= outermost boundaries.1,2 = the Don River of Russia, once considered to be the boundary between Europe and Asia.21

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!
A. 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.

Pr. Edw. How mean you? and the king, my father, lives!
No, my Lord Mortimer, not I, I trow.

Q. Isab. Not, son! why not? I would it were no worse.
But, gentle lords, friendless we are in France.

A. 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 showed himself; but madam, right makes room
Where weapons want; and, though a many friends
Are made away, as Warwick, Lancaster,
And others of our part and faction;
Yet have we friends, assure your grace, in England
Would cast up caps, and clap their hands for joy,
To see us there, appointed for our foes.

Kent. Would all were well, and Edward well reclaimed.
For England’s honour, peace and quietness.

A. Mort. But by the sword, my lord, ‘t must be deserved;
The king will ne’er forsake his flatterers.

Sir John. My lords of England, sith th’ ungentle king
Of France refuseth to give aid of arms
To this distressed 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.

How say’st, young prince? what think you of the match?

Pr. Edw. I think king Edward will outrun us all.

Q. Isab. Nay, son, not so; and you must not discourage
Your friends, that are so forward in your aid.

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
Prosper your happy motion, good Sir John.

**Y. Mort.** This noble gentleman, forward in arms,
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,
That England's peers may Hainault's welcome see.

*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!

**Y. Spen.** What news, my lord?

**K. Edw.** Why, man, they say there is great execution
Done through the realm; − my lord of Arundel,
You have the note, have you not?

**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.]*

Why, so; they barked apace a month ago:
Now, on my life, they'll neither bark nor bite.
Now, sirs, the news from France? Gloucester, I trow
The lords of France love England's gold so well
As Isabella gets no aid from thence.
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.

**K. Edw.** If, dost thou say? Spenser, as true as death,
He is in England's ground; our portmasters
Are not so careless of their king's command.

   Enter a Messenger.

How now, what news with thee? from whence come these?

Post. Letters, my lord, and tidings forth of France; −
To you, my lord of Gloucester, from Levune.

   [Gives letters to Young Spenser.]

K. Edw. Read.

Spen. [Reads] "My duty to your honour premised, &c.,
I have, according to instructions in that behalf,
dealt with the King of France his lords, and effected,
that the queen, all discontented and discomforted, is
gone; whither, if you ask, with Sir John of Hainault,
brother to the marquis, into Flanders. With them are
gone lord Edmund, and the lord Mortimer, having in
their company divers of your nation, and others; and,
as constant report goeth, they intend to give King
Edward battle in England, sooner than he can look for
them. This is all the news of import.

Your honour's in all service, Levune".

K. Edw. Ah, villains! hath that Mortimer escaped?
With him is Edmund gone associate?
And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?
Welcome, a God's name, madam, and your son;
England shall welcome you and all your rout.
Galloping bright Phoebus, through the sky,

And dusky night, in rusty iron car,

Between you both shorten the time, I pray,
That I may see that most desired day,
When we may meet these traitors in the field.
Ah, nothing grieves me, but my little boy
Is thus misled to countenance their ills.
Come, friends, to Bristow, there to make us strong;
And, winds, as equal be to bring them in,
As you injurious were to bear them forth!

   [Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE IV.
[Near Harwich.]

The Scene: 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, You must not grow so passionate in speeches. −

Lords, Sith that we are by sufferance of Heaven Arrived, and armed 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; That England's queen in peace may repossess Her dignities and honours: and withal We may remove these flatterers from the king.

Sir John. Sound trumpets, my lord, and forward let us march. Edward will think we come to flatter him.

Kent. I would he never had been flattered more!

[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

= ie. then called Netherlands, the location of Hainaut, part of modern Belgium.21
4: Isabella is referring to herself and her forces that have just landed in England (home) to offer battle (cope).1 = lance or other pole-arm, perhaps with a blade at one end.1,21 = turmoil. = when people kill their fellow countrymen in civil war, they die a little bit themselves. = lawless or immoral.1 = ruin.

= laxness or lewdness.1,2 = gutters. = protector.11 = expressive of emotion; Mortimer's admonishment is a common one: the inability to control one's emotions was viewed as a weakness.

19: "since Providence has permitted us to (land safely)".

= enthusiasm, zeal.2 = take revenge on it.1

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.

26-28: 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. = waste or make havoc of; a rare use of havoc as a verb.1
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;
Her friends do multiply, and yours do fail.

Shape we our course to Ireland, there to breathe.

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:
And in this bed of honour die with fame.

Bald. O no, my lord, this princely resolution
Fits not the time: away! we are pursued.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Kent alone, with sword and target.

Kent. This way he fled, but I am come too late.

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,

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
And Isabel do kiss while they conspire:
And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.
Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate!

Edmund, away! Bristow to Longshanks' blood
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:

Proud Mortimer pries near into thy walks.

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.

Since then successfully we have prevailed,
Thankèd be Heaven's great architect, and you. –
Ere farther we proceed, my noble lords,
We here create our well-belovèd son,

Of love and care unto his royal person,
Lord Warden of the realm, and sith the fates
Have made his father so infortunate,
Deal you, my lords, in this, my loving lords,
As to your wisdome fittest seems in all.

Kent. Madam, without offense, if I may ask,
How will you deal with Edward in his fall?

Pr. Edw. Tell me, good uncle, what Edward do you mean?

Kent. Nephew, your father: I dare not call him king.

Y. Mort. My lord of Kent, what needs these questiöns?
'Tis not in her controlment, nor in ours,
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.

Q. Isab. My lord, the mayor of Bistow knows our mind.

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?

Sir John. So are the Spensers, th’ father and the son.

Kent. This Edward is the ruin of the realm.

Enter Rice ap Howell, with the Elder Spenser prisoner, and Attendants.

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,
That, like the lawless Catiline of Rome,
Revelled in England’s wealth and treasury.

Q. Isab. We thank you all.

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.

Y. Mort. [Aside]
Some whirlwind fetch them back, or sink them all. –
They shall be started thence, I doubt it not.

Pr. Edw. Shall I not see the king my father yet?

Kent. [Aside]
Unhappy Edward, chased from England’s bounds.


Q. Isab. I rue my lord’s ill fortune; but, alas!
Care of my country called me to this war!

Y. Mort. Madam, have done with care and sad 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.

Sir John means the Spensers are also with the king.
Kent, perhaps feebly, tries to appear still anti-Edward.
= Howell is a Welshman who was, until Isabella released
him, a prisoner in the Tower of London.

Rice puns mildly with presence / present.
= unmanageable or self-indulgent.

Lucius Sergius Catalina, 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.

The Capture of the Elder Despenser: the Elder
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.

= flattering.

= “away with”.

= “what’s to be done?” Isabella presumably appears
pensive.
= anxiety.
E. Spen. Rebel is he that fights against his prince;
So fought not they that fought in Edward's right.

Y. Mort. Take him away; he prates.

[Exeunt Attendants with the Elder Spenser.]

You, Rice ap Howell,
Shall do good service to her majesty,
Being of countenance in your country here.
To follow these rebellious runagates. —
We in meanwhile, madam, must take advice,
How Baldock, Spenser, and their complices,
May in their fall be followed to their end.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE VI.
[Within the abbey at Neath.]

Enter the Abbot, Monks, King Edward, Young Spenser and Baldock (the three latter disguised).

Abb. Have you no doubt, my lord; have you no fear;
As silent and as careful will we be
To keep your royal person safe with us,
Free from suspect, and fell invasion
Of such as have your majesty in chase,
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.

Stately and proud, in riches and in train,
Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp:
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life or death made miserable? —
Come, Spenser; Baldock, come, sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy,
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle. —

Father, this life contemplative is Heaven.

= ie. king.

= prattles.

124: Despenser met a horrible traitor's death, being hanged and eviscerated before his own dying eyes (Hutchison, p. 136).  

= high standing. = ie. Wales or the border region.  

= fugitives or runaways. = deliberate. 

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.  

The Scene: 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.
O that I might this life in quiet lead!

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.

Monk. Your grace may sit secure, if none but we
Do wot of your abode.

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.

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.

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 ope' these eyes again!
Never again lift up this drooping head!
O nevermore lift up this dying heart!

Spen. Look up, my lord. — Baldock, this drowsiness
Betides no good; here even we are betrayed.

Enter, with Welsh hooks. Rice ap Howell,
a Mower, and Leicester.

Mower. Upon my life, these be the men ye seek.

Rice. Fellow, enough. — My lord, I pray, be short;
A fair commission warrants what we do.

Leic. The queen's commission, urged by Mortimer;
What cannot gallant Mortimer with the queen?

Alas! see where he sits, and hopes unseen
'T escape their hands that seek to reave his life.
Too true it is, Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.

But, Leicester, leave to grow so passionate.—

Spenser and Baldock, by no other names.

I do arrest you of high treason here.

Stand not on titles, but obey th’ arrest:
'Tis in the name of Isabel the queen.—

My lord, why droop you thus?

K. Edw. O day the last of all my bliss on earth,

Center of all misfortune! O my stars,
Why do you lour unkindly on a king?
Comes Leicester, then, in Isabella’s name

To take my life, my company from me?
Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,
And take my heart in rescue of my friends!

Rice. Away with them!

Y. Spen. It may become thee yet
To let us take our farewell of his grace.

Abb. [Aside] My heart with pity earns to see this sight,
A king to bear these words and proud commands.

K. Edw. Spenser, ah, sweet Spenser, thus then must we part?

Y. Spen. We must, my lord; so will the angry heavens.

K. Edw. Nay, so will hell and cruel Mortimer;
The gentle Heavens have not to do in this.

Bald. My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.
Here humbly of your grace we take our leaves.
Our lots are cast; I fear me, so is thine.

K. Edw. In Heaven we may, in earth ne’er shall we meet:
And, Leicester, say, what shall become of us?

Leic. Your majesty must go to Killingworth.

K. Edw. Must! 'Tis somewhat hard, when kings must go.

Leic. Here is a litter ready for your grace,
That waits your pleasure, and the day grows old.

Rice. As good be gone, as stay and be benighted.

Roman philosopher and dramatist Seneca: "Whom the rising sun hath seen high in pride, him the setting sun hath seen laid low."32

= cease. = emotional or compassionate; Leicester strains to control his emotions.

= Leicester makes a point of refusing to address the pair by their respective titles of Chamberlain and Chancellor.

= "don't bother insisting".

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.3

= appear dark and threatening.1 Edward refers to the belief that the position of the stars at one's birth determines one's destiny.

= ie. "in exchange for the lives of".

= "do you honour"; though outwardly formal, notice that Spenser uses "thee" in addressing Leicester to signal a bit of scorn and to emphasize his sarcasm.

= grieves, feels compassion.2

= forced to put up with. = arrogant.

= ie. so the angry heavens will it to be.

= command.

= ie. nothing.

= "our fates have been decided."1

= on.

= ie. "me" (the royal "we").

= ie. Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, owned by the Lancasters, now a spectacular ruin.

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.

= a portable bed, carried by others.

111: "it is just as well to leave as to stay and be overcome by night." Perhaps proverbial.
And to the gates of hell convey me hence.
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore;
For friends hath Edward none but these, and these,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword.

Rice. My lord, be going: care not for these,
For we shall see them shorter by the heads.

K. Edw. Well, that shall be, shall be: part we must!
Sweet Spenser, gentle Baldock, part we must!
Hence, feignèd weeds! Unfeignèd are my woes;
[Throws off his disguise.]
Father, farewell! Leicester, thou stay'st for me,
And go I must. Life, farewell, with my friends.

[Exeunt King Edward and Leicester.]

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.

Bald. Spenser, I see our souls are fleeting hence;
We are deprived the sunshine of our life:
Make for a new life, man; throw up thy eyes,
And heart and hand to Heaven's immortal throne;
Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance:
Reduce we all our lessons unto this,
To die, sweet Spenser, therefore live we all;
Spenser, all live to die, and rise to fall.

Rice. Come, come, keep these preachments till you
come to the place appointed. You, and such as you are,
have made wise work in England; will your lordships
away?

= coffin.
= from here.
= Roman god of the underworld.
= Charon was the old ferryman who shipped souls across
the rivers of the underworld into Hades.
= ie. the monks on the one hand, and Baldock and Spenser
on the other.\textsuperscript{5}
= care is disyllabic: CAY-er.
121: common and grimly humourous phrase, referring to
the anticipated beheading of the captives.
= 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.\textsuperscript{1}
= "Away with you", ie. "off, deceptive clothing (weeds)!
= waits.

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.

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 was thought to contain the throne
of God, the angles, 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 above the airy region.

= departing from here.\textsuperscript{1}
= "prepare for the afterlife".
= common phrase referring to death, which all people "owe"
to Nature.

145-7: "all of life's lessons boil down to this: we live to die."
ie. the purpose of life is to prepare for the afterlife.

= this preaching.
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?

Rice. Remember thee, fellow! What else? Follow me to the town.

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.]

Enter King Edward, Leicester, the Bishop of Winchester, and Trussel.

The Scene: 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

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 16 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.

The Bishop of Winchester

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.

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;

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

1 Leic. Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament;
2 Imagine Killingworth castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
4 Not of compulsion or necessity.
6 K. Edw. Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
8 Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows;
10 For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
12 But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
14 Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;

12 But when th’ imperial lion's flesh is gored,
14 He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
16 And highly scorning that the lowly earth

10: not = read as "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

= another pleonasm.
Should drink his blood, [he] mounts up to the air.
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
Th’ ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,

That thus hath pent and mewed me in a prison;
For such outrageous passions clov my soul,
As with the wings of rancour and disdain
Full often am I soaring up to Heaven,
To plain me to the gods against them both.
But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of my wrongs,
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; I bear the name of king;
I wear the crown, but am controlled by them,
By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;

Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care.

Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To company my heart with sad laments,
That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.
But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a king?

B. of Win. Your grace mistakes; it is for England's good,
And princely Edward's right we crave the crown.

K. Edw. No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head;
For he's a lamb, encompassèd by wolves,
Which in a moment will abridge his life.

But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,

Heavens turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire!
Or like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon,
Engirt the temples of his hateful head;

So shall not England's vine be perishèd,
But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies.

Leic. My lord, why waste you thus the time away?
They stay your answer; will you yield your crown?

= rears up, so that his front paws are in the air.
= 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.
= another pleonasm, as both pent and mewed mean "shut up".
= fill, satiate.

= complain; the extra me is an intensifier, another example of the ethical dative. Edward uses the construction again in line 25.
= royal authority.

= unfaithful, disloyal.
= stains; Edward alludes to Isabella's now-open adultery with Mortimer.
= ie. prison; care = anxiety; the phrase cave of care is pleasantly, and simultaneously, alliterative and assonant.
= "waits on me".
= ie. accompany.
= transformation.?

= ie. the prince. = surrounded.
= shorten, ie. take.

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

48-49: 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 snakes, and sometimes with wings.
= ie. the royal family line or name, the house of Plantagenet.

= "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 Edward had been
Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook
To lose my crown and kingdom without cause;
To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss,
In which extreme my mind here murdered is.
But what the heavens appoint, I must obey!
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,

That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
So shall my eyes receive their last content,
My head, the latest honour due to it,
And jointly both yield up their wished right.
Continue ever, thou celestial sun;

Let never silent night possess this clime:
Stand still, you watches of the element;

All times and seasons, rest you at a stay,
That Edward may be still fair England's king!

But day's bright beam doth vanish fast away,
And needs I must resign my wished 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!

[He puts on 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 seek 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 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 murderer of a king,
   Take it. − What, are you moved? pity you me?

Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
   And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
   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.]

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.

Leic. Another post! What news brings he?

K. Edw. Such news as I expect — come, Berkeley, come,
And tell thy message to my naked breast.

Berk. My lord, think not a thought so villainous
Can harbour in a man of noble birth.
To do your highness service and devoir,
And save you from your foes, Berkeley would die.

Leic. [Reading the paper]
My lord, the council of the queen commands
That I resign my charge.

K. Edw. And who must keep me now? Must you, my lord?

= mad.
= ie. be appointed the Protector of; the position would effectively allow Mortimer to rule England so long as young Edward was a minor.

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.

= happiness.
= 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.

= messenger.

172: Edward histrionically invites Berkeley to deliver his anticipated message - a stab in the heart.

= duty.

180-1: Leicester has been ordered to turn custody of Edward over to Berkeley.
Berk. Ay, my most gracious lord − so 'tis decreed.

K. Edw. [Taking the paper]
By Mortimer, whose name is written here!
Well may I rend his name that rends my heart!

[Tears it.]

This poor revenge hath something eased my mind.
So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper!
Hear me, immortal Jove, and grant it too!

Berk. Your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight.

K. Edw. Whither you will; all places are alike,
And every earth is fit for burial.

Leic. Favour him, my lord, as much as lieth in you.

Berk. Even so betide my soul as I use him.

K. Edw. Mine enemy hath pitted my estate,
And that's the cause that I am now removed.

Berk. And thinks your grace that Berkeley will be cruel?

K. Edw. I know not; but of this am I assured,
That death ends all, and I can die but once.
Leicester, farewell!

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 he had of course by this time repossessed.

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, and finally died in 1345.

ACT V, SCENE II.
[An apartment in the royal palace.]

Enter Queen Isabella and Young Mortimer.

Y. Mort. Fair Isabel, now have we our desire; The proud corrupters of the light-brained king Have done their homage to the lofty gallows.

And he himself lies in captivity. Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm. In any case, take heed of childish fear, For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,

That, if he slip, will seize upon us both, And gripe the sorer, being griped himself. Think therefore, madam, that imports us much To erect your son with all the speed we may, And that I be protector over him; For our behoof will bear the greater sway.

Whenas a king’s name shall be under writ.

Q. Isab. Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel, Be thou persuaded that I love thee well, And therefore, so the prince my son be safe, Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes, Conclude against his father what thou wilt, And I myself will willingly subscribe.

Y. Mort. First would I hear news he were deposed, 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.
Q. Isab. Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief!

Enter the Bishop of Winchester with the crown.

Thanks, gentle Winchester.
[To the Messenger] Sirrah, be gone.

[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 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.
The lord of Berkeley is as pitiful
As Leicester that had charge of him before.
Q. Isab. Then let some other be his guardian.
Y. Mort. Let me alone, here is the privy seal.

[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.
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?
Q. Isab. I would he were, so 'twere not by my means.

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).

Y. Mort. Enough. –
Matrevis, write a letter presently
Unto the lord of Berkeley from ourself
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 curtly 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;

= ie. "me"; Mortimer ostentatiously affects the royal "we", as if he were the king.
= turn over.
= sign.

91: "if you desire to be promoted by me".
92: 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.
93-94: Mortimer requires the king's new keepers to mistreat their prisoner.

= schemes.
= "move Edward continuously".
= cursedly, ie. severely.

103-6: not satisfied with inflicting physical discomfort on the king, Mortimer orders Matrevis and Gurney to psychologically torture him as well.

= "ride that way immediately."
And bear him this as witness of my love.

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.

Q. Isab. Use Edmund friendly as if all were well.

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.

Kent. I hear of late he hath deposed himself.

Q. Isab. The more my grief.

Y. Mort. And mine.

Kent. [Aside] Ah, they do dissemble!

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.

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.

Q. Isab. But be content, seeing ’tis his highness' pleasure.

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.

Pr. Edw. Why, is he dead?

Q. Isab. No, God forbid.

Kent. I would those words proceeded from your heart.

Y. Mort. Inconstant Edmund, dost thou favour him, That wast a cause of his imprisonment?
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.

Pr. Edw. But he repents, and sorrows for it now.

Q. Isab. Come, son, and go with this gentle lord and me.

Pr. Edw. With you I will, but not with Mortimer.

Y. Mort. Why, youngling, 'sdain'st thou so of Mortimer?
Then I will carry thee by force away.

Pr. Edw. Help, uncle Kent! Mortimer will wrong me.

Q. Isab. Brother Edmund, strive not: we are his friends;
Isabel is nearer than the Earl of Kent.

Kent. Sister, Edward is my charge, redeem him.

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,
To be revenged on Mortimer and thee.

[Exeunt on one side Queen Isabella, Prince Edward, and Young Mortimer; on the other Kent.]

ACT V, SCENE III.
[Within 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,
Therefore, come, – dalliance dangereth our lives.

K. Edw. Friends, whither must unhappy Edward go?
Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest?
Must I be vexèd like the nightly bird,
Whose sight is loathsome to all wingèd fowls?
When will the fury of his mind assuage?
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.

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.

emoting. = grief.

treatment.

= ie. breath.

distressed.

= ie. dying.

the chamber or sac within which the heart sits.

26-27: note the rhyming couplet.

"filth" generally.

gutter. = "we were instructed to do."

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.

"why do you bother to fight us?"

= aim.

= "I'll suffer a thousand insults."

= reside.

---

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 to 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 rent the closet of my heart;

Thus lives old Edward not relieved by any,

And so must die, though pitied 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 murder 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 wronges I'll take.

The Spensers' ghosts, wherever they remain,

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.
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.
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?
Gurn. Bind him, and so convey him to the court.
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.

[Exeunt Matrevis and Gurney, with King Edward.]

Kent. O, miserable is that commonweal,
Where lords keep courts, and kings are locked in prison!
Sold. Wherefore stay we? on, sirs, to the court!
Kent. Ay, lead me whither you will, even to my death,
Seeing that my brother cannot be released.

[Exeunt.]

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;

101: 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).
And therefore will I do it cunningly.
This letter, written by a friend of ours,
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.

[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:
Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est":
Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst.

Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,

That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
And we be quit that caused it to be done.

Within this room is locked the messenger
That shall convey it, and perform the rest:
And by a secret token that he bears,

Shall he be murdered when the deed is done. —
Lightborn, come forth!

Enter Lightborn.

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?

Light. Ay, ay, and none shall know which way he died.

Y. Mort. But at his looks, Lightborn, thou wilt relent.

Light. Relent? ha, ha! I use much to relent.

Y. Mort. Well, do it bravely, and be secret.

Light. You shall not need to give instruction; 'Tis not the first time I have killed a man:

Line 4 is another example of an *alexandrine*, a line
with 12 syllables.

= 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).

= interpret.

6-14: the letter of instruction, written in Latin, is
unpunctuated (*unpointed*), and could, depending on
how one chooses to punctuate 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!

= ie. once Edward is dead.

= ie. acquitted of responsibility. 15-17: by allowing for the
alternative interpretation, Mortimer believes he will be
immune from blame, should the letter be found one day
by his enemies.

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.

24: Entering Character: the messenger Lightborn is
fictional.

= contrived, figured out.

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.

34: Mortimer tests Lightborn: "oh, I am sure that when you
see the pitiful king in person, you will falter."

= 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.

= well.

41-48: Lightborn describes the methods he has learned to
dispose of another without leaving evidence of murder.
I learned in Naples how to poison flowers;

To strangle with a lawn thrust down the throat;

To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point;
Or, whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
And blow a little powder in his ears:
Or ope' his mouth, and pour quicksilver down.

But yet I have a braver way than these.

Y. Mort. What's that?

Light. Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall know my tricks.

Y. Mort. I care not how 't 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;

[Gives money.]

Away! and never see me more!

Light. No!

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,

And with a lowly congè to the ground,
The proudest lords salute me as I pass;
I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.
Ffeared am I more than loved; -- let me be feared,
And when I frown, make all the court look pale.
I view the Prince with Aristarchus' eyes,

= Italy was regarded as the focal point of wickedness and licentiousness in Europe, and the nation from which Elizabethan characters sometimes absorbed such traits.

= 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. This type of assassination was called "lawn".

= small tube.

= ie. poison; Tancock notes the popularity of murder by poison in the 16th century.

= mercury, a highly toxic metal which is liquid at room temperature.

= "an even better way than these to kill him."

= 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.

= congée, ie. bow.

= ie. can use the Great Seal to issue official documents.

= ie. from fear.

Aristarchus was a 2nd century B.C. grammarian and schoolmaster who had a reputation for being a severe critic. 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.
Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy. They thrust upon me the protectorship.

And sue to me for that that I desire. While at the council-table, grave enough, And not unlike a bashful puritan.

First I complain of imbecility. Saying it is onus quam gravissimum; Till being interrupted by my friends, Suscepi that provinciam as they term it; And to conclude, I am Protector now. Now is all sure: the queen and Mortimer Shall rule the realm, the king; and none rule us. Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance;

And what I list command who dare control? Maior sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.

And that this be the coronation day, It pleaseth me, and Isabel the queen. [Trumpets within.]

The trumpets sound, I must go take my place.

Enter the King Edward the Third, Queen Isabella, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Champion and Nobles.

A. of Cant. Long live King Edward, by the grace of God, King of England and Lord of Ireland!

Champ. If any Christian, heathen, Turk, or Jew, Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king, And will avouch his saying with the sword, I am the champion that will combat him.

82: 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, and so he was the de facto ruler of England.

84: the king's Council begs Mortimer to be the Protector, which is what he wants anyway.

85-88: Mortimer describes the false modesty with which he affected to be unqualified to accept the role of Protector.

= needless to say, 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.¹

bashful = "hypocritically modest", a trait often assigned to puritans (Briggs, p. 195).⁶

86: Latin: a most heavy burden.

= Latm: "I accept that office or position."⁶

= secure.

= ie. "and shall also rule, ie. control, young Edward."

= 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.

= wish to. = object to or criticize.¹¹

96: Latin: "I am too great for Fortune's power to injure." From Ovid's Metamorphosis (Humphries, p. 135).²⁸

97: Edward was crowned on 1 February 1327.

104-5: the scene now changes to Westminster.⁴

= the Champion's role is described in his speech at lines 110-3 below.

108: Lord of Ireland had been part of the English king's official title since the days of King John.

= assert.

= make good, back up.²¹

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
Y. Mort. None comes, sound, trumpets.

[Trumpets sound.]

Edw. III. Champion, here's to thee.

[Gives a purse.]

Q. Isab. Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge.

Enter Soldiers with Kent prisoner.

Y. Mort. What traitor have we there with blades and bills?

Sold. Edmund, the Earl of Kent.

Edw. III. What hath he done?

Sold. 'A would have taken the king away perforce, As we were bringing him to Killingworth.

Y. Mort. Did you attempt his rescue, Edmund? speak.

Kent. Mortimer, I did; he is our king, And thou compell'est this prince to wear the crown.

Y. Mort. Strike off his head! He shall have martial law. = ie. a military trial.

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!

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 — My lord, if you will let my uncle live, I will require it when I come to age.

Y. Mort. 'Tis for your highness' good, and for the realm's. — How often shall I bid you bear him hence?

Kent. Art thou king? must I die at thy command?

Y. Mort. At our command. — Once more away with him.

115: presumably there is a brief pause before this line is spoken.

127: blades = blade was commonly used as a synecdoche (a figure of speech in which a named part signifies the whole) for a weapon with a blade at one end. 
bills = a bill was a pole-arm with a hook and spikes attached at one end.

Kent was actually tried and convicted in Parliament.

162: to the guards: "how many times do I have to tell you to get him out of here?"
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: And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me?  

[Soldiers hale Kent away, to be beheaded.]

Edw. III. What safety may I look for at his hands, If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?  

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?  

Q. Isab. He is a traitor; think not on him; come.  

[Exeunt.]

170-172: Neither of them.  
175-176: Edward addresses Isabella.  
182: Briggs notes the inconsistency of the prince's portrayal: having acted with such maturity till now, would young Edward really speak a line so naïve and childish as this? (p. 199).  

184: 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.  

= sewers.  
6: Actually, Edward was tall and unusually strong, and seems to have surprised his keepers with his ability to survive the harsh treatment heaped on him.  

Gurn. And so do I, Matrevis: yesternight  
I opened but the door to throw him meat,  
And I was almost stifled with the 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.
Gurn. Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.

Mat. But stay, who's this?

Enter Lightborn.

Light. My Lord Protector greets you.

[Gives letter.]

Gurn. What's here? I know not how to construe it.

Mat. Gurney, it was left unpointed for the nonce: "Edwardum occidere nolite timere."

That's his meaning.

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.

Gurn. I thought as much.

Mat. [Aside] And when the murder's done, See how he must be handled for his labour. Pereat iste! Let him have the king. —

What else? Here is the keys, this is the lake. Do as you are commanded by my lord.

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.

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.

[Gives a light, and then exit with Matrevis.]
on the other hand, posits that Edward climbs up from out of the dungeon, and the scene simply continues.?

= business.

72: Lightborn is impressed by Edward's bleak surroundings!

K. Edw. Who's there? what light is that? wherefore com'st thou?

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 murder me.

Light. To murder 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. 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.

= for fear that.¹

= ie. "though I am".²

= lack.

= deranged or disturbed.

= "I didn't look like this".

= ie. josted (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 is brought in; at line 57, Lightborn had 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.
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 jewel have I left; receive thou this.

[Give jewel.]

Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
O, if thou harbourest murder 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 murder me,
Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay.

[Sleeps.]

Light. He sleeps.
K. Edw. [Waking] O let me not die yet! 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 on it,
But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body.

Mat. I fear me that this cry will raise the town,
And therefore, let us take horse and away.

Light. Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done?

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.]

ACT V, SCENE VI.
[An apartment in the royal palace.]

Enter Young Mortimer and Matrevis.

Y. Mort. Is't done, Matrevis, and the murderer dead?

Mat. Ay, my good lord; I would it were undone!

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.

Mat. Gurney, my lord, is fled, and will, I fear,
Betray us both, [and] therefore let me fly.

Y. Mort. Fly to the savages!
Mat. I humbly thank your honour.

[Exit.]

Y. Mort. As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree, like an oak tree; the oak was sacred to Jove.
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!

Enter Queen Isabella.

Q. Isab. Ah, Mortimer, the king my son hath news
His father's dead, and we have murdered him!

Y. Mort. What if we have? The king is yet a child.

Q. Isab. 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.

Enter King Edward the Third, Lords and Attendants.

Ist Lord. Fear not, my lord, know that you are a king.

Edw. III. Villain! –

Y. Mort. Ho, now, my lord!

Edw. III. Think not that I am frightened with thy words!
My father's murdered through thy treachery;
And thou shalt die, and on his mournful hearse
Thy hateful and accursed 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.

Ist Lord. Why speak you not unto my lord the king?

Y. Mort. Because I think it scorn to be accused.
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.

[**Showing letter.**]

**Y. Mort.** [Aside] False Gurney hath betrayed me and himself.

**Q. Isab.** [Aside] I feared as much; murder cannot be hid.

**Y. Mort.** It is my hand; what gather you by this?

**Edw. III.** That **thither** thou didst send a murderer.

**Y. Mort.** What murderer? 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? Bring him unto a **hurdle**, drag him forth; Hang him, I say, and set his **quarters** up; 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, 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.

Q. Isab. Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief.

[Exit with Attendants.]

Re-enter First Lord, with the head of Young Mortimer.

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.

[Exeunt Attendants.]

Accursed 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.

[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 Edwardthe Second.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).
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 from *Edward II* that are indicated by the OED as being either the first or only use of a given word, or, as noted, the first use with a given meaning:

asseize
balk, baulk (meaning to disappoint)
brisk (meaning finely dressed)
buckler (meaning to protect)
civil (as an adjective, meaning municipal or town)
fleet (as a verb, describing the soul leaving the body)
gather head
gloomy
goat-feet
have end
heavy-headed (meaning stupid)
hooded (used to describe a garment, rather than a person)
Hymen (first use in English literature)
jess(e) (first figurative use)
lay it on (meaning to lavish with money)
light-brained
manent (as a stage direction, meaning to remain on stage, applied to more than one person)
Midas-like
mort dieu
mushroom (referring to an upstart)
my stars (as an expression of surprise)
night-grown
nook and corner (a predecessor to nook and cranny)
or else (still the modern elliptical phrase implying a threat)
overdaring
port-master
shipwrecked (as an adjective)
smooth-tongued
sword-proof
tanti
targeteer
torpedo (applied to a person)
tune (figuratively meaning to bring two people things into harmony)
unfrequented
unrigged
vailing (as a noun)
vellvet-caped
wait attendance
Welsh hook (though possibly used first by Thomas Nashe)
FOOTNOTES

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online.


