

ElizabethanDrama.org

presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

EDMUND IRONSIDE

ANONYMOUS

Perhaps Performed c. 1590.

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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EDMUND IRONSIDE

ANONYMOUS

Perhaps Performed c. 1590.

Personae Dramatis:

The English:

Edmund Ironside, King of the Saxons, son of
Ethelred the Unready.

Alfric, his general.

Archbishop of York.

Emma, widow of Ethelred, stepmother of Edmund.

Alfred, her son.

Edward, her son.

Gunthranus.

Edmund's Officers:

Ulfkettle.

Godwin.

Aylward.

The Danes:

Canutus, Prince of Denmark, son of King Sveyn
Forkbeard.

Canutus' Officers:

Uskataulf.

Swetho.

English Renegades and Allies of Canutus:

Leofric, Earl of Chester.

Turkillus, Duke of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Earl of Southampton.

Egina, his daughter.

Edricus, Earl of Mercia.

Archbishop of Canterbury.

Two Hostages, sons of Leofric and Turkillus

Edrick, a poor man

His Wife, mother of Edricus

Stitch, son of Edrick and his wife.

Chorus.

Messengers, Herald, Danish and English Soldiers,
Poor Danes, Bailiffs, Bluecoats.

Scene: England, 1016.

EDMUND IRONSIDE.

Edmund Ironside is one of the great anonymous plays of Elizabethan drama, providing a fascinating look into England's ancient history, at a time when Danish Vikings were regularly invading, ransacking and enslaving a war-weary nation. There arises a new English king, Edmund, who, in his very brief moment in history, finally fights back. The play is further thought by many, foremostly by the now-deceased scholar Eric Sams, to be an early work by Shakespeare.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCES.

Our text of *Edmund Ironside* is based on both the transcript of the play published in 1927 by the Malone Society (*Edmond Ironside, or War Hath Made All Friends*: Oxford University Press) and Eric Sams' 1986 edition of the play.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS.

Mention in the annotations of **Sams** refers to his notes for his published edition of *Edmund Ironside*.

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

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Sams, Eric. *Shakespeare's "Edmund Ironside": The Lost Play*. London: Wildwood House, 1986.

INTRODUCTION to EDMUND IRONSIDE

A. *Edmund Ironside*: an Anonymous and Unpublished Play.

In the deep recesses of the British Museum can be found a handwritten manuscript of an English play entitled "*Edmond Ironside*", with a secondary title of "*War Hath Made All Friends*". There is no attributed author, and there is no evidence that the play was ever published.

Thankfully, in 1927, the Malone Society, whose mission was to see to the republishing of facsimiles of many of the plays of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, published a transcript of *Edmond Ironside* (we shall, going forward, employ the conventional spelling of **Edmund** for **Edmond**). We are grateful for this deed, as we have used this transcript in presenting to you, the contemporary audience, an accurate rendering of this fascinating early history play.

B. Our Author's Sources.

The story of Edmund Ironside and the Danish invasions is an old one, dating back to 1016 A.D., the turn of the second millennium. It is sobering to reflect on the fact that we are as separated in time from the actors of these real-life events as they were from the fall of the Roman Republic and the birth of Christianity.

Luckily for academics and students of English history, Britain has been blessed from its earliest times with literate men who recorded the events of their days; these included such venerable chroniclers as Geoffrey of Monmouth, a 12th century monk who authored a volume entitled *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*), and Polydore Vergil (c.1470-1555), an Italian scholar who moved to England in 1502, living out his life there, and writing *Anglica Historia* for Henry VII.

The 16th century in England saw an explosion in literature of all types, most famously the hundreds of plays that were produced in the late Elizabethan era. But histories of England were also penned in abundance. Two of these histories have been identified by Shakespearean scholar Eric Sams as sources for the author of *Edmund Ironside*; these were:

- (1) the 1587 update and reprint of Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, originally published in 1577; and
- (2) Richard Grafton's 1569 history, *A Chronicle at Large*.

We will refer to the two sources in our annotations as **Holinshed** and **Grafton** individually, or collectively as the *Histories*. The spelling of quotes from the *Histories* is modernized.

C. Pre-History of England:

1. Formation, Invasion, and Early Kingdoms.

Humans have occupied the British Isles since time out of mind, but the ancestors of the kingdom's modern population can be traced back to those who arrived from the shores of Europe around 15,000 B.C. These ancient adventurers eventually developed into those tribal groups who bear such familiar names as Britons, Celts, Scots and Picts.

The Romans arrived in the first century A.D., ruling effectively for over three centuries. The armies that supported the new ruling class, however, were not comprised of Italians, but were instead filled with recruits from Gaul, Spain and Germany, many of whom intermarried and raised families with the indigenous peoples.

The next batch of immigrants to arrive in Britain were the Saxons, who were actually invited by various native tribes to fight as hired mercenaries in petty wars in the late 5th century. The floodgates opened soon thereafter, as the island saw waves of more Germanic peoples land on its shores – Angles, Frisians, Jutes, and more Saxons. These Germans invaded, fought and settled.

Tribal arrangements slowly metamorphosed into small kingdoms, which themselves gradually merged, until by the 9th century, three powerful kingdoms dominated the island: Wessex, Northumbria and Mercia. In the late 8th century, the first Vikings arrived (the Norsemen of Norway), slaughtering and pillaging across large swaths of the island. Successive raids continued throughout the 9th century, during which the nationality of the invaders switched to Danish. Some attacks were strictly of a military nature; other invasions were less malevolent, as boats brought numerous Scandinavian settlers to the shores of Britain.

In this period, the first great historical English kings made their mark. King Alfred of Wessex defeated the Danes at a battle fought at Edington in Wiltshire. By the 10th century, the Danes were domesticated, giving King Edward the Elder of Wessex the opportunity to invade the eastern lands held by the Danish, unifying for the first time large areas of English land under a single king.

Information for this section was adapted from pages 1-76 of *Foundation: The History of the England from Its Earliest Beginnings to the Tudors*, by Peter Ackroyd; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011.

2. The Reign of Ethelred (978-1016 A.D.).

There have been several eras during which it must have been unbearably miserable to live in England, including the bubonic plague years of the 14th century, and the years of the terrible civil war (called the **War of the Roses**) of 1455-1478. Added to this list must be the decades that coincided with the reign of **King Ethelred** (called **the Unready**, reigned 979-1016), during which Britain was compelled to suffer repeated violent and devastating invasions from the reinvigorated **Danish Vikings**.

The section of Holinshed's *Chronicles* dealing with this period make for depressing reading. England "*was on each side sore afflicted, wasted and harried by the Danes, which covered [England] the same as [if] they had been grasshoppers.*" Ethelred tried valiantly to raise armies and navies with which to defend England against the invaders, but was frequently thwarted by defections of his officers to the enemy.

A fascinating factor in all of this was the extensive interbreeding of the Danish settlers with the native English throughout the course of the 10th century. Holinshed writes, "*the English blood was so mixed with that of the Danes and Britains...that there was almost few of the nobility and commons which had not on the one side a parent of some of them.*" Elsewhere, we read of three of Ethelred's leading officers who "*were*

Danes on their father's side." Ethelred was probably driven to madness by his inability to know whom he could trust!

Unable to provide tide-turning military victories for his countrymen, Ethelred was forced to pay enormous bribes to the Danes to buy some peace for the realm (Grafton's *Chronicle* says he had to pay the tribute, known as *Danegilt*, or Danegeld, annually). The amount demanded by the Vikings rose substantially over the years: an initial payment of 10 thousand pounds was later increased to 16 thousand, then 20 and 30 thousand pounds. The result was a treasury which was bankrupt for most of the reign.

Around 1002, a new Danish king, **Sveyn Forkbeard**, inaugurated a new series of invasions, overrunning the helpless English each time. Burning towns, robbing churches and abbeys, and slaughtering the natives indiscriminately, the Danes made for cruel taskmasters. By the end of 1010, the Danes "*had wasted the most part of 16 or 17 shires within this realm.*"

No longer able to trust his armies and officers, Ethelred, after three decades of warfare, finally gave up. He fled to the continent, committing himself to the sanctuary of his brother-in-law, **Duke Richard of Normandy**. Sveyn, now the undisputed ruler of England, "*used the victory very cruelly against the Englishmen, oppressing them on each hand.*" But in 1014, the Danish king died, and Ethelred returned to England, welcomed back by a population which understandably received the news of Sveyn's demise with joy.

The wars with the Danes were not over, though; England was now ruled by Sveyn's son **Canute**, who was elected the new King of England by his counsel. Ethelred raised new armies, and new battles were fought. The war took on the nature of a civil war, as Ethelred found himself forced to lay waste to parts of England which had submitted to the Danes.

And then, in 1016, Ethelred, after an interminable reign of 37 years, died.

Edmund, Ethelred's eldest son, was crowned king in London, and the new king resolved to continue the war against Canute and the Danes. This is where our play picks up the story.

Ethelred's reputation was stained beyond his inability to repel the Viking invasions. Holinshed repeatedly refers to his failures of character, which, 500 years later, still make for entertaining reading: Ethelred "*gave himself to lecherous lusts, in abusing his body with naughty strumpets, forsaking the bed of his own lawful wife, to the great infamy and shame of that high degree of majesty.*"

Information for this section was adapted from Holinshed and Grafton. All quotes are from Holinshed unless noted otherwise.

D. Shakespeare as Author of *Edmund Ironside*?

In 1986, Shakespearean scholar Eric Sams (1926-2004) published the first annotated version of **Edmund Ironside** (our online version is the second). Mr. Sams' primary purpose in writing this book was to put forth a persuasive case that the author of *Edmund Ironside* was none other than William Shakespeare. In this now difficult-to-find volume, Sams marshalled a dizzying array of evidentiary material to convince his readers of the overwhelming similarities to be found between Shakespeare's known works and *Edmund Ironside*.

The most interesting evidence Sams used was linguistic. He identified scores of words and phrases whose earliest known appearances occurred in both ***Edmund Ironside*** and known plays of the Bard; he notes that the majority of these similarities occur in the earliest of Shakespeare's plays, such as the *Henry VI* trilogy, which supports the contention that ***Edmund Ironside*** was an early effort of Shakespeare. Sams also explores the similarity of use of the Bible and chronical (English history) sources by both the author of this play and Shakespeare in his known works.

Sams' case is exhaustive. While we do not propose to take a position on Sams' theory – we wish to leave that decision to you – we will note that we find his argument very persuasive, even if we must point out that the numerous uncertainties of authorship that plague studies of Elizabethan drama will never likely be completely settled.

E. One Argument For Shakespeare That Fails.

Eric Sams observed that the expression *book of life*, which appears in *Edmund Ironside* at Act III.iv.7, made its earliest appearance in the written record, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part II*.

Sams identified scores of other words, phrases and collocations (WCPs) that also (1) are found in *Edmund Ironside*, and (2) are cited by the OED as having made their first appearance in English writing in a work by Shakespeare. To Sams, this overwhelming amount of linguistic evidence made a practically *prima facie* case that Shakespeare was the author of *Edmund Ironside*.

But alas, it is not to be. The truth is, in a very large majority of these situations, the WCPs which Sams believed to have been first used by Shakespeare, had actually been in use long before the Bard put them to paper. It is not Sams' fault though. When he compiled his list of WCPs in the 1980's, there was no reason to believe the OED was ever wrong about anything. But in the case of the earliest existing citations for Sams' WCPs, the OED was almost always wrong, and in many cases still is.

The reason for this is simple: the original compilers of the OED had failed to consult scores, if not hundreds, of works that had been published earlier than the 1590's, when Shakespeare was known to have begun writing his plays, and it turns out that almost all the WCPs which Sams cites as having first appeared in Shakespeare actually were employed, in some cases in substantial numbers, by previous writers, often times decades before Shakespeare was active.

While the OED is working through these older volumes, and then adding earlier citations to the dictionary, progress is very slow; it will take decades for the OED to finish updating all of its hundreds of thousands of entries.

Today, thanks to the internet, anyone can find, in mere seconds, some of the earliest appearances of any WCP he or she can think of (assuming it existed in the 16th or 17th centuries), thanks to a project known as the **Early English Books Online** (EEBO). The EEBO is a searchable online database on which can be found transcripts of

thousands of English-language published works, dating all the way back to the introduction of the printing press to England in the 1470's.

A few examples of Sams' bad luck will suffice; each of the following WCPs appears in *Edmund Ironside*, and was thought by Sams otherwise to appear, outside of *Edmund Ironside*, for the first time in a Shakespearean play:

1. Sams asserts that the earliest known use of *unfit* with an infinitive occurs in *Henry VI, Part III* ("*unfit to be a sovereign*"); however, we find in the EEBO many older examples, the earliest appearing in a 1575 work ("*unfit to write*").

2. the mock form of address *Sir Knave*, *Henry VI, Part II*; but also found dozens of times in earlier works, at least as far back as 1553.

3. the collocation *hark ye*, *Titus Andronicus*; but found many times prior to that, at least as far back as 1523.

Other incorrect examples produced by Sams include the collocation *marriage day*, *madcap* as an adjective, the contraction *'twere*, and the expression *fair England*. All of these were actually part of the written English language long prior to the advent of Shakespeare. There are scores more.

F. Names Used in the Play.

Holinshed and Grafton were wildly inconsistent in the spellings they employed for the names of the men and women who enter and exit their respective histories of England. Although the author of *Edmund Ironside* relied more heavily on Holinshed than he did on Grafton for plot elements, he did favour Grafton's spellings for the names of the play's main characters:

(1) Canutus. In Grafton's *Chronicle*, the Danish King of England known to us as **Canute** was called **Canutus**; our author uses both of these names throughout the play. We note that the scribe of the play's manuscript frequently wrote *Canute* when he should have written *Canutus*, which led to the lines in these cases becoming unmetrical. We will correct the error by printing "**Canut[us]**" as necessary. Holinshed never used the spelling **Canutus**, preferring **Cnute** and **Cnutes** instead.

We may also mention that the location of the primary stress in *Canutus* is not consistent in our play, landing sometimes on the first syllable (*CA-nu-tus*), and sometimes the second (*ca-NU-tus*), depending on the demands of a given line's meter.

(2) Sveyn. Canute's father and conqueror of England is known to us today as **Sweyn Forkbeard**; our author adopts **Swaine** and **Swanus** (the choice dependent on whether he needed a one- or two-syllable word), the latter which was used exclusively by Grafton. Holinshed employed *Swaine*, *Sweine* and *Swanus*.

(3) Egelred. The name of the English king referred to today as **Ethelred** was often written in the 16th century as **Egelred**, the form used by our author. Both *Histories* used a variety of spellings for the name of the English monarch, including *Egelred* and *Ethelredus*.

(4) Edricus. The name of the English traitor was spelled solely **Edricus** by Grafton, and this is the form adopted by our author. Holinshed primarily employed *Edrike*.

G. Interesting Poetic Quirks to Watch For.

The anonymous playwright of *Edmund Ironside* employed all of the typical tropes and figures of speech (such as metaphors, alliteration and apostrophes), and other conventions (such as the occasional use of *alexandrines*, iambic lines of twelve syllables instead of ten) which could be found in most plays of the Elizabethan era. Here are a few interesting features to keep an eye out for as you read this play:

(1) **Rhyming Couplets:** the play is filled with rhyming couplets, many of which are used to signal the end of individual scenes and speeches. We will identify only some of the more interesting or unusual of these rhyming couplets.

(2) **Paired-Word Wordplay:** our author appears to have been extremely fond of understated punning, using the same word two times or more within the same line or two, but employing different meanings. For example, in the play's first scene we find,

*Which doth so much concern our private good
To you in private...[lines 257-8]*

Here, the first *private* means "personal", the second "secret". Be on the lookout for such wordplay, of which the notes will point out only a few.

(3) **Lack of Subject-Verb Agreement:** the Elizabethans appear not to have been sticklers for agreement between the subject and verb of a clause. For example, line 28 of Act IV.iii reads, "*Then all your brooding hopes is cast away...*"

H. The Play as Acting Company's Copy.

The manuscript of *Edmund Ironside* is marked with numerous hand-written deletions, alterations and additions: most interesting amongst these are the occasional insertions of specific actors' names in the margins: for example, where the Messenger enters during Act II.iii, next to the stage direction is inserted the name "H. Gibson".

This is good evidence that the extant manuscript copy of *Edmund Ironside* was used as a stage script, and that the alterations were the work of a reviser who was preparing the script for an actual stage production.

The reviser indicated which passages he wanted cut by first bracketing the lines to be removed, and then crossing them out with a series of large X's. Luckily, these obliterated passages are easy to read, and are all included in our text.

I. Scene Breaks, Settings, and Stage Directions.

Edmund Ironside survives only in manuscript form, and as such its date of composition is completely unknown, but it seems likely it was a product of the Elizabethan era. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of the original text as much as possible.

Words or syllables which have been added to the original text to clarify the sense or repair the meter are surrounded by hard brackets []; these additions are often adopted from the play's modern editions. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course choose to omit any of the supplementary wording.

The manuscript divides the play into numbered Acts, but not so with Scenes; nor does it provide settings. We separate the play into Scenes and number them based on the suggestions of Sams.³ Suggestions for scene locations are those of the editor.

Finally, as is our normal practice, a few of the manuscript's stage directions have been modified, and others added, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action.

EDMUND IRONSIDE

ANONYMOUS

Perhaps Performed c. 1590.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Southampton: Camp of Canutus.

Scene Settings: all scene locations are the suggestion of the editor, based on the historical background of each scene.

Author's sources: Sams identifies two main sources used by our anonymous dramatist in drafting this play:

(1) the 1587 update and reprint of Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, originally published in 1577; and

(2) Richard Grafton's 1569 history, *A Chronicle at Large*.

We will refer to the two sources in our annotations as **Holinshed** and **Grafton** individually, or collectively as the *Histories*.

Scene I: Fierce Danish Vikings have repeatedly invaded Britain since King Ethelred ascended the English throne in 979 A.D. As a result of continuous war and occupation, the island, for the next three and half decades, suffered from an unrelieved state of devastation. In 1014, unable to trust his own frequently traitorous officers, Ethelred gave up fighting, leaving Britain to be ruled by the cruel Danish king Sveyn Forkbeard.

Sveyn died suddenly the same year, however, and his son Canute, or Canutus, was elected king by his counsel. Ethelred returned to England to resume the military defense of his realm. When Ethelred himself died in 1016, the throne passed to his eldest son Edmund, who was crowned king at London.

Canute, says Holinshed, was ordained at the same time at **Southampton**.

Names Used in the Play: this edition of the play retains the spellings of the deceased monarchs **Ethelred** and **Sveyn** as they appear in the play's original, unpublished manuscript (MS), ie. **Egelred** or **Egelredus** (MS) for **Ethelred** (modern) and **Swaine** or **Swanus** (MS) for **Sveyn** (modern). In the annotations, we will employ the modern names.

For King **Edmund**, we will follow Sams, and universally use **Edmund** rather than **Edmond**, the spelling which appears in the MS, since **Edmund** is more familiar, and there is barely a difference in the pronunciation of the two forms.

For the Danish king **Canute**, we will use the spelling **Canutus** in the notes when discussing the character in the play, and **Canute** when speaking of the historical figure.

Enter Canutus, Archbishop of Canterbury,
Earl of Southampton, Edricus (Duke of Mercia),
Leofric (Earl of Chester), Turkillus (Duke of Norfolk
and Suffolk), Uskataulf and Swetho (Danes).
They sit about a table.

1 **Canut.** Archbishop and you other English peers,
2 I hear how Egelredus, late your king,

My tributary, is departed life,

4 And how his son prince Edmund wears the crown
Without the notice of your free consent,
6 Or homage unto me, his sovereign.

8 Yourselfes, lords spiritual and temporal,
Besides the due my father's conquest claims,

Have chosen me,

10 And by a universal sound decree,
Have solemnly throughout this little world

12 Proclaimed me heir-apparent to the crown
When Egelredus lived.

14 Then let not this young upstart prince of prates
16 Curb your proceedings with untutored words,

[He riseth.]

18 But finish boldly what you have begun.
20 Resist his private coronatiön,

And put not up this vild dishonour done

22 Unto you, chief commanders of the realm,
As though you were not worth the sending-for.

Entering Characters: *Canutus*, son of the now-deceased Danish king Sveyn Forkbeard, has been elected king of England by his supporters, some of whom enter the stage; Canutus' crew include not only Danish officers (*Uskataulf* and *Swetho*), but also a number of Englishmen (the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, *Edricus*, *Leofric* and *Turkillus*), who have thrown their full support to the Danes.

2: *Egelredus* = ie. Ethelred, the recently deceased King of England, who ruled 979-1016 A.D.
late your = ie. "your recent".

3: *My tributary* = Holinshed tells us that Ethelred was compelled to raise 30,000 pounds to pay Canute as tribute in about 1015.
is departed life = ie. has just died.

4-6: *Edmund*, son of Ethelred, has assumed the throne of England, but without the formal consent (*notice*)¹ of Canutus or his advisors, or recognition of Canutus as his overlord.

= ie. both religious and secular leaders.

8: "in addition to the fact that the crown should naturally descend to me, since my father conquered Britain".

9-13: Holinshed states that on the death of Sveyn, "*the Danes elected... Canute... to succeed him... in his dominions.*"

= proper, valid.¹

= ie. the self-contained community that is England;¹ a common expression since the 1580's.

12-13: Sams³ notes that Canutus is not really using the term *heir-apparent* (which properly refers to the oldest son of a living king, who would inherit the crown so long as he survives his father) correctly: Canutus only means that he was formally chosen king by his followers.

14-19: Canutus, calling Edmund an uneducated, boorish and idle talker, admonishes his advisors not to allow the lad to persuade them into veering away from their commitments and loyalty to Canutus as the legitimate King of England.

20: when Ethelred died, Edmund was first proclaimed king by the citizens of London and elsewhere, before being formally crowned by his ally, the Archbishop of York, in London.

21: *put not up* = ie. "do not tolerate"; *to put up* was an early version of the modern *to put up with*.

vild = ie. vile, a common alternate form.

= ie. "inviting to this meeting."

24	<i>A. of Cant.</i> Indeed, his rashness is <u>unportable</u> ,	= intolerable. ¹
26	And <u>merely</u> nothing but a <u>proud</u> contempt	= absolutely. = an arrogant.
28	Against us of the clergy and the rest, That have for <u>public profit</u> of the realm, For peace, for quiet and <u>utility</u> ,	= the benefit of all the English people. = advantage. ¹
30	Elected prince <u>Canutus</u> for our king,	= the Danish king's name is usually stressed on its second syllable (<i>ca-NU-tus</i>), as here, but the author is not consistent about this, as he will allow the emphasis to fall on the first syllable (<i>CA-nu-tus</i>) when required by the meter.
	Whose valour <u>we have proved</u> unto our cost,	= "we have tested", and hence has been well-demonstrated to the satisfaction of the nobles.
32	Whose love unto the church we need not doubt,	32: the <i>Histories</i> note that Canutus was well-supported by England's higher clergy.
	Whose care for all we may rely upon, And whose <u>true bounty</u> is so notable	= generosity.
34	That <u>even</u> his foes admire and honour him,	= normally disyllabic words with a median <i>v</i> were sometimes, as here, pronounced in a single syllable, the <i>v</i> elided for purposes of meter: <i>e'en</i> .
36	<u>When th' other what he is</u> I need not tell,	= ie. "and his other good qualities".
38	'Tis too well known. <u>I would I could say well</u> ; But this I say and swear – were I myself	= "I wish I were able to express myself better."
40		
	[<i>He riseth.</i>]	
42	<u>Professed</u> a soldier or a man at arms,	= "employed in the profession of"; but the archbishop is engaging in a bit of wordplay, as <i>profess</i> also means "to take religious vows". ¹
	As I am one deprived from the world	43-44: as a clergyman, the archbishop ostensibly lives a life withdrawn from more worldly or mundane matters.
44	And from my cradle called to serve the Lord,	
	I would with <u>lance approve his title naught</u>	45-46: the archbishop would take the field and fight on Canutus' behalf. <i>lance</i> = the familiar medieval weapon comprised of an iron or steel head attached to the end of a long wooden shaft. ¹ <i>approve his title naught</i> = confirm that Edmund's so-called "title" has no value; <i>naught</i> = not at all. ¹ <i>plead</i> = make a case for, fight for.
46	And <u>plead</u> your coronation with my sword.	
		32-35 (above): the archbishop's praise for Canutus was not undeserved, as even Holinshed admits that the present Danish king, unlike his father, behaved with generosity and courtesy towards the English, hoping to win their approval.
48	<i>Canut.</i> <u>Stout-hearted</u> bishop, <u>spoken like a man!</u>	48: <i>Stout-hearted</i> = brave-hearted. <i>spoken like a man</i> = earliest appearance in English literature of this admiring expression.
	<u>Would</u> all the English lords <u>were of thy mind</u> .	= if only. = thought the same way.
50		51-88 (below): the other lords are a bit put off by Canutus' seeming implication that the archbishop is the Dane's only genuine English supporter. Nobles were notorious for being

52 **South.** Am I not ready to defend your right
With force of arms as doth become a knight?

54 **Leo.** I ne'er was slack or hindmost of the rest,
But ever first and foremost with the best.

56

58 **Edric.** Had I not been a help unto your father
Whenas he first arrived in Albion,

You ne'er had stood in question for the crown,
60 Nor had your father's wars so prosperèd.

62 'Twas I that first did counsel Egelred
To pay you tribute and to buy your league,

Whereby we emptied all the treasury;
64 And had not gold failed, you had ne'er been king.

66 I had a navy once (the time when 'twas
In Egelredus' days, your father living),

68 With which I should have met you on the sea
Within the straits of England, and I wis
Had then no little vantage on your ships;
70 Yet I, as favouring your party most,

Gave way and let you land without resistance,

72 And for that fact rest foully scandalized.
Was it not I that gave intelligence

prickly in points of honour.

51-55: both Southampton and Leofric respond with indignant rhyming couplets.

= behind, trailing.

57-88 (below): the *Histories* universally condemn the English Earl of Mercia **Edricus** as a most traitorous villain. For years, the Machiavellian Edricus pretended to serve King Ethelred faithfully, when all the time he was secretly aiding the Danish, frustrating the English king's efforts to defeat the invaders, before he finally formally defected to the enemy sometime in 1016.

58: *Whenas* = when.

Albion = old name for the island of Britain. *Albion* was often used in poems and plays of ancient English history.

= common expression used to describe a situation whose outcome was uncertain.

60: ie. "nor would your father have been so successful in his invasions of England."

61-62: according to Grafton, as the Danes were pillaging the country in about 1005, whenever Ethelred desired to raise a new army with which to strike the invaders, "*Edricus would counsel him to the contrary, showing him that he should spend his treasure.*"

to buy your league = to purchase an alliance with Canutus.

63: the expenses spent by Ethelred to pay off the Danes bankrupted the government!

= the English run out of gold with which to pay Canutus.

65-66: a bit of literary license: according to the *Histories*, the actual admiral of the fleet was one **Alfrike**.

your father = ie. Canutus' father Sveyn.

= "I know".¹

= ie. a great advantage.

= side, faction.

71: the first time Earl Alfrike was assigned the navy with which to repel the invading Danes (about 992 A.D.), he allowed them to escape without harm; later he surrendered his entire fleet to the enemy, before finally personally defecting to the Danes.

As a postscript, we may note that Ethelred responded to Alfrike's treachery by putting out the eyes of the admiral's son.

= deed. = remain.

73-75: *Was it...father* = Edricus acted as a spy or mole for

74	Of all the councils of King Egelred Unto your father? Did not I, <u>I pray</u> ,	the Danish. = "I ask you".
76	<u>Feign sickness</u> , weakness, <u>disadvantages</u>	76: Feign sickness = the <i>Histories</i> tell how in 1003 A.D., Edricus, having been assigned to gather an army with which to fight a rampaging Danish force, pretended to be too ill to fight, and the leaderless army, discouraged, " <i>went home</i> " (Holinshed, p. 168). disadvantages = Sams suggests disadvantages to mean that Edricus often tried to convince Ethelred that conditions were unfavourable for an attack.
	Whenas the king sent me to fight with him?	77: when Ethelred asked Edricus to take the fight to Canutus' father.
78	Was I not causer of your good success In all your <u>actions</u> since your father's death,	= battles, ^{1,3}
		80-82 (below): Edricus refers to a battle that took place between the forces of Canute and Edmund in 1016, when Ethelred was still alive, but very ill, so that his son Edmund led the English army. It was during this battle that Edricus went over to the Danish side.
80	As namely in that battle <u>lately</u> fought	= recently.
	Between yourself and Edmund Ironside,	
82	Where I fled from him and did <u>succour</u> you?	= assist.
	Then since the only ladder upon which	
84	Your father climbed to get and you to hold This <u>gotten</u> kingdom was my diligence,	83-85: Edricus describes himself as the primary agent by which the Danes under Sveyn were able to take control of England. gotten = acquired, won. ¹
86	I hope you <u>will not the least motiön</u>	86: will not the = Sams emends will not the to will not let the in order to clarify the line's meaning. motiön = impulse.
	Of an ill thought creep in to <u>hinder</u> me,	= slander, disparage. ¹
88	Nor do I think you <u>used</u> this speech by me.	88: Edricus suggests that this speech he just gave should not have been necessary; used = needed. ^{1,3}
90	Canut. Why, what need all this repetitiön? Good faith, I meant no harm in saying so.	
92	Why should I doubt you? <u>Wherefore</u> should I fear? You never yet deceivèd me.	= why.
94	I cannot <u>speak</u> , but <u>some</u> or other <u>straight</u> <u>Miscónsters</u> me.	= say anything. = someone. = immediately. = misconstrues, misunderstands; misconster(s) is always stressed on its second syllable: <i>mis-CON-ster(s)</i> .
		92-94 (above): the lines are reproduced as they appear in the MS; but the three lines may readily be written as two, scanning easily as iambic: <i>You never yet deceivèd me. I cannot speak, But some or other straight misconsters me.</i>
96	Why, <u>by my troth</u> , my lord, I meant not you, But those that <u>cleave</u> to Edmund Ironside	= truly. = cling.
98	And hang in <u>part</u> against my government.	98: "and, adhering to his side (part), resist my authority."

100	Calm ye, therefore, and be not discontent.	
102	South. In token then you mean as you have said, Honour my castle with the name of court, And take a subject's welcome from his heart To signify you love my town and me.	= ie. "as evidence, therefore, that you mean what you say". 102-4: Southampton invites Canutus to stay at his castle.
106	[<i>Uskataulf whispereth in Canutus' ear.</i>]	106: Uskataulf speaks in an aside to the king.
108	Uska. Why, that's a <u>trifle</u> , mighty sovereign. Yield unto him in this petition. It will confirm the people's hearts to you And make him live and die to honour you.	108-111: Uskataulf recommends that Canutus accept the earl's invitation, as it would be an easy way to retain the goodwill of the natives. trifle (line 108) = thing of no moment. ¹
112		
114	Canut. [<i>To Southampton</i>] I willingly <u>descend</u> to your request, And will this night be with you at your place.	= deign to accept.
116		
118	South. I'll go <u>before</u> , to countenance your grace.	117: Southampton will go home ahead of (before) ² the king so that he may be there to welcome Canutus with due honour when he arrives.
120	[<i>Exit Southampton.</i>]	
122	<i>Enter a company of countrymen making a noise.</i>	121: a group of Danish settlers approaches the royal party.
124	Countrymen. Where is the king, that he may right our wrong?	123: right our wrong = ie. "rectify the injury done to us".
126	Canut. The king is here; who is it calls the king? I am your king. Speak, gentle countrymen, What lawless hand hath done you injury?	
128		
130	Ist Count. Renownèd Canutus, we are all Danes by birth, The remnant of thy needy followers, Who when thy father lived, lived here secure And dwelt among the fattest of this land. We then did yoke <u>the Saxons</u> and compelled Their stubborn necks to <u>ear</u> the fallow fields. We then did force them honour us as lords And be our slaves, our drudges and our dogs. But now (I know not what the cause should be, Unless the instigation of their prince, Young Ironside, or else their stubborn nature) They all rebel, and with <u>conjoinèd</u> force	129-136 (below): the Danish settlers recount the good times of earlier years when they cruelly domineered over the English. Of the Danes' severity, Grafton wrote: " <i>The Danes by strength caused husbandmen to ear [ie. plough] and sow their land, and to do all other vile labour that belonged unto husbandry, and the Dane held his wife at pleasure, with daughter and servant. And when the husbandman came home, he should scantily have of his own as his servants had, so that the Dane had all at his commandment, and did eat and drink his fill of the best, when the owner had scant his fill of the worst.</i> " 132: and lived in luxury and abundance. = ie. the English. = plough. ¹ = combined.

142	Assault us <u>manly</u> , and from every part Of this perturbèd island banish us.	= fiercely, bravely. ¹
144	We are not able to resist their <u>powers</u> , But fall like leaves before <u>the northen wind</u> .	= forces. = a proverbially fierce and cold wind; <i>northen</i> = a common alternate form of <i>northern</i> .
146	Huge heaps of us lie dead in every place, And we, unless you help, shall all be slain.	145-6: a possible reference to the St. Brice's Day (13 November) massacre of 1002, when, in a major coup of secret planning, the English arose and slaughtered all the Danish settlers in the land.
148	<i>All Cry.</i> Help, help, Canutus, help and <u>succour</u> us!	= synonym for <i>help</i> .
150	<i>Canut.</i> Good countrymen, Canutus will not see you wronged,	
152	For yet the spirit of my father Swaine Runs in these veins, which I will shed,	= before.
154	Even drop by drop, <u>ere</u> I will see you harmed. Go in, good friends, and <u>pacify</u> yourselves.	= calm.
156	Be confident in me, and if I live, I plant you in your former <u>quiet states</u> . – Swetho, look to them; they shall be your care.	= peaceful estates.
158	[<i>Exeunt Swetho with the poor Danes.</i>]	
160	Now, lords, let not this sudden rumour daunt Your manly hearts. Though Edmund be so strong,	
162	We are as strong, and stronger far than he.	
164	Then tell me, shall we now assail him?	164: Canutus asks whether the time is right to go to war against Edmund.
166	Say, <u>Uskataülf</u> , what is to be done?	= pronounced with four syllables: <i>US-ka-TA-ulf</i> .
168	<i>Uska.</i> You may, my lord, yet <u>be remembered</u> now Against what nation you are <u>bound to war</u> ,	= recall. = obliged to make war on.
170	A generation like <u>the chosen Jews</u> : <u>Stubborn</u> , unwieldy, <u>fierce</u> and <u>wild</u> to tame,	169-173: Uskataulf compares the English to the Biblical Jews, who in the 16th century were often referred to by the pejorative <i>stubborn</i> (for their both frequent turning their backs to God, and to those Jews who were pedantic about following Mosaic law), and <i>fierce</i> and <i>wild</i> to a lesser extent.
172	Scorning to be compelled <u>against</u> their wills, Abhorring servitude as having felt The overloading burden <u>of the same</u> .	<i>the chosen Jews</i> = allusion to the Jews as God's "special instruments", a "holy people set apart to worship God" (Lockyer, p. 219). ⁵ <i>against</i> (line 171) = ie. to act against. <i>of the same</i> = ie. of the same weight as what the Jews have borne.
174	<i>Edric.</i> Indeed <u>my countrymen</u> are <u>factiöus</u> ,	= ie. the English. = mutinous, disputatious. ¹
176	And must be <u>reined</u> with a <u>marking-stall</u> .	176: <i>reined</i> = ie. reined in, restrained. <i>marking-stall</i> = an unknown term, appearing neither in the OED nor anywhere else in contemporary literature. Sams hypothesizes that a <i>marking stall</i> may have been a "device or technique for training or restraining unruly draught animals" (p. 122). ³

<p>178</p> <p>180</p> <p>182</p> <p>184</p> <p>186</p> <p>188</p> <p>190</p> <p>192</p> <p>194</p> <p>196</p> <p>198</p> <p>200</p> <p>202</p> <p>204</p>	<p><u>Curb</u> them, my lord, and <u>bridle</u> but their wills, And you shall find them mild and tractable.</p> <p>If <u>that you use them as your father did</u>, They dare not, nay they will not <u>look awry</u>, But serve you as your slaves by conquest due. But if you lay the <u>team</u> upon their necks, And let them have but any scope to run, Why then be sure they'll <u>gad as they were galled</u>,</p> <p>And neither know themselves nor yet your grace,</p> <p>For <u>lenity</u> doth cause them to rebel 'Cause they are ignorant of living well.</p> <p><i>Uska.</i> <u>List</u> how this flattering <u>mate</u> <u>soothes up</u> the king</p> <p>And doth abuse his gracious sufferance.</p> <p>Base, <u>vild</u>, <u>insinuating</u> sycophant, Degenerate bastard, <u>falsely bred</u>,</p> <p>Foul <u>mother-killing viper</u>, traitor, slave,</p> <p>The scum of vices, all the ill that <u>may</u> be. Who would <u>excite</u> the king to tyranny Against his countrymen, but only he? – I am a Dane, renownèd sovereign: You have experience of my loyalty, And that my counsel is not <u>mercenary</u>. If I were wise enough to give advice, You should not <u>prove</u> a tyrant, but a king. A tyrant is abhorred <u>of</u> God and man, <u>Whenas</u> a king lovèd and honourèd. –</p> <p><u>Accomptest thou</u>, Edricus, <u>the Saxons</u> fools,</p>	<p>177-8: the equestrian metaphor continues: curb and bridle, terms applied to horses, both mean "restrain".</p> <p>= ie. if. = treat. = ie. with great cruelty and oppression. = avert their eyes, as from distaste or dislike.</p> <p>= yoke.¹</p> <p>= leap about or run wildly, as if they had been irritated or chafed,¹ ie. they will no longer be under the king's control.</p> <p>185: "which will cause them to be so inflamed that they will not be able to restrain their own behaviour, nor recognize or acknowledge you as king."</p> <p>186-7: Canutus' gentle rule leads the English to revolt, because they are too stupid to know when they are well off. <i>lenity</i> = lenience, ie. mildness.¹</p> <p>189-196 (below): Uskataulf is unimpressed with Edricus' advice to Canutus to treat the English harshly!</p> <p>189: <i>List</i> = listen. <i>mate</i> = fellow, a derogatory term. <i>soothes</i> = flatters, sucks up to.</p> <p>190: Edricus takes improper advantage of the king's tolerant nature (to feed him bad advice).</p> <p>= vile. = slimily ingratiating. = ie. born of unmarried parents.</p> <p>= allusion to the belief that baby <i>vipers</i> kill their mother by eating their way out of her womb when they are ready to be born; Uskataulf seems to be alluding to Edricus' turning against the land and king who treated him so well.</p> <p>= may be omitted to repair the line's meter. = incite, encourage.</p> <p>199: ie. Uskataulf's loyalty to Canutus is proven. = motivated by self-interest.¹</p> <p>= ie. "act the". = by. = whereas,¹ ie. but.</p> <p>204-228 (below): many of the era's plays included lengthy encomiums such as this to the English race, which were intended to flatter the audience.</p> <p>204: <i>Accomptest thou</i> = "do you judge"; Uskataulf's use of the informal <i>thou</i> in addressing Edricus is intended to be insulting. <i>Accomptest</i> = should be pronounced here as a disyllable:</p>
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206 Or rather, hardy, wise and valorous?
Their names discover what their natures are,
More hard than stones, and yet not stones in deed.

208 In fight, more than stones, detesting flight;

210 In peace, as soft as wax, wise, provident.
Witness the many combats they have fought
Denmark, our country's loss by them and theirs,

212 With many other witnesses of worth.

How often they have driven us to our shifts,

214 And made us take the sea for our defense
When we in number have been three to one.
216 Oh, you deceive yourself, and eke the king,
In wishing him so much against himself.
218 Recall the former perils we have passed,
Whose dear-bought times are freshly yet in mind;

220 The tyranny your father Swanus used
In tithing people, killing 9 of 10.

222 What did ensue? Why, loss of many holds,
Bloodshed and war, rebellion, sword and fire;

224 For they are Englishmen, easy to rule
With lenity, so they be used like men:
226 Patient of right, impatient of wrong,
Brooking no tyranny in any sort,
228 But hating and revenging it with death;
Therefore I counsel you, if it might stand,
230 To win their hearts, not by severity
But by your favour, love and lenity.

232 **Canut.** Good Uskataulf, I allow your speech,
234 And praise your counsel by my own consent.
I will endeavor to suppress my rage
236 And quench the burning choler of my heart,
Which sometimes so inflames my inward parts
238 As I fall out with my best-lovèd friends.
I will therefore so moderate myself

accompt'st; **accompt** was an alternate form of **account**;
the Saxons = ie. the English.

= "or on the other hand".

= reveal.

= tougher. = blockheads, stupid people (figurative).¹

208: in battle, the English are tougher than stones, never running away or retreating; note the wordplay of **fight** and **flight**.

Sams suggests emending **more than** to **much more than** to repair the line's meter.

= pliable, ie. gentle.

= the casualties both inflicted and received by the English on and from the Danish.

= actions which prove their merit.¹

= forced the Danes to extremities or into difficult predicaments from which to escape.

driven = a monosyllable: *dri'n*.

= ie. outnumbered the English.

= also.

= to act against his own best interests.

= experienced, endured.¹

= ie. which the Danes survived but at great cost.

220-1: the *Histories* record how Sveyn, in an act surpassing even his accustomed brutality, executed 9 out of every 10 lay citizens of Canterbury, upon having captured the city after a long siege. Holinshed ironically referred to this depraved act as a **tithing** "after an inverted order", ie. instead of a conventional tithing of 10%, or 1 out of 10. According to this chronicler, 900 clergy and 43,200 non-clergy were put to death, leaving only 4,800 residents to carry on.

= castles, forts.

= Holinshed used the expression **fire and sword** six times in his chapters on Ethelred and Edmund.

= treated.

= unwilling to tolerate insult or injury.

= refusing to endure.

233: Canutus accepts Uskataulf's advice.

240	As Englishmen shall think me English-born. I will be mild and gentle to my foes,	
242	If gentleness can win their stubborn hearts. – But let us <u>hence</u> , my lords: <u>by this</u> the earl	= go from here, leave. = by now, by this time.
244	Expects us at Southampton; there we'll rest Till we consult if peace or war be best.	244-5: Canutus' role in the scene ends with a rhyming couplet.
246		
248	[<i>Exeunt omnes.</i> <i>Leofric pulls Turkillus by the sleeve</i> <i>as he is going and <u>stays him</u>.</i>]	247: everyone exits. = "stops him from leaving".
250		
252	<i>Leo.</i> A word, my lord.	
254	<i>Turk.</i> So you use no blows.	252: ie. "so long as you do not want to start a fight."
256	<i>Leo.</i> I think you noble, virtuous, <u>secret</u> , wise; Else would I not have <u>opened my intent</u> , Which doth so much concern <u>our private good</u> , To you in private. So it is, my lord.	= discreet. = "revealed my goals". = ie. "what is best for us personally".
258	<u>I have</u> oft noted your discontented gait, Which, measured by my own, do well declare The mind that rules your body is not pleased;	259-261: Leofric can tell that Turkillus is unhappy just by observing the latter's manner, which is similar to his own. <i>I have</i> (line 259) = pronounce as <i>I've</i> .
262	And since so sweet a <u>symphony</u> appears <u>Betwixt</u> our bodies' discontent, I judge Our mind's <u>disturbance</u> to be only one, <u>Caused from the sad neglect</u> of these strange days.	= concord, agreement. = between. 264: ie. "we are thinking the same thing". <i>disturbance</i> = agitated condition. = ie. caused by the indifference of the king.
266	Oh what a grief is it to noble bloods To see each base-born <u>groom</u> promoted up, Each <u>dunghill brat</u> <u>arreared to dignity</u> ,	266-271 (below): Leofric is unhappy that Edricus, a man of no account, has risen so high in the king's esteem, surpassing that of the genuine nobility who are loyal to Canutus. This is the first suggestion that Edricus was actually born a commoner, without a drop of noble blood, a theme which will be developed for comic effect later in the play. = man (contemptuous). ¹ 268: <i>dunghill</i> = common opprobrious adjective. <i>brat</i> = child (contemptuous). <i>arreared to dignity</i> = raised to high office. ¹
268	Each flatterer esteemèd virtuous, When the true, noble, virtuous gentlemen Are scorned, disgraced and held in <u>obloquy</u> .	= disgrace. ²
270	Base Edricus, <u>a traitor to his king</u> ,	= ie. a traitor to Edmund, his own king; but as Leofric will admit below, he and Turkillus, as English allies of Canutus, are guilty of being turncoats as well.
272	Is held in honour: we two trusty subjects Are <u>feared</u> , suspected, and have liberty	274: <i>feared</i> = frightened.
274		

	Only to live, yet not in liberty;	273-4: <i>have liberty...to live</i> = "only are permitted to keep our lives" (bitter and sarcastic).
276	For what is it but <u>prisonment</u> or worse	= ie. imprisonment, a common alternate form.
278	<u>Whenas</u> our children, blood of our own blood, Are <u>kept close</u> prisoners, <u>pledges for our faiths</u> ?	277-8: we learn that the sons of these two nobles are being held as "hostages" by the king as a way to guarantee the good behaviour of Leofric and Turkillus (who, after all, are themselves traitors to the English crown, which means their loyalties to Canutus will always be viewed with at least some suspicion). <i>Whenas</i> (line 277) = when. <i>kept close</i> (line 278) = securely held. <i>pledges for our faiths</i> = sureties for their fathers' loyalty to Canutus. The <i>Histories</i> note that when Sveyn was alive, he took hostages from the English as a way to secure their obedience, and gave his son Canute the responsibility for keeping them.
280	King Edmund, who indeed is our true king, For good regard of merit and desert, For honour, fame and true nobility,	
282	Is rightly <u>termed</u> " <u>mirror of majesty</u> ".	= called. = the image of.
284	Canutus is a prudent, noble prince, And loves to hear <u>him</u> called so, <u>too, too</u> much	284: <i>him</i> = ie. himself. <i>too, too</i> = common way of describing a quality that regretfully exists in excessive amounts.
286	But I will tell you this – as long as we <u>Take part</u> against our sovereign Ironside, We are but traitors, therefore –	= ie. take sides.
288	<i>Turk.</i> <u>Stay</u> , noble <u>Chester</u> , for I <u>spy your drift</u> .	289: <i>Stay</i> = ie. "say no more". <i>Chester</i> = Turkillus addresses his companion by his title. <i>spy your drift</i> = "understand what you are getting at"; other 16th century variations of the modern "catch your drift" included <i>see</i> , <i>perceive</i> , <i>smell</i> and <i>mark your drift</i> .
290	To heap as many titles on your head As you have poured on mine, were but your due;	290-1: "you have complimented me greatly, but you yourself merit the same amount of praise."
292	Yet to cut off such <u>troyting</u> thieves of time, I <u>say "Amen"</u> to your <u>intention</u> ,	292-3: to save time, Turkillus will forgo returning the compliments, and simply note his agreement with everything Leofric said. <i>troyting</i> = likely meaning "wasteful"; <i>troyt</i> does not appear in the OED; however, we find in a loose 1567 translation of the Psalter the line, " <i>no tyme then troyted I</i> " (119:60). Sams cites an earlier scholar (Ephraim Everitt) who noted that <i>to troyt</i> was slang for <i>to idle</i> , so that "idling" is another possible gloss here. <i>say "Amen" to</i> = "agree with"; this early version of the more familiar "amen to that" can be traced back to 1540. <i>intention</i> = intended meaning. ¹
294	Which is to leave Canutus and his court, And <u>fly</u> to Edmund, our true, lawful king;	= flee.
296	But lest you should suspect my secrecy By being won so soon to your <u>device</u> ,	296-9: Turkillus does not want Leofric to be suspicious as to his true intentions, because he agreed with Leofric so quickly, without seeming to have put any thought into it, ie.
298	I here assure you that this very plot	

Hath long been hammering in my troubled brain;

300 And had you not prevented my intent,
I should ere long have movèd you herein;

302 But what shall then become of our two boys,
Who are our pledges? They shall surely die.

304 **Leo.** Tut, 'tis no matter: if they die, they die.
306 They cannot suffer in a better time,
Nor for a better cause, – their country's good.
308 We gave them life; for us they shed their blood.

310 **Turk.** He that sent them can send us more again.
312 Then let us hence; delay of time is vain.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT I, SCENE II.

Southampton.

[*Enter Edricus solus.*]

1 **Edric.** What shall I think of him that means to beg
2 And can thus finely live upon his wit?

I was as mean as any basely born. –

4 **Fi**e, say not so, it will discredit thee. –

Tut, no man hears me. Ay, but think not so,

6 For it will make thy peacock's plumes fall down
If one such abject thought possess thy mind.

8 'Tis strange to see how I am favourèd,

that his purpose is to trap Leofric and betray him: rather, he himself has been thinking the same things for a long time.
device (line 297) = scheme, idea.

= "anticipated me".
301: "I would have myself before (*ere*) long approached you about this same subject."

306: there is no more appropriate time for the boys to die.
= ie. "for their".

310: the boys were a gift from God, who can send them more sons (if **He** desires).
= get out of here. = foolish.¹

Entering Character: Edricus is the English earl we met early in the first scene. The play's primary protagonist, Edricus had turned traitor to his own king, and has risen to become Canutus' most trusted advisor. The entire scene is comprised of a soliloquy by the earl.

1-2: what should we think of a person who decides to leave everything behind, and then makes something of himself by living only off his own wits?

3: Edricus was as low-born as anyone. The suggestion that Edricus was not of noble birth comes from Grafton, who wrote that this Englishman was "*but of base birth.*"

4: (apostrophizing to himself): "don't let anyone hear you say this, for you will lose your reputation" (because everyone believes him to be of noble descent).
Fie = common exclamation of reproach.

5: **no man hears me** = a wonderfully playful line: though Edricus is expressing confidence that no one in the play's 1016 A.D. setting can hear him, his assertion is in a literal sense untrue, since the eaves-dropping 16th century audience obviously can!
but think not so = "do not even think this!"

6-7: Edricus worries that he will lose his swagger if he obsesses about his humble origins; the **peacock** was a traditional symbol of pride.
abject = contemptible.¹

<p>10 Possess <u>my</u> dukedom and Canutus' <u>grace</u>, And am the <u>chief</u> of all his counselors; <u>Whenas</u> my betters are exiled <u>the</u> court, 12 Being <u>discountenanced</u> and out of <u>grace</u>. They cannot so <u>dissemble</u> as I can: 14 <u>Cloak</u>, <u>cozen</u>, <u>cog</u> and flatter with the king; <u>Crouch</u> and seem courteous; promise and <u>protest</u>; 16 Say much, do <u>naught</u>, in all things use deceit; Tell <u>troth</u> to no man; <u>carry tales abroad</u>; 18 Whisper close secrets in the giddy air; Be a <u>news-monger</u>; <u>feed the king with sooths</u>; 20 Please all men's humours with humility, Which he must do that is a courtier, 22 And minds to keep in favour with the king. He that had <u>hard</u> my story from the <u>end</u> – 24 How many treasons I have practicèd, How many vild things I have brought to pass 26 And what <u>great wonders</u> have been <u>compassèd</u> By <u>this deep-reaching pate</u>, – would think <u>I wis</u> 28 I had been bound apprentice to Deceit, And from <u>my birthday</u> studied villainy. 30 I understand Prince Edmund's up in arms, Lays hold upon <u>occasion's sluggy</u> lock; 32 And whilst Canutus here securely sleeps,</p>	<p>9: <i>my</i> = the MS has <i>thy</i> here, emended to <i>my</i> by Sams. <i>grace</i> = favour, good opinion. = foremost. = when. = ie. from the. = disapproved of, criticized.¹ = favour. = fake a sycophantic attitude towards the king. = dissemble.¹ = beguile.¹ = deceive. 15: <i>Crouch</i> = bow excessively deeply to demonstrate his submissiveness. <i>protest</i> = ie. declare his loyalty. Note line 15's delightful double alliteration. = nothing. 17: <i>troth</i> = truth. <i>carry tales abroad</i> = spread rumours around; <i>abroad</i> only suggests "outside the court", and does not mean "international". 18: disclose closely held information to the swirling or moving air,¹ suggesting that the rumours or secrets are carried over long distances. 19: <i>news-monger</i> = trafficker of rumours, gossip.¹ <i>feed the king with sooths</i> = ie. flatter Canutus. 20-22: act servilely and humbly to all, behaviour which is necessary for anyone who wishes to remain in Canutus' good graces to engage in. = ie. heard, a common variation. = beginning.³ 24-25: Sams delightfully describes these lines as an example of "the relish of [a] self-condemnatory confession" (p. 126).³ = marvelous achievements.¹ = brought about.² 27: <i>this deep-reaching pate</i> = ie. Edricus' own deep-think- ing intellect (<i>pate</i>).¹ <i>I wis</i> = certainly, for sure. 28: ie. that Edricus, like an <i>apprentice</i>, had been taught by his master, personified <i>Deceit</i>, how to dupe others. = the day he was born. 31: is prudently seizing the opportunity (<i>occasion</i>) that has presented itself to him to fight for the crown for himself. The expression "<i>to take opportunity by the forelock</i>" was a common one. <i>sluggy</i> = sluggish.¹ 32-38 (below): Edricus confidently expects he can ingratiate himself into the favour of whichever leader – Canutus or Edmund – has the upper hand.</p>
--	--

He wins with ease what we with pain have got.

34 Mass, if he do, and fortune favour him,

36 I will so work as I'll be in his grace
And keep my living and myself unhurt;
But if Canutus chance to gain again,

38 Then I am his, for I can gloze with all;

40 And yet indeed, to say the very troth,
Rather of both I love Canutus best,
For Edmund's father first did raise me up,
42 And from a ploughman's son promoted me
To be a duke for all my villainy,

44 And so as often as I look on him,
I must remember what he did for me,
46 And whence I did descend and what I am,
Which thoughts abase my state most abjectly.
48 Therefore I hate him and desire his death,
And will procure his end in what I can;
50 But for Canutus, he doth honour me
Because he knows not whence I did descend.
52 Therefore of the two I love Canutus best;
Yet I can play an ambodexter's part,
54 And swear I love, yet hate him with my heart.

56 [Exit.]

ACT I, SCENE III.

London.

Enter Edmund and Alfric the general under the king.

33: Edmund (**He**) is easily reconquering all that Canutus and his supporters had with great effort previously procured or won.

34: **Mass** = a common oath.

if he do = ie. if Edmund is victorious in this struggle.

= life, income, property.¹

= ie. to regain the upper hand; the MS prints this as **to gaine a gaine**, emphasizing the wordplay.

= explain away (**gloze**)¹ any seemingly disloyal behaviour as skillfully as anyone.

= truth.

= as a reward for the all the dirty work Edricus had performed on his behalf; the play uses the titles **earl** and **duke** interchangeably.

44-49 (below): Edricus hates Edmund because Edmund knows his true background, of which Edricus hates to be constantly reminded.

= from what ancestry he derived.

= "degrade my well-being".¹ = contemptibly.²

= ie. death. = ie. whatever way.

= Edricus repeats this expression from line 46.

= double-dealer's, two-faced person's.¹

= ie. "love him".

Entering Characters: we finally meet **Edmund**, the ostensible native king of the English, and his senior advisor, **Alfric**. Here we have yet another name borrowed by the author from Holinshed, who mentioned in a single reference a **Duke Alfrike**, a supporter of Edmund (this Alfrike is not to be confused with the admiral Alfrike, who traitorously served Ethelred).

According to Holinshed, Edmund was nicknamed **Ironsides** "for his noble courage, strength of body, and notable patience to endure and suffer all such hardness and pains as is requisite in a man of war."

Because the date of Edmund's birth is so uncertain (sources give differing dates ranging from 980 to 993 A.D.), our play's hero might have been aged anywhere from 23 to 36 at this time (his opponent Canute's date of birth is

1 **Edmund.** Yet are ye sure, my lord, that all is fit?
 2 Are all my soldiers furnished for this war?
 What, have they meat and drink to their content?

4 Do not the captains pince them of their pay?

6 **Alfric.** Assure your majesty, my care is such
 As I do daily oversee them all,
 8 And cause the meanest soldier to be served
 And have his fill of meat and drink that's good
 10 Without controlment, check or menaces;
 For th' only means to mar a soldier's fight –
 12 Pinch him of meat and pay, and pinch his might.

14 **Edmund.** Then do ye well, for I am of this mind –
 He that for private base commodity
 16 Will starve his soldiers or keep back their pay;
 He that to deck himself in gorgeous 'tire,
 18 Will see his men go naked, die for cold;
 Is a plain cutthroat to the commonwealth.
 20 A worthy captain, seeing a tall soldier
 March barefoot, halting, plucked off his own shoes
 22 And gave them to the soldier, saying "Fellow,
 When I want shoes, then give me these again."
 24 But captains nowadays
 Pluck off their soldiers' shoes, nay, sell their lives
 26 To make them rich and gallant to the eye.

28 [Enter Turkillus and Leofric.]

30 But soft, what are yon two strangers?

32 [They kneel.]

34 **Turk.** We are rebellious traitors to your grace,
 Born Englishmen but strangers to ourselves,
 36 Who in remorse of conscience, knowing well
 We have in taking part with Danish Canutus
 38 Deservèd death, come of our own free wills,
 Either to suffer for our heinous facts,
 40 Or else embrace our pardons, which we crave
 Even as hereafter we shall merit it.

42 **Edmund.** Rise up, Turkillus; Leofric, arise.
 44 Give me your hands, and with your hands your hearts.
 I more esteem the life of one true subject
 46 Than the destruction of a thousand foes.
 One sheep that was lost I more rejoice to find
 48 Than twenty other which I never missed.
 A friend of whose return I stood in doubt

likewise unknown).

In this scene, Edmund is pointedly, and perhaps awkwardly, portrayed as a caring leader, solicitous for the welfare of his soldiers.

= ie. all the soldiers are properly equipped.¹

= equipped, prepared.²

= enough provisions; *meat* = food.

4: *captains* = officers, commanders.

pince them of = withhold; *pince*, which does not appear in the OED, nor anywhere else in contemporary literature, is likely an error for *pinch*, which appears in line 12 below.

= ie. ensure. = lowest-ranked.

= restriction. = restraint.¹ = threats.

= way. = ie. hinder a soldier's effectiveness in battle.

= ie. "deprive him". = strength, power.¹

14: "then you have done a good job; here is what I think".

15: "he who for his own private gain (*commodity*)".¹

= adorn. = ie. attire.

= nation.

= brave.

= limping.

= lack, "am without".

= ie. sacrifice their soldiers' lives.

= themselves. = ie. by dressing showily.

= wait a moment.

= ie. have acted in a manner foreign to themselves.

= the side of.

= deeds.

41: "even as we shall prove by our future behaviour that we deserve your pardon."

45-50: Edmund evokes the sentiments of Luke 15:7, in which God proclaims, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven for one sinner that converteth, more than for ninety and nine just men, which need none amendment of life." (all Biblical quotes are from the

50 | Is more welcome to me than forty other. –
52 | Oh that when strangers cannot conquer us,
We should conspire with them against ourselves!

54 | England, if ever war thy face doth spoil,
Thank not thy outward foe but inward friend;
56 | For thou shalt never perish till that day
When thy right hand shall make thy heart away.

58 | Go in, brave lords: your sight doth me more joy
Than Agamemnon when he conquered Troy.

60 | [Exeunt omnes.]

END of ACT I.

Geneva Bible of 1560; all spelling is modernized).
true (line 45) = loyal.

51-52: "if we cannot make friends with someone just because we do not know them, then we only harm ourselves."

53-54: England can only be harmed in war by its own traitorous citizens, not by its foreign enemies.

56: *thy right hand* = the right hand was considered the stronger and more valuable hand.
make thy heart away = "destroy your own morale."¹

58: Edmund alludes to the leader of the Greek forces which needed a full decade to *conquer Troy*. The relevance of the allusion is unclear.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Castle of the Earl of Southampton: Great Hall.

[*Drum and trumpets sound. Enter a banquet.*
Then enter Canutus, Southampton, Archbishop,
Uskataulf and Swetho, Edricus.]

1 **Canut.** [*To Southampton*]
2 My lord, my lord, you are too bountiful.
3 Half this expense would well have satisfied
4 The homely stomachs of our soldiërs,
5 And entertained ourself right royally.
6 Where is your daughter?
8 **South.** She shall give attendance
9 To wait upon your grace at dinner time.
10
11 **Canut.** Nay, good my lord: unless you give her leave
12 To sit at board and find me table talk,
13 I shall not think myself a welcome guest.
14
15 **South.** May I crave pardon of your majesty.
16 My daughter, being young in years and manners,
17 Is far unfit to keep a queen's estate.
18
19 **Canut.** I' faith, my lord, you are too scrupulous,
20 Too unadvised, too fearful without cause,
21 To stand upon such nice excuses.
22 I love to see a table furnishèd,
23 And sure I will not sit till she comes in.
24
25 **South.** Egina, daughter, come away, sweet girl.
26
27 *Enter Egina.*
28
29 The king will have thee dine with him today.
30 Be not too coy, nor yet too flexible.
31 If chance he proffer any courtesy,
32 Behave yourself in honourable sort
33 And answer him with modesty and mirth.
34
35 A means may be to make thee queen.
36 **Canut.** What, is your daughter come? – Welcome, fair
lady.

= servants bring in a table and set up a feast.

1-5 (below): note how, here in Southampton's castle, Canutus and his officers are depicted as the beneficiaries of an opulent feast, which could have generously fed their army twice over, in contrast to the paternal concern shown by Edmund to the needs of his men in the previous scene.

= generous.

4: "the simple or unsophisticated appetites (*homely stomachs*) of our soldiers", ie. the men are used to plain fare.

= common poetic reordering of *my good lord*. = permission.
12: "to sit (with us) at mealtime and converse with me".

table talk = common expression for informal conversation, especially at a table.

= ie. act in the place of a queen (as Canutus' guest).

= truly. = over-nice.¹

= rash or lacking good judgment.¹

= trivial.¹

29-34: likely spoken as an aside to Egina.

30: "be neither too shy nor too pliant or yielding."¹

31: "if by chance the king interacts politely with you".

proffer = offer, tender.

= manner.

= good humour.

34: perhaps Egina can ingratiate herself enough with Canutus to persuade him to marry her!

38 Your presence is as welcome as the day
 After a long and weary watchful night.
 Sit down, fair lady. Sit down, noble lord. –
 40 Fill me a cup of wine. – Here's to the health
 Of Ironside and all his followers.
 42 Who will pledge me?
 44 **Egina.** Pardon your handmaid, and Egina will.
 46 **Canut.** Wilt pledge me to the health of Ironside?
 What reason moves you so to fancy him?
 48
 50 **Egina.** The good regard I bear your majesty,
 For should he die before these wars were done,
 And you have finished strife though victory,
 52 Some other Cadmus bird worse than himself
 54 Might hap to broach some new commotiön
 And trouble all the state with mutinies,
Where if he lives till you have conquered him,
 56 None after him dares renovate the wars.
 58 **Canut.** Sweetly and wisely answered, noble queen,
 For by that name, if Heaven and thou consent,
 60 By sunset all the camp shall wish thee health. –
 My lord, what say you to this motiön?
 62 **South.** As it shall please your royal majesty,
 64 Dispose of me and whatsoe'er is mine.
 66 **Canut.** Madam, pleaseth it you to be a queen?
 68 **Egina.** What my dread sovereign and my father wills,
 I dare not, nay, I will not, contradict.
 70 **Canut.** Then for a manual seal receive this kiss,
 72 The chief dumb utterer of the heart's intent; –
 74 [He kisseth her.]

= sleepless.¹

40-42: **Here's to...pledge me** = Canutus tests his hosts and the other guests: Edmund (**Ironside**), after all, is the enemy!

= ie. "excuse me"; **handmaid** = servant. A formulaic expression of deference.

49-56 (below): it is for Canutus' own good that Egina wishes Edmund to remain in good health: if Edmund dies before Canutus achieves a complete victory over the English, a new and more vicious rebel may arise to take his place (lines 52-54).

= ie. Edmund.

= ended the fighting (ie. war).

52: though Egina's overall point is clear enough, the allusion here is not: the reference seems to be to the story of the Greek hero **Cadmus**, who, having slain a dragon, planted the monster's teeth in the ground. From these dental seeds arose a legion of warriors, who fell to fighting amongst themselves. After a general slaughter, peace was made between the final five surviving soldiers, who together with Cadmus founded the city of Thebes.

Cadmus bird = chap or fellow like Cadmus.^{1,3}

= happen. = commence.² = insurrection.²

= rebellions.¹

= whereas.

= resume.¹

60: ie. Canutus and Egina will be married today.

= proposal.

64: "do whatever you want with me and all my possessions" (which include his daughter Egina!).

= personal seal; see Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*: "*Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips*" (line 516).⁶ There is also a possible allusion to an inscribed design on a ring which the wearer may use to seal wax,³ as on a letter.

75: a clever metaphor: a kiss is a way to disclose your feelings without having to say anything.

76 And noble father – now I'll call you so –
If this rash-seeming match do like you well,
78 Deliver me possession presently
Of this fair lady, your beloved child,
80 And we will straight to church, and celebrate
The duties which belong to marriages. –
82 Bishop of Canterbury, you will marry us
Without the sibert-asking, will ye not?

84 *A. of Cant.* I am prepared if every part be pleased.

86 *Canut.* Faith, I am pleased.

88 *A. of Cant.* But what say you?

90 *Egina.* I say a woman's silence is consent.

92 *Canut.* Why, here's a match extempore, small ado
94 About a weighty matter. Some, perhaps,

96 Would have consumèd millions to effect
What I by some spent breath have compassèd. –

98 Lords, let us in, for I intend to be
Espoused tonight with all solemnity.
After our marriage, we do mean to go
100 To meet in open field our open foe.

102 [Exeunt omnes.]

ACT II, SCENE II.

Southampton: a Street.

Enter Edrick (a poor man), his Wife, and Stitch.

1 *Edrick.* Nay, Stitch, and you once see my son you'll
2 swear he is a bouncer, all in silks and gold, vengeable
rich.

4

Stitch. How say you that?

= common vocative term for one's father-in-law.
= seemingly hasty.¹ = marriage. = please.

= "immediately go to the".

= *sibert* is an unknown word, not in the OED. Canutus may be politely asking if they may marry while skipping the English tradition of *banns*, by which a couple formally announce in church, three times, their intention to marry, providing an opportunity for those who object to do so.

= all parties, everyone.

= truly.

93: *match extempore* = sudden marriage.

93-94: *small ado...matter* = treating an important matter as a trivial one.

= spent a great amount of money.

96: "which I, with just a few spoken words, have achieved (*compassed*).¹

= ie. go in.

= married.

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

= shameless or manifest.^{1,3}

Canute's Real Wife: Canute had actually gotten married when his father Sveyn was still alive. His real wife was **Aelfgifu**, the daughter of one **Aelfhelm**, a once-powerful nobleman of Northumbria.

Entering Characters: *Edrick* and his *Wife* (who is never dignified with a named) are the parents of Edricus, Canutus' wicked advisor. *Stitch*, who provides the play's comic relief, is their second, and younger, son.

1-3: Edrick has learned that his elder boy Edricus (*my son*) has risen to a high position in the Danish king's government.

and = if.

bouncer = Sams, citing Everitt, suggests "thumper" or "maker of big noise" (p. 132),³ ie. "big deal".

vengeable = an intensifier.

6 **Wife.** I can tell you, you may bless the day that ever
 8 you happed into his service: he is a man every hairs-
 breadth, a most vild brave man i' faith.

10

Stitch. Then we shall be well-met, for I love bravery
 and cleanliness out of all cry; and indeed, of all things,
 I cannot brook an ill-favoured face: hang him that
 14 wants a good face.

16 **Edrick.** You are of my mind: we may say “a pox of all
 good faces” and never hurt our own.

18 **Stitch.** We may indeed, God be praised. But what
 20 house is this? How far off are we from Southampton?

22 **Wife.** Why, we are in the town. Th' king Canutus lies
 here now, and my son is here, and all our neighbors
 24 will be here today at the bridal for alms.

26 *Enter Edricus.*

28 **Edric.** Whoso desires to mount a lofty pitch
 Must bear himself against the stubborn wind,
 30 And shun base common popularity.

32 **Stitch.** Who is this?

34 **Wife.** Oh 'tis my son. – Make ye handsome, tie your
 garters for shame, wipe your shoes, mend your shirt-
 36 band.

38 **Edrick.** Oh let me go to him first. –
 [To Edricus] God save ye, son.

40 **Edric.** [Aside] A pox upon him, 'tis the knave my father. –
 42 Good fellow, hast thou any suit to us?

Deliver up thy supplication.

7-9 : Stitch's parents intend to get him a job his with his
 older sibling.

8: **happed** = happened.
 8-9: **every hair's-breadth** = every inch of him (Sams,
 p. 132).³

9: **vild** = ie. vile, an intensifier.
brave = fine, excellent; but Stitch takes **brave** in its
 alternate meaning of "finely dressed".
i' faith = truly.

11-14 (below): Sams notes that Stitch is acknowledging that
 he and his parents are poorly dressed, filthy and ugly.

11: **we shall be well-met** = "this shall be a fortunate en-
 counter".¹
bravery = fine clothing.
 = excessively.¹
 = endure. = ugly. = ie. curse, damn.
 = lacks an attractive face.

= "I think the same way". = on.
 = Edrick, following Stitch, admits that the members of his
 family are all unattractive.

= is present, ie. holds court.

24: **at the bridal** = at the wedding feast of Canutus and
 Egina.
for alms = seeking alms or handouts.

= rise to a great height.

29: must fight the drag forces that hold him back.
 30: and avoid seeking the admiration of the masses.¹

34: **ye** = ie. yourself.
handsome = attractive.
 34-35: **tie your garters** = Stitch is instructed to fasten
 the bands he wears above or below his knees, and which
 are attached to his stockings to hold them up.

35-36: **mend your shirt-band** = "straighten your collar."¹

42-43: Edricus pretends not to recognize his father.
suit to us = "petition for me".
 = another word for "petition".¹

44	Edrick. Oh sir, ye know me well enough: I am	
46	<u>goodman</u> Edrick, your father.	= title for head of the household. ¹
48	Edric. My father, <u>grout-head</u> ? Sir knave, I say you lie,	= block-head. ¹
50	You <u>whoreson cuckold</u> , you base vagabond,	= bastard. = see the play's text at lines 56-57 below.
52	You slave, you <u>mongrel</u> peasant, dolt and fool,	= contemptible. ¹
54	<u>Can'st thou not know</u> a duke from common men?	= "can't you distinguish or recognize".
56	Wife. [<i>Aside</i>] <u>By my troth</u> , I <u>learned</u> him all these	= truly. = taught.
58	names to call his father when he was a child, and see	54-55: <i>see if he can forget them yet</i> = the Wife is impressed
60	if he can forget them yet! Oh <u>he</u> is a wise man, for in	that Edricus remembers the old insults!
62	<u>faith</u> my husband is <u>none of</u> his father, for indeed a	= ie. Edricus.
64	soldier begot him of me as I went once to a fair. –	= truth. = not.
66	But son, know ye me?	
68	Edric. Thee, old hag, witch, <u>quean</u> , slut, <u>drab</u> , whore	= prostitute. = harlot.
70	and thief:	
72	How should I <u>know</u> thee, <u>black Egyptian</u> ?	61: know = recognize.
74		black Egyptian = Edricus alludes to his mother's
76		dark complexion, which was considered unattractive
78		in Elizabethan times.
80		= ie. "he is just kidding around".
82		tricks = mischievousness or foolishness. ¹
84	Wife. <u>This is his old tricks</u> , husband. – Come, come,	
86	son: I am sure ye know [me].	
88	Edric. Aye, if not too well.	
90	Wherefore comes yon <u>sheep-biter</u> ? –	67: "why is that (yon) ¹ villain approaching me?" or "why
92		has he come here?" Edricus gestures towards Stitch.
94		sheep-biter = malicious fellow; originally referred to
96		a dog that worries sheep. ¹
98		= ie. "I ask you".
100		
102		71: by not claiming kinship with his brother, Stitch may be
104		simply being absurd, but he also likely understands that he
106		is more likely to gain Edricus' confidence by pleading such
108		ignorance.
110		and it like ye = "if it pleases you"; an expression of
112		deference.
114		= pleases.
116		= why.
118		
120		77: "to get him a job working for you."
122		
124		79: gossip = idle talker. ²
126		wants he tongue? = "lacks he a tongue?", ie. "can't
128		he speak for himself?"
130		
132		= "shows", a common alternate form.
134		
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88 *Stitch.* Anything: dress a horse, scour a chamber pot,
 go to plough, thrash, dick and indeed what not.

90 *Edric.* Canst make clean shoes?

92 *Stitch.* Who, I? It is part of my occupation; you win
 my heart. I am a cobbler for need, I can piece a shoe as
 94 well as the best. Wipe a shoe? Look you here else –
 give me your foot.

96

Edric. Stay, not so hasty. –

98 [*Aside*] We that by sly devices mean to mount
 And creep into opinion by deceit

100 Must not of all things have a scholar know
 Our practices; we must suppress good wits
 102 And keep them under; we must favour fools,
 And with promotions win their shallow pates.

104 A ready wit would quickly wind us out,
 And pry into our secret treacheries,
 106 And wade as deep in policy as we.
 But such loose-brained windy-headed slaves;

108 Such block-heads, dolts, fools, dunces, idiots;
 Such logger-headed rogues are best for us;

110 For we may work their wills to what we will
 And win their hearts with gold to anything. –

112 Come hither, Stitch. This villain and quean
 That brought thee hither claim an interest
 114 In my nobility, whenas God knows

My noble father died long since in wars,
 116 Being Duke of Mercia then as I am now.

Therefore – but first to cut off long delays,
 118 I entertain thee for my chamberlain;

= groom. = scrub.¹

88: *go to plough* = plough a field, a common expression.
thrash = thresh, a slang form,³ meaning "to separate
 grain from the husk and straw".¹
dick = Sams suggests *dick* may be slang for *dyke*,
 meaning "to dig ditches".^{1,3}

= when necessary.¹ = mend.¹
 = "if you do not believe me".¹

98-111 (below): Edricus reveals more of his Machiavellian
 philosophy: those who wish to rise in power must not take
 on servants who are too smart; rather, they should employ
 foolish persons who will do anything they are commanded
 to do without question!

97: "hold on, not so fast."

98: *We* = ie. "people like me".
sly devices = sneaky tactics.
 98-99: *mean to...deceit* = "intend to rise and deceit-
 fully insinuate ourselves into the good opinion of others".

= an educated person, ie. an intelligent man.
 = schemes.¹ = keep clever individuals impotent or subdued.¹
 = subservient, subordinate.¹
 = dull minds.

105: a perceptive person (*ready wit*) would soon figure out
 what we are up to (*wind us out*).¹

106: "and get themselves too involved in our business."
 107: *loose-brained* = a unique insult in the literature.
windy-headed = ie. empty-headed.¹
slaves = common term of opprobrium.

= stupid.¹ = "are the best types for people like me to hire."
 = ie. "get them to do anything we want". Note the line's
 fabulous alliteration (which continues with *win* in the
 next line), as well as wordplay with *wills* and *will*.
 = ie. do anything.

= knave and whore, referring to Edricus' parents.
 = here. = ie. assert a connection.
 = when.

115-6: Edricus either seems to know who his real father is,
 or is assuming a fictional ancestry to put off Edrick.
 116: the *Histories* report that King Ethelred had promoted
 Edricus to *Duke of Mercia* in about 1005 A.D.

= ie. "but rather than drag out this discussion any further".
 = hire. = ie. chief personal attendant.

<p>120 And <u>as</u> thou shalt prove <u>secret</u>, <u>trusty</u>, <u>true</u>, I will reward thee with some higher <u>place</u>. But first, to <u>try</u> thee, fetch <u>the constable</u>. –</p> <p>122 Yet stay awhile. – They would suspect the truth. –</p> <p>124 I'll <u>have thee</u>, when thou seest me gone away, Beat these two beggars <u>hence</u>, and teach them how They shall hereafter choose a meaner son.</p> <p>126 Wilt thou be trusty? wilt thou <u>cudgel</u> them?</p> <p>128 Stitch. <u>Never take care for that</u>; I'll beat them, they were never better beaten since they were born.</p> <p>130 Edric. Aye, do so, Stitch, <u>I preethee</u> beat them well,</p> <p>132 <u>Hark ye</u>, and see them whipped out of the town; And if they speak or prattle, curse or rave, 134 For every word give them ten blows, sweet slave.</p> <p>136 [Exit Edricus.]</p> <p>138 Edrick. Oh son, son, <u>stay</u>!</p> <p>140 Stitch. "Son", "son", <u>with a pestilence</u>. You are much like to be his father and you his mother. You brought 142 me hither –</p> <p>144 Edrick. Aye.</p> <p>146 Stitch. – and I must beat you hence, and if you desire to know why, you must hereafter learn to find a 148 meaner man for your son than <u>my lord</u> is.</p> <p>150 [He beats them about the stage.]</p> <p>152 Wife. He <i>is</i> my son. – Oh! Oh! Oh good Stitch, hold thy hand!</p> <p>154 [Exeunt.]</p> <p><u>ACT II, SCENE III.</u></p> <p><i>Southampton.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enter Canutus, Archbishop, Edricus, Uskataulf, and Swetho.</i></p> <p>1 Canut. Then are <u>they</u> gone: 'tis certain they are fled? 2 Turkillus and Leofric, who would have thought it?</p>	<p>= if. = discreet. = trustworthy. = loyal. = position, office. = test. = an arresting officer.</p> <p>122: Edricus reconsiders his order: if anyone hears the old couple claim to be his parents, a seed of suspicion will be planted at the court; therefore, he needs to get his parents out of town as quickly as possible. The second clause in this line may be spoken as an aside.</p> <p>= "want you to". = from here.</p> <p>125: in the future, Edrick and his Wife should select a man of lower station to claim as their son. = beat.</p> <p>= "do not worry about that."</p> <p>= please; preethee was a common alternate version of prithe. = ie. "hear me".</p> <p>133-4: Edricus' part in the scene ends with a rhyming couplet.</p> <p>136: stage direction added by editor.</p> <p>= "stop", "do not do this".</p> <p>140: with a pestilence = with a curse; a common intensifier. 140-1: much like = "very likely" (ironic).</p> <p>144, 146: Sams notes the wordplay of Aye with I.</p> <p>= title for Stitch's employer.</p> <p>= ie. Leofric and Turkillus.</p>
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4	Did I not <u>use</u> them well, <u>gave them good words</u> , Rewarded their endeavors, and besides Graced them as much as any <u>parson</u> here?	= treat. = "complimented them". = ie. person, a common variant.
6		
8	Edric. You used them <u>but</u> too well, and let me say Your lenity did cause them run away.	= only,
10	Canut. Have we not <u>pledges of their loyalty</u> ?	= ie. the men's sons as hostages to guarantee their loyalty.
12	Edric. Ye have, my lord.	
14	Canut. Their eldest sons, I think?	
16	Edric. True, but <u>they</u> know you are too merciful.	= ie. Leofric and Turkillus.
18	Canut. They are deceived, for since they have disturbed The <u>settled solace</u> of our marriage day, And daunted our determined <u>merriments</u> With <u>causeless flight</u> , <u>to plague their fathers' fact</u> ,	= established pleasure. = festivities. ¹ 21: causeless flight = ie. they had no reason to flee. to plague...fact = ie. "then, in order to punish their fathers' deed (fact)".
22	I'll lay the treason on their children's back, And make their guiltless shoulders bear the <u>burthen</u> . –	= ie. burden, a common variation.
24	Fetch me the pledges, Swetho, and with them Some bloody varlet from the Danish <u>host</u> ,	25: "also bring back some bloodthirsty rogue from among the Danish soldiers". host = army.
26	And let him bring an axe, a block and knife Along with him, but do it quickly, Swetho, And <u>come again</u> as fast.	= return.
28		
30	Edric. What doth your grace intend to do with them?	
32	Canut. I'll cut their hands and noses off.	32ff: the following incident was inspired by a brief mention in each of the <i>Histories</i> of Canute cutting off the hands and noses of the pledges his father Sveyn had entrusted into his safekeeping.
34	Edric. Your <u>judgment</u> doth not far enough extend Unto the height of runaways' desert.	34-35: the penalty is not severe enough, failing to reach the level of punishment Leofric and Turkillus deserve. judgment = sentence.
36	Death is too light a punishment for traitors, And loss of hands and nose is less than death.	
38		
40	Uska. If an honest man had said so, I would Have liked it never the worse.	39-40: "even if a less sycophantic man had given this advice, I could not disagree more." This line may be spoken as an aside.
42	Canut. This punishment is worse than loss of life, For it is a <u>stinging corsive</u> to their souls As often as they do behold themselves <u>Lopped</u> and <u>bereft</u> of <u>those two ornaments</u> Which necessary use doth daily crave.	42-46 (below): the punishment is worse than death, because the boys will suffer unmitigated agony every time they look at their stumps, or think about how they have been robbed of their hands, which they need on a daily basis. = painful and sharp corrosive. = truncated, maimed. ¹ = robbed. = ie. their hands.
44		
46		

48 50	<p>Again, it giveth others daily cause To think how traitors should be handled, Whereas the memory of present death Is quickly buried in oblivion, Doing no good but whilst it is in doing.</p>	<p>47-51: such punishment acts as a continuous visual reminder to all who see them of the consequences of betraying their king; if Canutus has the boys killed, however, then the incident will be quickly forgotten.</p>
		<p>52-64 (below): a lengthy analogy: just as, if you trim a healthy tree (line 53), each removed branch will be replaced by several others (lines 54-55), if you execute a traitor (line 58), others will take his place (line 59). However, if you mutilate a tree severely enough, it will die on its own (lines 56-57); similarly, a disfigured rebel will serve as a visible message to all who see him as to the high price to be paid by revolutionary activity, thus suppressing further rebellion.</p>
52 54	<p>A traitor may be likened to a tree, Which being <u>shred</u> and <u>topped</u> when it is green, Doth for one twig which from the same was cut Yield twenty <u>arms</u>, yea twenty arms for one,</p>	<p>= pruned.¹ = the top lopped away. = branches, but also suggestive of human arms: Sams notes the interesting blending of arboreal and anatomical imagery, which continues below with <i>stock</i> in line 59.</p>
56	<p>But being hacked and mangled with an axe, The root straight dies and <u>piecemeal</u> rots away.</p>	<p>= piece-by-piece, ie. bit by bit.</p>
58	<p>Even so of traitors: <u>cut me off</u> their heads,</p>	<p>= ie. "cut off"; the reflexive <i>me</i> is an intensifier, suggesting a higher level of the speaker's interest in seeing the action completed; it also offers the dramatist an extra syllable to help fill out the line's meter.</p>
	<p>Still more out of the self-same <u>stock</u> will sprout,</p>	<p>= line of descent, family; but <i>stock</i> also means "tree trunk" or "stump", continuing the arboreal metaphor with <i>sprout</i>. Note also line 59's wonderful alliteration.</p>
60 62	<p>But <u>plague</u> them with the loss of <u>needful members</u> As eyes, nose, hands, ears, feet or any such; Oh these are <u>cutting</u> cards unto their souls,</p>	<p>= punish. = necessary (ie. indispensable) parts of the body. = an unclear adjective, perhaps suggesting something that painfully checks the victims' souls. Sams wonders if a <i>cutting card</i> is similar to Shakespeare's <i>cooling card</i> of <i>Henry VI, Part I</i>, which the Crystals² define as "something that dashes an opponent's hope of success" (p. 99).</p>
	<p><u>Earmark</u> to know a traitorous villain by,</p>	<p>63: such disfigurements act as an identifying mark (<i>ear-mark</i>) by which traitors may be recognized.</p>
64	<p>Even as a brand is to <u>descry</u> a thief.</p>	<p>64: just as the mark left by a branding iron allows one to discern (<i>descry</i>) a thief. Contemporary literature refers to thieves being branded on the hand.</p>
66 68	<p>These <u>desperate</u> persons, for example's sake, These ruffians, these <u>all-daring lusty bloods</u>, These <u>court appendixes</u>, these madcap lads, These nothing-fearing <u>hotspurs</u> that attend</p>	<p>65-78 (below): any rogue will laugh off a hanging or beheading, or even a quartering (because death in such cases is instant), but they will desperately seek to avoid a sentence of maiming. = irreclaimable.¹ = hot-blooded or spirited fellows that dare to do anything. = appendages or hangers-on of the court.¹ = rash individuals.¹</p>

<p>70 Our royal court – <u>tell them of hanging cheer</u>, They'll say <u>it is a trick or two</u> above ground; Tell them of quartering or the <u>heading</u> axe, 72 They'll swear beheading is a gallant death, And <u>he is a dastard</u> that doth fear to die; 74 But say to them, "you shall be branded, Or your hands cut off, or your nostrils slit;" 76 Then <u>shallow fear</u> makes their quivering tongues</p> <p>To speak abruptly – "rather let us die, 78 Than we should suffer this vild <u>ignomy</u>."</p> <p>A valiant heart <u>esteemeth light of death</u>, 80 But honourable minds are <u>jealous</u></p> <p>Of honourable <u>names</u>: then to be <u>marked</u>, 82 Which robs them of their honours, likewise robs Their hearts of joy; and like to <u>irksome</u> owls, 84 They will be bashful to be seen <u>abroad</u>.</p> <p>86 <i>Uska.</i> Alas, poor souls, it was against their wills That their hard-hearted fathers broke the league. 88</p> <p><i>Edric.</i> Alas, poor souls, it is against their wills 90 That they must lose their noses and their hands.</p> <p>92 <i>Enter Swetho, the two pledges, and Stitch with an axe.</i></p> <p>94 <i>Canut.</i> Come on, gentlemen: 'cause I have found Your fathers <u>trusty</u> as they promised 96 Unto my father and to me, Therefore I mean to make you worthy men, 98 Such as the world shall afterward <u>report</u> Did suffer torments for their country's good. 100 Come on, I say, prepare your <u>visages</u></p> <p>To bear the <u>tokens</u> of <u>eternity</u>;</p> <p>102 Prepare your noses, bid your hands adieu, Because your sires have proved themselves so true. 104</p> <p><i>Ist Pledge.</i> Rather than this, oh kill us <u>presently</u>; 106 These being gone, we do abhor our lives, And <u>having these</u>, we loathe to live accursed,</p>	<p>= jocularly, "inform them they will be hanged". = ie. hanging is nothing but a trifle. = ie. beheading.</p> <p>= pronounce as <i>he's</i>. = coward.</p> <p>= fear which lurks just below the surface appearance of bravado, or visceral fear;³ <i>fear</i> is a disyllable here: <i>FE-er</i>.</p> <p>= humiliation; a now-obsolete shortened variant of <i>ignominy</i>.¹ = judges death to be a trifle. = protective; a variant of <i>jealous</i>; the unusual (but not unique) spelling suggests it should be pronounced as a trisyllable: <i>JEA-li-ous</i>. = fame, credit.² = ie. by disfigurement.</p> <p>83-84: <i>and like to...abroad</i> = ie. and like owls, the boys will be too shy to appear in public (<i>abroad</i>). The owl was not really considered <i>bashful</i>: the allusion is more likely to this creature's habit of only coming out at night. <i>irksome</i> = loathsome.¹</p> <p>86-87: <i>it was...league</i> = the boys did not desire for their fathers to break their alliance or bond with Canutus.</p> <p>89-90: Edricus is sarcastic.</p> <p>= trustworthy, reliable (ironic).</p> <p>= relate, tell the story of.</p> <p>= countenances, faces.</p> <p>101: Sams cites Everitt, who thought that <i>eternity</i> refers to a noseless face's resemblance to a skull: hence, the boys' faces will bear the marks (<i>tokens</i>) of death.</p> <p>102-3: Canutus' speech ends with a rhyming couplet.</p> <p>105-8 (below): the boys find themselves in a no-win situation: on the one hand, life would unbearable without their hands; on the other hand, even if they kept their hands, the burden of the treason of their fathers would pass down to the sons, destroying their (ie. the boys') reputations as well.</p> <p>= immediately. 106: ie. "without our hands, we would hate to live". = ie. retaining their appendages.</p>
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108	<u>Accompted</u> traitors to our native soil.	= judged, considered.
110	Suffer us first to <u>try</u> our <u>stripling</u> force With any giant of your <u>Cyclops'</u> size,	109-110: the first son begs for the opportunity to engage the largest and most powerful man in Canutus' service in single combat. <i>Suffer</i> = allow. <i>try</i> = test. <i>stripling force</i> = strength of a lad just passing from boyhood to manhood. ¹ <i>Cyclops'</i> = the <i>Cyclops</i> were the familiar one-eyed giants of myth.
112	And let our arms fight once before our deaths To <u>wreak</u> their <u>malice</u> on <u>their masters'</u> foes, So let us perish <u>like to</u> gentlemen,	= vent their wrath. = ie. the boys'. = ie. like.
114	Like to ourselves, and like to Englishmen.	
116	Canut. Look how cold water cast on burning coals Doth make the fire more fervently to flame;	116-7: note the fine alliteration within each of these lines.
118	<u>Even so</u> your tears doth add unto my rage, And makes it hotter when it 'gins to cool.	= similarly.
120	'Tis not my pleasure you should suffer death, 'Cause I believe 'twould ease your fathers' griefs;	
122	'Tis not my pleasure you should <u>try your powers</u> So I should give you honours undeserved,	= "test your strength".
124	And you perchance might so redeem yourselves; But you shall see our <u>judgments straight</u> performed. –	= sentences. = immediately. = "administer the sentence at once!"
126	Do execution on them presently! – I'll teach your fathers if they do not know	
128	What 'tis to violate a lawful oath. I'll teach them what it is to <u>play</u> with kings,	= trifle. = ie. assuming any transgression will be forgiven. = "why are you wasting time, ie. hesitating?"
130	<u>Presuming on their mercy</u> : – come I say, <u>What trifle ye?</u> Delay no more the time,	
132	For you must suffer for your fathers' crime.	
134	2nd Pledge. What sir, must you cut off my hands?	
136	Stitch. Aye, and your noses too, 'twere pity in faith to mar two such faces. Boys, will you <u>change</u> beards with	= exchange.
138	me?	
140	1st Pledge. You shall not touch my nose with those base hands: By Heaven, I'll sooner cut it off myself!	
142	Stitch. You will think a worse pair than these a good pair ere night. – How they'll look when their noses	143-4: You will...night = before evening falls, the boys would be grateful to have uglier noses than the ones they now possess – and are about to lose.
144	be off! <u>Everyone will take them for Frenchmen.</u>	= ie. everyone will think the boys have venereal disease; a common joke about VD, one of whose symptoms was the wasting away of the cartilage in the nose, causing it to collapse. Elizabethan humour associated the widespread existence of sexually transmitted disease with the French, often referring to it by the shorthand expression, <i>French pox</i> .
146	Canut. <u>Dispatch</u> , I say, I must not stay so long:	= "get it done".
148	The <u>more</u> you delay the time, the worse you <u>speed</u> .	= possibly a disyllable: <i>MO-er</i> . = ie. "will fare or prosper."

150	Ist Pledge. Give me the axe, I'll quickly execute This <u>direful</u> judgment on my <u>guiltless</u> hands.	= terrible. ¹ = innocent.
152		
154	Stitch. With all my heart, you save me a labour.	153: Stitch begins to hand the axe to the first Pledge.
156	Canut. [To <i>Stitch</i>] Stay, <u>unadvised</u> villain, hold thy hand, Or I will hack thee <u>piecemeal</u> with thy axe.	= "wait a minute". = rash. ¹ = into pieces.
158	Why, art thou mad, to give thy enemy An instrument to kill thyself and me? Cut off his hands first, then <u>deliver it him</u> .	= "give the axe to him;" deliver is a disyllable: <i>de-li'er</i> .
160		
162	[<i>Stitch cuts off one hand.</i>]	
164	So, cut off th' other.	
166	[<i>Stitch cuts off the other hand.</i>]	
168	Now, sir, fight <u>your fill</u> .	= "to your satisfaction."
170	Ist Pledge. Let these my stumps crave vengeance at thy hands, Thou judge of judges and thou king of kings!	169-170: spoken to God.
172	Canut. Cut off his nose, then let him pray again: <u>Perchance</u> his praying mitigates his pain.	= perhaps.
174		
176	[<i>Stitch cuts off his nose.</i>]	
178	Ist Pledge. Pour thy vengeance on this bloody Dane, And let him die <u>some unheard monstrous death!</u>	= a death so awful that it had never been seen or heard of before.
180	Canut. Make quick dispatch to <u>execute</u> the other. – <u>I am</u> sure you will not now be pardonèd?	= ie. execute the sentence upon. = pronounce as <i>I'm</i> .
182	2nd Pledge. Not I, thou <u>murthering</u> stony- <u>hearted</u> Dane.	183: murthering = ie. murdering; murther was a common alternate form of murder . hearted = the MS prints hated here, emended to hearted by Sams.
184	I am <u>resolved</u> to suffer this and more To do my father or my country good; They gave me life; for them I'll shed my blood.	= determined, decided.
186		
188	[<i>Stitch cuts off his hands and nose.</i>]	
190	Ist Pledge. Now thou hast spit thy venom, bloody king, We do <u>return</u> defiance in thy face.	= the MS prints retone , emended by Sams as shown.
192		
194	Canut. Sirs, temper well your tongues and be advised; If not, I'll cut them shorter by an inch. Remember that you both have lost your hands Because your fathers did abuse their tongues	
196		
198	In perjury; go quickly away And tell your traitorous fathers what I say.	196-7: your fathers...perjury = ie. they violated their oaths to serve Canutus loyally. 197-204: the Pledges' portion of the scene ends with three consecutive rhyming couplets.

<p>200 2nd Pledge. We go but to thy cost, proud Danish Canute, Throughout this isle thy tyranny to <u>bruit</u>.</p>	<p>200-1: ie. the boys will spread the news (bruit) of Canutus' cruelty throughout Britain, to the king's detriment. bruit = pronounced like <i>brute</i>, so as to rhyme with <i>Canute</i>.</p>
<p>202 204 Ist Pledge. We go thy cruël butchery to <u>ring</u>. – Oh England, never trust a foreign king.</p>	<p>= proclaim.</p>
<p>206 [Exeunt Pledges.]</p>	
<p>208 Edric. Ha, ha, ha.</p>	
<p>210 Canut. Why laughest thou, Edricus?</p>	
<p>212 Edric. I cannot <u>choose</u>, to see the villains rave.</p>	<p>= help it.</p>
<p>214 Stitch. And I must <u>needs</u> laugh to bear my master company.</p>	<p>= necessarily; Stitch may laugh here too.</p>
<p>216 <i>Enter a messenger running.</i></p>	
<p>218 Canut. What news with thee?</p>	
<p>220 Mess. Renowndèd Canutus, thy forces in the north, 222 Which thou didst send 'gainst Edmund Ironside, Are <u>clean dispersed</u> and <u>piecemeal overthrown</u></p>	<p>223: are completely (clean) scattered or routed (dispersed) and defeated in detail, or into pieces (piecemeal overthrown).¹</p>
<p>224 By him, as these letters <u>signify</u>.</p>	<p>= announce, report.</p>
<p>226 [Canutus reads letters.]</p>	
<p>228 Canut. 'Tis wonderful, what, twenty thousand slain Of common soldiers? This unwelcome news 230 <u>Nips</u> like a <u>hoary frost</u> our <u>springing</u> hopes</p>	<p>= ironic again. 230: "kills off my growing expectations." Nips = cuts off; the line is an example of a wonderfully dense poetic metaphor: the word nip was used both literally to describe the killing off of a growing plant, but also figuratively to describe anything that was cut short; here, the meanings are blended by metaphorically describing Canutus' expectations, which have been brutally cut off by Edricus' news, as if they were plants being destroyed by frost.</p>
<p>And makes my fearful soldiers <u>hang their heads</u>. –</p>	<p>= ie. in shame; the botanical metaphor is concluded, as the demoralized soldiers are implicitly compared to drooping flowers.</p>
	<p>228-231 (above): the <i>Histories</i> mention no battles between King Edmund and the Danish forces at which Canute was not present. The figure of 20,000 dead was perhaps borrowed from Holinshed, who stated that at least this number of men died on each side at the later battle of</p>

<p>232</p> <p>234</p> <p>236</p> <p>238</p> <p>240</p> <p>242</p> <p>244</p> <p>246</p> <p>248</p> <p>250</p> <p>252</p> <p>254</p> <p>256</p> <p>258</p> <p>260</p>	<p>Come hither, <u>Edricus</u>, <u>void the company</u></p> <p>That you and I may talk in secrecy.</p> <p>[<i>Exit omnes; manet Canutus and Edricus.</i>]</p> <p>Ah, Edricus, what had I best to do To <u>race out</u> this dishonourable <u>blot</u></p> <p>Out of the brass-leaved book of <u>living</u> fame?</p> <p>Shall it be said hereafter when <u>Report</u> Shall celebrate my noble father's acts, That Canutus did lose what noble Swanus <u>got</u>? Shall it be said that Edmund Ironside, Unfriended, poor, forsaken, desolate, Did overthrow the <u>power</u> of mighty Canutus, Whose wealth was great, friends more, but forces most?</p> <p>Never since Edmund was <u>of force</u> to bear A <u>massy</u> helmet and a <u>curtle-axe</u> Could I return a victor from the field, Unless, as I remember, thou betrayedst The gallant <u>stripling</u> once into <u>our</u> hands.</p> <p>Then had not valour hewed him through our troops, That day had made an end of all our griefs;</p> <p>But now, what now? Oh tell me if thou knowest How shall I <u>extrIBUTE my stock and name</u></p> <p>That <u>after-age</u> may not report my shame?</p> <p>Edric. Despair not, noble king, <u>time comes in time.</u></p> <p>Know ye not 'tis a <u>deed of policy</u></p> <p>In fickle <u>Chance</u> to <u>cross your mightiness</u>, For else in time you might <u>dismount</u> the queen,</p>	<p>Scorastan.</p> <p>232: Edricus = may be emended to Edric to mend the line's meter. void the company = send everyone away.</p> <p>235: all exit except Canutus and Edricus; manet = remain.</p> <p>238: race out = erase. blot = (1) literal blot, as of ink; and (2) stain, as on the king's reputation.</p> <p>239: common allusion to an imagined universal register of those who enjoy great renown. living = present, contemporary.¹</p> <p>= ie. personified Reputation.¹</p> <p>= obtained, ie. won.</p> <p>= army.</p> <p>247-251 (below): Canutus has never defeated Edmund in battle without the help of Edricus betraying his ostensible boss (Edmund) through treachery.</p> <p>= strong enough, ie. old enough. = heavy. = short, broad sword.¹</p> <p>= youngster. = ie. "my".</p> <p>252-3: "if Edmund had not bravely fought his way through my soldiers, thus escaping capture, then all my troubles would have ended."</p> <p>= perhaps, "reclaim the reputation of me and my family (stock)"; extrIBUTE is an unknown word, appearing neither in the OED, nor elsewhere in contemporary literature.</p> <p>= history.</p> <p>= ie. opportunity arrives eventually.</p> <p>259-263 (below): Edricus presents the traditional image of Fortune as a female deity spinning her wheel, raising the conditions and luck of some while lowering those of others, seemingly without rhyme or reason – hence her sobriquet of fickle (line 260).</p> <p>= strategic act.</p> <p>260-3: Fortune (Chance) acts to thwart (cross) Canutus (his mightiness), because she worries that the king might</p>
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262	And throw her headlong from <u>her rolling stone</u> , And take her whirling wheel into your hand.	<p>overthrow her, thus taking his fate into his own hands, which the goddess cannot abide. <i>dismount</i> = cast down.² <i>her rolling stone</i> = Fortune was also frequently imagined to be resting her foot on a continuously <i>rolling</i> spherical <i>stone</i>, which "symbolizes her continual, restless, motion" (Sawday, p. 155).¹³</p>
264	I tell your grace, Chance ever <u>envies</u> wise men And <u>favours fools</u> , promoting them <u>aloft</u> .	<p>264-5: the idea that Fortune always protects or <i>favours</i> <i>fools</i> was proverbial. <i>envies</i> = hates. <i>aloft</i> = to great honours and high positions.</p>
266	But as for this <u>flea-spot of dishonour</u> , The greatest monarchs have endured <u>more</u> ,	<p>= Edricus dismisses <i>dishonour</i> as a trivial matter. <i>flea-spot</i> = the red mark left by a flea-bite. = ie. worse events.</p>
268	<u>Even blinking Philip's son</u> , and many more	<p>= reference to Alexander the Great, whose father, King <i>Philip</i> of Macedonia, famously lost an eye in battle, hence the description of him as <i>blinking</i>, meaning "weak-eyed" or "visually impaired".¹</p>
270	<p>Whose repetitiön were needless to recite.</p> <p><i>Canut.</i> I preethee flatter still, on, on, what more? Speak we of Fortune, honest sycophant? Chance favoureth not a fool in favouring thee;</p>	<p>At first glance, it makes no sense for Edricus to raise the example of Alexander, who suffered no such defeat like the one Canutus just suffered; Edricus' intent is likely simply to engage in gross flattery by indirectly comparing Canutus to the great Macedonian. Sams thinks the allusion is to Alexander's killing his long-time friend and general, Clitus, in a drunken rage; Alexander greatly regretted this action, even thinking of killing himself after he sobered up.⁹</p>
270		<p>269: ie. "of which I have no need to tell you, as you already know it."</p>
272		<p>= "please flatter me always".</p>
274	Thy flattery is gracious in her eye. –	<p>273: a compliment: Edricus, having risen to the position of the king's number-one advisor, is obviously no fool, yet Fortune has favoured him.</p>
276	<p>Come hither, Edricus. Oh strange miracle: See you not in the heavens <u>prodigious</u> signs? Look how the sun looks pale, the moon shines red, The stars appear in the perturbèd Heaven Like little comets, and <u>not twelve o'clock</u>. What is the cause then, that the stars are seen?</p>	<p>274: Fortune, approving Edricus' sycophancy, has treated him well!</p>
276		<p>= portentous, ominous.</p>
278		<p>= ie. it is still but morning.</p>
280		
282	<i>Edric.</i> I see them well, my lord, yet know no cause, Unless it <u>shews</u> the fall of Ironside.	<p>= presages, foretells.</p>
284	<i>Canut.</i> Surely it doth. Look now, they are all gone.	
286	'Tis night, 'tis dark, beware ye stumble not;	<p>286: Sams recognizes a biblical allusion here; see John 11:10: "<i>But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.</i>"</p>
288	Lend me your hand, but first go fetch a torch To light me to my tent; <u>make haste I pray</u> . –	<p>= "hurry, I beseech you."</p>

290 [Exit Edricus.]

292 He's gone to fetch a torch to light the day!

292: Canutus lets on that he is play-acting regarding his visions; this line concludes a rhyming couplet begun in line 288.

294 Enter Edricus.

296 **Edric.** My lord, the misty vapours were so thick,
They almost quenched the torch.

= extinguished.

298 **Canut.** True as all the rest. I say thy wit is thick.

299: **True as all the rest** = what Edricus just said is as truthful as everything else he has been saying – that is, not at all!

thy wit is thick = "you are stupid."

300 Gross flattery, all-soothing sycophant,
Doth blind thy eyes, and will not let thee see
302 That others see thou art a flatterer.
Amend, amend thy life; learn to speak truth.
304 For shame do not, in thy declining age –
Children may see thy lies, they are so plain.
306 Oh whilst ye live, from flattery refrain.

= open, obvious. = ever-humouring.

308 **Edric.** It stands not with my zeal and plighted faith
Otherwise to say than as your highness saith:

308-9: "it would be inconsistent with my eagerness and vowed loyalty for me to disagree with anything you say."

310 Your grace is able to give all their due,
To make truth lie and likewise make lies true.

310-1: as king, Canutus has the power to decide what is true and what is false.

312 **Canut.** I would it lay in me to make thee true,

313: "I wish I had the power to turn you into a truth-teller".

314 But who can change the Ethiopian's hue?

314: Sams identifies another, and more familiar, biblical allusion, this time Jeremiah 13:23: "*Can the black Moor change his skin? or the leopard his spots?*"

the Ethiopian's hue = the colour of a black man.

316 [Exeunt.]

END of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Somewhere in England.

*Enter at one door the Archbishop of Canterbury,
at the other the Archbishop of York.*

1 **A. of Cant.** Why bends not the presumptuous knee of York
2 When Canterbury speaks? Cannot the curse
Of God and me, the metropolitan
4 Under the Pope of all dominiöns
Within this realm of England, cause thee fear,
6 Proud, irreligious prelate? Know my power
Stretcheth beyond thy compass even as much

8 As Rome doth mine. Then quiver when I curse,
And like a child indeed prostrate thyself
10 Before my feet, that thy humility
May move me to absolve thy former sins
12 And set thee free from hell's damnatiön.

14 **A. of York.** Traitor to God and to thy lawful king,
Where thou dost bless I curse, where curse I bless.

16 As thou art bishop, my commissiön
Stretcheth as far as thine, and let me say
18 Unless thou leave thy contumelious threats –

Further than mine? No, Canterbury, no,

20 I humble me to God and not to thee, –
A traitor, a betrayer of his king,
22 A rebel, a profane priest, a Pharisee,

Scene I: in this fictional scene, the archbishops of Canterbury and York meet and argue. The two clerics are fierce partisans of Canutus and Edmund respectively.

Entering Characters: we have met the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, who works for Canutus. His rival, the *Archbishop of York*, is loyal to Edmund.

1-5 (below): the argument between the two clerics rests in part over whether or not Canterbury has authority over York; in the 5th century, the early Christian church had divided England into two distinct and equal "provinces", each of which was presided over by its own archbishop – one at Canterbury, the other at York. The bishopric of Canterbury was not granted supremacy until the Reformation in the 16th century, when Henry VIII converted the Catholic prelates to Protestantism.⁷

Note how the two archbishops address each other with the disrespectful *thee* to underscore their mutual hatred.

1: "why do you not kneel to me?"

= early name for the head bishop of a province.¹
= territory, lands.¹

6: *irreligious* = practicing a false religion.^{1,3}

6-7: *Know my...compass* = Canterbury asserts that his wide-ranging authority (*power*) extends to include York's territory.

compass = boundaries, range.²

= persuade.

= ie. Edmund.

15: perhaps a deliberate perversion of Genesis 12:3, which begins, "*I will also bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee*".

= authority.¹

= ie. is equal to.

= cease. = insolent.¹

= York may ask this with incredulity, as if he just suddenly registered the fact that Canterbury has outrageously asserted his authority over York.

= myself.

= the *Pharisees* comprised a Jewish sect that believed in the strictest interpretation of the Mosaic Law. Because the Pharisees rejected Jesus' teachings, their name came to be used as a term of opprobrium. York sees Canterbury as

24 A parasite, an enemy to peace,
A foe to truth and to religion:
I say I will not bend to him,
26 And such a one art thou, and therefore hear,
Unless repentance bend thy stubborn heart,
28 I here pronounce the curse of God and man
Upon thy soul; and so farewell and mend.

[York offers to depart.]

32 **A. of Cant.** Stay, York, and hear me speak. Thy puffy
words,
34 Thy windy threats, thy railing curses, light
Upon thy stubborn neck, unless with speed
36 Thou dost forsake the part of Ironside
And cleave unto Canutus; and more, submit thyself
38 To me thy head, and to our mother church. –
Reply not, bishop, for I seal thy lips
40 With my irrevocable bitter curse,
If one untoward word slip from thy tongue.

42 **A. of York.** So heapest thou coal of fire upon thy head

44 And blesest me with cursing, impious priest.
Oh let me die whenas I leave my king,
46 A true-born prince, for any foreigner.

48 **A. of Cant.** Oh I could eat thee. Now my crozier staff

Longs to be pelting that old hoary pate.

50 My hands do quake with rage.

52 **A. of York.** You are a champion for the devil and Canutus;
I fly not from thy curses but thy strokes.

[Exit York.]

56 **A. of Cant.** I'll follow thee with curses and with clubs.

58 [Exit Canterbury.]

ACT III, SCENE II.

profaning the church.

One may omit the line's second *a* to repair its meter.

= submit.²

= alter, redirect.²

= "reform thyself", ie. "atone for your sins."

= begins.

= bombastic, suggestive of a "puff of wind".¹

= flimsy, frivolous.¹ = will fall, ie. redound.

= side.

= should probably be emended to *Canute* to repair the meter.

= perverse, unruly.¹

43: metaphorically, Canterbury should be causing himself to burn with shame.

Sams identifies the allusion to Proverbs 21-22: "*If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt lay coals upon his head, and the Lord shall recompense thee*" (ie. the hater shall be ashamed for the way he has treated you).¹²

heapest = pronounce as *heap'st*.

= wicked, irreverent.¹

= when. = abandon.

48: **eat** = ie. destroy.¹

crozier staff = staff or crook of a bishop;¹ **crozier** was the original and preferred alternate form of **crozier** in the 16th century.

49: **be pelting** = strike (repeatedly) or beat.

that old hoary pate = "your old white-haired head."

= one who fights on behalf of another.

= run. = blows.

Outside the Gates of London.

*Enter Canutus, Southampton, Edricus, Uskataulf,
Swetho, Herald-at-Arms and soldiers.*

1 **Canut.** Go to yon city which we mean to sack:

2 New Troy, the state of Edmund Ironside;

Command a parley at the city gates;

4 Bid them choose whether they will let us in,
Or else withstand the utmost of our wrath,
6 And be consumed to ashes and to coals
With flaming fire, which whilom did destroy
8 Their mother city, quondam callèd Troy.

10 [The Herald departeth from the king
to the walls sounding his trumpet.
12 The bailiffs appear above.]

14 **Herald.** Canutus, king of England, prince of Danes,
Greets you by me, his trusty messenger,
16 Commanding you to serve him as your lord,

Bidding you wait on him as on your king,
18 And you shall be entreated lovingly;
If not, he is prepared with fire and sword
20 To race your city. Thus he sends you word.

22 **Ist Bail.** Go tell your master thus we answer him:
His ships that proudly ride upon the Thames
24 Shall anchor on the ground where he abides,
Borne by the blood shed of our carcasses,

26 And we compelled by thirst to suck the stream
Of this fair river dry, so that his men
28 May dry-shod march over the floating deeps

Scene II: having been crowned king in London, Edmund assembled an army and marched west to reclaim his lands. Canute, who in response had himself crowned in Southampton, moved his own army to besiege London.

Entering Characters: the traditional responsibilities of a *herald-at-arms* was to make proclamations, arrange public processions, etc;¹ here the Herald is simply Canutus' messenger.

= yonder city, ie. "that city over there".

2: *New Troy* = ie. London; an allusion to the mythological belief that London was founded by Brutus, a descendant of the Trojan prince Aeneas.

state of...Ironside = territory controlled by Edmund.¹

3: it was traditional for the leaders of two armies to negotiate a settlement before battle, as a means for each side to avoid incurring the uncertainty and expense (in both lives and money) of combat. Stage generals often used *parleys* as an opportunity to exchange insults and improbably demand the surrender of the enemy.

= command.

= smouldering embers.^{1,2}

= once upon a time.

= formerly.

10-12: the *bailiffs* (chief magistrates of the city)¹ enter into view on the stage's balcony, which frequently stood in for city or fortress *walls*.

= to submit to Canutus, and in so doing acknowledge their status as his vassals.

= serve or attend him, ie. submit to his authority.

= treated graciously.

= erase, ie. wipe out.

= carried. = from, by.

26-28: a hyperbolic image of the English army drinking the Thames dry, permitting Canutus' soldiers to walk across the river bed without wetting their feet (*dry-shod*). Sams notes that the inspiration for this passage may have derived from Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part I*, in which the eponymous conqueror, borrowing from the ancient historian Herodotus, observed that the Persian king Xerxes invaded Greece with so many men that his army was said "*to have drank the mighty Parthian Araris*".

to suck (line 26) = ie. shall suck.

30 Ere we will let him enter in these gates,
 Or ope our lips to call him sovereign.
 Tell him we are resolved to keep him back;
 32 Tell him we are no traitors, but are sworn
 To be King Edmund's liege-men while we live,
 34 And if he stay, that shall he soon perceive.

36 **Herald.** Advise you, bailiffs, what is best to do;
 Incur not danger with security.
 38 Canutus is your king: then him obey,
 And to his gentle message say not nay.

40 **Bailiffs.** We are resolved to put Canutus back.
 42 He comes not here; his threats are spent in vain.

44 **Herald.** I fear your wills will put your wits to pain,
 And you repent it when it is too late.

46 **Ist Bail.** You have your answers. – Soldiers, guard the
 gate.

48 *[Bailiffs depart; Herald returneth.]*

50 **Herald.** Their answer, good my lord, is negative,
 52 Full of haughty courage and disdainful pride.
 This little peace hath brought their stomachs up,
 54 Which makes them to disdain your princely mercy.

56 **Canut.** And dare they thus refuse my proffered grace?
 Set they so light by my commandment? –

58 Assault the city, batter down the walls,
Scale all the turrets, rush the gates asunder –
 60 Why slack ye, soldiers? Who is foremost man
 To give a valiant onset on the town?
 62 *[Assail the walls.]*

64 *Enter a Messenger.*

66 **Mess.** Worthy commander of these warlike troops,
 68 Edmund your foe is coming hitherward
 With a choice company of armèd men,
 70 Intending to surprise you suddenly.

72 **Canut.** He is welcome, though I hope unto his cost.
 We are beholding to his excellence
 74 That he vouchsafe for safeguard of his town

floating (line 28) = overflowing.¹
deeps = deep water or river.¹

= open.
 = repel him, ie. stop Canutus from entering the city.

= vassals, faithful subjects.¹
 = ie. "Canutus remains here".

= "reconsider", an imperative.
 = by being over-confident or careless.²

= mild message, ie. generous offer.

= repulse the Danish king.¹
 = "in here", ie. within the city gates.

44: "I am afraid your stubbornness will lead to your own
 undoing".

42-47: the conclusion of the parley is marked by a pair of
 rhyming couplets.

= temporary truce. = fortified their courage.

= offered mercy.

57: "do they think so lightly of my sovereignty?"
commandment = likely a 4-syllable word here (*com-*
MAND-e-ment), as in French.³ We find the same usage in
 Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part I* (Act I.iii.22):
 "From him I have express commandment".

= climb the towers. = ie. break the gates in two.

= Canutus' men hesitate.

= assault, attack.¹

63: according to Holinshed, Canute's men repeatedly
 charged the city walls, but were successfully driven back
 with great loss by the re-energized Londoners, so much so
 that the Danes were forced to abandon their siege.

65ff: the following personal encounter between Edmund and
 Canutus is fictional.

= this way.

= select.

= beholden. = ie. Edmund (ironic).

74-75: that, in order to save London from devastation,

To yield himself without compulsïön.

76 We are as forward and as fit as he
 To give his force an equal counterbuff,
 78 Though he suppose to take us unawares. –

Now, noble lords, or never, shew your might

80 To put his men to sword and him to flight.

82 **South.** He that gives back, let him be slain
 By his next fellow that doth second him.
 84 If Englishmen at first begin to fly,
 Southampton willingly for them will die.

86 **Uska.** This day shall manifestly be known

88 How Danes have better hearts than Englishmen,
 And bodies answerable to the same,
 90 Else let them lose their everlasting fame.

92 **Edric.** The day is yours before the fight begins,
 Great and renownèd prince, fair England's king:
 94 For Emulation, which doth sometime lose,
 Now doth assure you of the victory.

96 See you not how the English lords contend,
 Who should excel in feats of chivalry,
 98 And creep up farthest in your highness' grace?

On thother side, behold brave-minded Danes,

100 Scorning to o'er-match in feats of arms,
 Strive who should compass most by power or wit

102 To amplify your honourable fame.

The soldiers are not slothful in this stir,
 104 But ready, forward prompt and fit to fight,

Expecting gladly that delightsome hour

Edmund is willing to surrender himself to Canutus.
 = eager. = prepared.¹
 77: to match Edmund's forces in an exchange of blows.¹
 78: "though Edmund thinks he is going to surprise us."

79: the expression **now or never** can be traced back at least to the turn of the 14th century.¹
 79-108: this speech and the next three all end with rhyming couplets.

= retreats.
 = follows him or takes his place in the line.¹
 = retreat first.

= Sams suggests emending **be known** to **be made known** to repair this short line's meter.
 = valour for a fight.
 89: and are willing to sacrifice their lives to prove it.

= "you are victorious".

94-95: personified ambition or contention (**Emulation**) sometimes leads one to fail, but not in this case.

96-98 (below): Edricus notes how Canutus' English nobles are competing to prove to Canutus who amongst them is most worthy of the king's good favour.
 In both real and stage battles, noblemen often performed heroic, and frequently foolhardy, acts in order to enhance their honour and reputation.

= climb.

99-102 (below): Canutus' Danish soldiers, on the other hand, prefer to win a battle, and in doing so exalt their king, through strategic maneuvering, rather than a straight-up slug-fest, increasing his power through non-military means.

= ie. the other; commonly written in the 16th century as a single, disyllabic word, as here.
 = out-do (the English).
 = sheer force of arms (the English) or cleverness, ie. strategy (the Danes).
 = augment.

= commotion or impulse.¹
 = eagerly. = ready.
 Compare line 104 to line 76 above, which reads, "We are as **forward** and as **fit** as he".

105-6: Canutus' soldiers are keen for the fray to commence.

106 When they shall grapple with their enemies.

Then in assurance of this happy day,
108 Arm to the fight; it is in vain to stay.

110 **Canut.** I do presume on this to win the field,
But all my striving is to get the crown.

112 [Sound drum within.]

114 Soft, what churlish drum doth ring so rude a peal
116 Within the hearing of our armèd troops?

118 *Enter Edmund with soldiers.*

120 'Tis Edmund! Strike up drums, and trumpets sound!
I'll not delay my hopes with any parley.

122 [Alarum. They fight.
124 *Edmund drives Canutus off the stage.
The drum sounds afar off.*]

ACT III, SCENE III.

Gillingham, then Worcestershire (from line 3).

Enter Chorus, attired in black.

1 **Chorus.** The fight is hot, but Canutus is o'ercome,

2 And Edmund hunts him out from place to place.
3 He flies to Worcester; Edmund follows him.
4 The way is long, and I am waxen faint.
5 I fain would have you understand the truth
6 And see the battles acted on the stage,
7 But that their length will be too tedious;
8 Then in dumb shews I will explain at large
9 Their fights, their flights and Edmund's victory,
10 For as they strived to conquer and to kill,
Even so we strive to purchase your good will.

grapple with = fight hand-to-hand or in close quarters with.¹

= lucky.

= delay.

= ie. Canutus' real goal.

= boorish.¹ = harsh.¹ = "volley of sound" (OED).¹

121: Canutus decides to skip negotiations with Edmund, and go straight into battle.

123-5: after Ethelred's death, the armies of King Edmund and Canutus fought six major battles. The stage battle portrayed here corresponds with the first of the clashes, which took place at Gillingham in Dorsetshire (about 113 miles west of London), at which Edmund was victorious, driving the Danish army off the field.

Entering Character: the **Chorus** traditionally comprised a single actor who entered the stage and spoke directly to the audience.

The format of this scene hearkens back to early English Renaissance plays, such as *Gorboduc* (1561), in which certain scenes were performed as "dumb shows", or pantomimed, while the Chorus describe the events on the stage. A dumb show was employed as a way to speed the action along, or to visually accompany a narration of key developments in the plot.

1: **hot** = fierce.

Canutus = should be emended to **Canute** for the sake of the meter.

o'ercome = defeated.

= Canutus flees. = see the note at for lines 13-16 below.

= growing.

= gladly.¹

= fully.¹

= retreats; note the wordplay of **fights** and **flights**.

= obtain.²

12		
14	[<i>Alarums.</i> <i>Enter Canutus flying, Edmund following.</i> <i>They fight. The two kings parley,</i> <i>sound a retreat and part.]</i>	13-16 (below): the following dumb show represents the first day of the second battle between Edmund and Canutus, fought at Scorastan in Worcestershire, on 24 June 1016. As suggested in the Chorus' following speech (lines 18-24 below), the contest was fought over two consecutive days. = fleeing. = formally converse. = a drum signals a retreat. = separate.
16		
18	Chorus. Canutus is <u>beholding</u> to the gracious sun, Who, grieved to see such <u>heaps of carcasses</u> Lie mangled and besmearèd in their gore, Made haste and went to rest before <u>his</u> time, So that the kings for <u>want</u> of light agreed To part until <u>Aurora raise the lark</u> , And now 'tis morning and they join to fight.	18-24 (below): darkness arrived early, so the combatants agreed to a ceasefire, and to resume combat in the morning. 18: Canutus, who has been badly bloodied, is obliged or beholden (beholding) to the sun for setting. = this language is adapted from Holinshed, who wrote of the day after the battle ended, that the soldiers " <i>gathered in heaps the dead carcasses which had been slain.</i> " 21: hurried to set early; his = its (the sun's). = lack. = ie. morning arrives; Aurora was the Roman goddess of the dawn. The lark was frequently alluded to in its role as an early riser.
20		
22		
24		26ff (below): even though the play portrays this fight as a great victory for Edmund, and a humiliating defeat for Canutus (see Scene V below), at the time the encounter was thought to have been a draw. Our author may have conflated the battle at Scorastan with the one which immediately succeeded it at Brentford, where the English did in fact soundly whip the Danes.
26	[<i>Alarum. Enter Canutus at one door</i> <i>and Edmund at the other. They fight.</i> <i>Canutus gives back and flies.</i>	= retreats.
28		
30	<i>Enter the soldiers of Edmund pursuing Canutus</i> <i>and his lords.</i>	
32	<i>Edricus takes a dead man's head upon his</i> <i>sword's point, holding it up to Edmund's soldiers.</i>	
34	<i>They fly.</i> <i>Enter Edmund again, cheering them up,</i> <i>and makes Canutus fly.]</i>	= reviving his soldiers' spirits.
36		
38	Chorus. Edricus, perceiving Canutus to have the worst, And Edmund <u>like</u> to triumph in their fall, Out of the bowels of a traitorous heart Brought forth <u>this subtle</u> dangerous stratagem: Whilst the two <u>battles</u> dealt the <u>dole</u> of death, And Edmund in the <u>forefront</u> <u>stoutly</u> fought With words encouraging his soldièrs, And with <u>rude</u> strokes <u>discouraging</u> the Danes,	= likely. = ie. the following. = cunning. = armies. = portion. Note the line's intense alliteration. = front lines. = bravely. = violent. ¹ = dispiriting.
40		
42		
44		

46 Edricus took up an English dead man's head,
 And sticking it upon his bloody sword,
 48 Unto the vanward of King Edmund's troops,
 Held his despitiful and most speedy course,
 50 Telling the soldiers Edmund Ironside
 Was slain, bidding the soldiers yield
 52 Or fly the field and trust unto their heels.
 The soldiers in amaze began to fly;
 54 Then Edmund, hearing of this stratagem,
 Amongst the thickest of his enemies,
 56 Gave notice that he lived a conqueror.
 His soldiers, taking heart, returned and fought.
 58 His enemies, despairing, run away.
 Edmund returns in triumph on the stage,
 60 But Canutus returns in passion and in rage.
 What after happens, with your patiënce,
 62 The entering actors gives intelligence.

64 [Exit.]

ACT III, SCENE IV.

Scorastan: Edmund's Camp.

Enter Edmund Ironside with lords and soldiers.

1 **Edmund.** Praised be th' eternal bulwark of this land,
 2 The fortress of my crown, in Whom I trust,

4 That hath thus discomfited my foes
 By His omnipotent all-conquering arm. –
 And, worthy lords, triumphant warriors,
 6 Whose valours echo through the mouth of Fame,
 And writes you worthies in the book of life,

= front lines.

49: stood firm with a malicious and most successful or advantageous (*speedy*)¹ course of action.

= imploring. = ie. to surrender.

52: or run away as fast as they could.

= ie. was still alive and fighting magnificently.

58-60: note the narrative's dramatic switch from the past to the present tense.

= a state of high emotion.

= report; note the lack of agreement in *actors gives*.

59-62: the Chorus' only appearance in the play ends with a pair of rhyming couplets.

Edricus Raises the Head: the incident described at lines 32-58 above was reported by Holinshed:

"When Duke Edrike perceived the Englishmen to be at point to have got the upper hand, he withdrew aside, and having by chance slain a common soldier called Osmear, which in visage much resembled king Edmund, whose head he cut off, held it up, and shaking his sword bloody with the slaughter, cried to the Englishmen, 'Flee ye wretches, flee and get away, for your king is dead, behold here his head which I hold in my hands.'

Herewith had the Englishmen fled immediately, if king Edmund advised of this stratagem, had not quickly got him to an high ground where his men might see him alive and lusty."

Scene IV: we assign possession of the battlefield at Scorastan to Edmund, who had driven Canutus off the field.

1-2: Edmund gives thanks to God in His role as the eternal defender of England, which in turn is the *fortress*, or stronghold, which protects his crown.³

bulwark = rampart or fortification.¹

= routed.¹

6: ie. personified Fame will spread the soldiers' renown.

7: *worthies* = heroes.¹

the book of life = ie. a registry of history; an oft-

8 Maugre the envy of Detraction,
 We render hearty thanks to each of you
 10 For fighting in our rights with such bold spirits.
 Continue to be valiant, and if God
 12 Make us once happy in a peaceful reign,
 I'll guerdon every soldier bounteously
 14 That lifts a weapon to defend our right.
 Let us not loiter opportunity,
 16 But follow Danish Canut[us] and force him fly.
 On, march afore, sound trumpets, strike up drums,
 18 Let shrieking fifes tell Canut[us] that Edmund comes!

20 [The soldiers shout and exeunt.]

ACT III, SCENE V.

Worcestershire: the Camp of Canutus.

Enter Canutus, Edricus, with other lords and soldiers.

1 **Canut.** A plague upon you all for arrant cowards!

2 Look how a dunghill cock, not rightly bred,

Doth come into the pit with greater grace,
 4 Brustling his feathers, setting up his plumes,
Clapping his wings and crowing louder out
 6 Than doth a cock of game that means to fight;

Yet after, when he feels the spurs to prick,
 8 Crakes like a craven and bewrays himself;

Even so my big-boned Danes, addressed to fight
 10 As thought they meant to scale the cope of Heaven,
 And like the giants grapple with the gods,

12 At first encounter rush upon their foes,
 But straight retire – retire? Nay, run away,
 14 As men distraught with lightning from above,

employed Biblical expression.

8: in spite of (*Maugre*) the malice of *Detraction*, a personified deity which seeks to slander individuals.
 = "I", the royal "we".

= one day.¹ = fortunate.

= reward. = generously.

= neglect.¹

= to run away.

= forward.

18: *shrieking* = shrill, high-pitched.¹

fifes = an anachronism; *fifes* were not invented until the 16th century.¹

= curse. = notorious, unmitigated.¹

2-8 (below): an extended metaphor by which Canutus describes Edmund as an arrogant cock.

2: *dunghill* = vulgar, ie. strutting arrogantly.

not rightly bred = improperly raised, because he is disrespectful to Canutus. Sams, however, interprets the expression to mean that Edmund was illegitimately born.

= (1) cockpit, for fighting, and (2) battlefield.¹

= bristling. = raising up.

= flapping.

= fighting cock, a cock trained to fight.¹

7-8: but when Edmund is urged on to fight, he croaks (*crakes*) like a coward (*craven*) and betrays (*bewrays*) his faint-heartedness.

when he feels the spurs to prick = an equestrian metaphor: Edmund the cock is demeaningly described as a frightened horse whose rider must drive his spurs into his flanks to urge him forward into the fight.

9: "similarly, my large Danes, ready to fight".

= "the vault of Heaven", a common and ancient expression.

11: allusion to the Battle of the Giants, in which the *Giants*, a race of monsters born from Mother Earth, sought, but failed, to overthrow the Olympian gods.

= immediately. = retreat.

= like. = driven mad, troubled.

16	Or dastards fearèd with a sudden fray.	15: or cowards terrified of a battle.
	<i>Edric.</i> Renownèd sovereign, do not <u>fret</u> yourself.	= vex.
18	Fortune in <u>turning</u> will <u>exalt your state</u> ,	18: ie. "personified Fortune, by turning her wheel, will reverse your circumstances for the better". <i>exalt your state</i> = literally, "raise your conditions". ¹
	And change the countenance of her <u>cloudy brow</u> .	= ie. and change her expression from a frown (a cloudy brow) to one more benevolent.
20	Now you must hope for <u>better still and better</u> ,	= the clause's awkward phrasing is a result of the author's having rearranged the words of the common phrase still better and better in order to achieve iambic meter; compare line 21's " still worse and worse ". <i>still</i> = always.
	And Edmund must expect still worse and worse.	= frowning.
22	A <u>louring</u> morning proves a fairer day.	= unattractive.
	Fortune's <u>ill-favoured</u> frown shews she will smile	
24	On you and frown on Ironside.	
26	<i>Canut.</i> What tellst thou me of Fortune and her frowns,	
	Of her <u>sour visage</u> and <u>her rolling stone</u> ?	= sullen or cross face. = see the note at Act II.iii.260-3.
28	Thy tongue rolls <u>headlong</u> into flattery. –	= rashly or with great force. ¹
	Now by these heavens above our wretched heads,	
30	Ye are but cowards, every one of you.	
	Edmund is blessed. Oh had I but his men,	
32	I would not doubt to conquer all the world	
	In shorter time than Alexander did;	
34	But all my Danes are <u>braggadocios</u> ,	= empty boasters. ¹
	And I accursed to be the general	
36	Of such a <u>flock</u> of fearful runaways.	= a metaphoric flock of sheep.
38	<i>South.</i> Remember you have lost ten thousand men,	
	All English-born except a thousand Danes.	
40	Your <u>pensive</u> looks will kill <u>them that survive</u>	= melancholy, meditative. ¹ = those who.
	If thus to choler you give liberty.	41: "if you give free reign to your fury."
42		
	<i>Canut.</i> It were no matter if they all were slain;	
44	Then they should never run away again.	
46	<i>Uska.</i> My noble lord, our countrymen are safe.	
	In all these <u>broils</u> English 'gainst English fight.	= battles.
48	The Danes or none or very few are slain.	
50	<i>Canut.</i> [<i>Turns towards Uskataulf</i>]	
	It was a sign ye fled and did not fight.	51: Canutus points out that the reason the Danes were killed in such small numbers is that they ran away.
52	Is't not a dishonour unto you	
	To see a <u>foreign nation</u> fight for me,	= ie. Englishmen.
54	<u>Whenas my home-bred countrymen</u> do run,	= when. = Canutus' own Danes.
	Leaving their king amongst his enemies?	
56		
	<i>Edric.</i> Give not such scope to <u>humorous</u> discontent:	= moody, peevish. ¹
58	<u>We are all partners of</u> your private griefs;	= ie. "we all share in".
	Kings are the <u>heads</u> , and if the head but ache,	= ie. heads of bodies, a metaphor.
60	The little finger is <u>distemperèd</u> ;	= vexed, disordered. ¹

62	We grieve to see you grieved, which hurteth us, And yet avails not to assuage your grief.	62: "but does nothing to mitigate your misery."
64	You are the sun, my lord, we marigolds, Whenas you shine we spread ourselves abroad And take our glory from your <u>influence</u> ,	63-70: note the extended and combined meteorological and botanical metaphor. = an astrological term, referring to an imagined ethereal fluid pouring from the heavens or stars (or, in this case, the sun), affecting everything below. ¹
66	<u>But</u> when you hide your face or darken it, With th' least encounter of a <u>cloudy</u> look,	= in the MS, But was deleted, and replaced with And . ³ = in addition to its meteorological connotation, cloudy was also used to describe a face darkened with gloom or anger.
68	We close our eyes as partners of your woes, Drooping our heads as grass down-weighed with dew.	
70	Then <u>clear ye up</u> , my lord, and cheer up us; For now our valours are <u>extinguishèd</u> ,	= brighten up; another expression which applies equally to both people and meteorological conditions. = eclipsed, quenched. ¹
72	And all our force lies drowned in <u>brinish</u> tears As jewèls in the bottom of the sea.	72: Sams' gloss: "the power of the Danes is lost through its submersion in their own tears" (see p. 155). ³ brinish = salty.
74	I do beseech your grace to hear me speak.	74: "please listen to what I have to say" – Edricus has a plan.
76	[Edricus talks to him.]	76: Edricus and Canutus talk quietly apart from the others.
78	South. I do not like this <u>humour</u> in <u>my son</u> ; "Twill quite discourage all his followers.	= mood. = ie. Canutus, as Southampton's son-in-law.
80	Uska. He stops his ears to all <u>persuasiöns</u> ;	81: "he refuses to listen to any arguments (persuasions)."
82	His council cannot be admitted speech: His father Swaine was much more patiënt,	82: "he won't permit his advisors to speak to him."
84	And could as well <u>brook</u> loss as victory.	= endure.
86	Canut. These words proceed not from a shallow brain.	86: to Edricus: ie. "you are no dummy."
88	Edric. Praise the <u>event</u> , my lord: the end is all. In the meantime, I'll go write to Ironside, Craving forgiveness, and <u>insinuate</u> <u>His yielding favour</u> . He is <u>pitiful</u> ,	88: "do not praise the plan, but rather the outcome (event), which is all that counts." = "wheedle or worm myself into".
90		91: His yielding favour = Edricus knows that Edmund is inclined to be forgiving. pitiful = merciful.
92	And I am <u>rare</u> in moving passiön.	92: "and I am very good (rare) at stirring others' emotions." ¹
94	I know the prince will quickly <u>credit</u> me And <u>put affiance</u> in my <u>smooth pretense</u> , But whatsoe'er he <u>doth or minds to do</u> ,	= believe. = place trust. ³ = glib affectation. ^{1,2} = does or wants to do.
96	You shall be sure to have <u>intelligence</u> ;	= news; Edricus will act as a spy for Canutus.
98	But, good my lord, leave me a little while To private contemplation, for my head Swims full of plots and other stratagems	97-100: Edricus' mind is filled with numerous ideas, and he asks for time to sort them all out.
100	Of great <u>avail</u> , and I must empty it.	= advantage.
102	Canut. God prosper what thou dost intend.	

104	Edric. Pray to the devil: God is not my friend.	104: Edricus reveals his Faustian soul.
106	[Exit Canutus. <u>Manet Edricus.</u>]	= Edricus remains on-stage.
108	Stitch, what, Stitch, call in Stitch!	
110	<i>Enter Stitch.</i>	
112	Stitch. Here's a <u>stitching</u> indeed, you have made	= pain. ¹
114	Stitch have a <u>stitch in his side</u> with coming so hastily	= common expression describing a sudden and sharp pain
116	after dinner.	within one's ribcage. ¹
116	Edric. Why, villain, dar'st thou eat <u>meat</u> in these	= food.
118	troublesome times?	
118	Stitch. Dare I eat meat? Aye, and <u>eat Time</u> , be he	= time itself was often described by the adjective eating ,
120	never so troublesome. My lord, were <u>Mars</u> himself	because it moves forward relentlessly.
120	made of <u>beef and brewis</u> , I <u>durst</u> in this choleric	= the god of war.
122	stomach devour him quick.	121: beef and brewis = ie. beef and beef broth, ¹ a common
124	Edric. <u>Sure</u> , ye are a <u>tall</u> man.	collocation.
126	Stitch. Aye, sir, <u>at the end of a fray</u> and beginning of a	durst = would dare.
128	feast.	121-2: choleric stomach = fiery temper. ¹
128	Edric. Well, fetch me paper and a <u>cornegraph</u> .	= certainly. = brave.
130	Stitch. A <u>horn-grafter</u> ? What's that, sir?	= when the fight is over(!)
132	Edric. <u>Sirrah</u> , I mean an <u>inkhorn</u> .	= Edricus explains in line 133 below that a cornegraph is an
134	Stitch. <u>You mean well</u> , sir. A <u>blackhorn</u> , you have	inkhorn ; this apparently made-up word contains two Latin
136	dipped your pen in many a man's inkhorn besides	roots: (1) corne = horn, and (2) graph , from graphium ,
138	your own.	meaning "stylus".
140	[Exit Stitch.]	= Stitch, naturally confused, correctly understands corn

142 **Edric.** My state may be comparèd unto his
 143 That ventures all his credit and his wealth
 Upon the fickle hazard of a die.
 144 The crown I level at; I venture life,
 145 The dearest jewèl and of greatest price
 146 That any mortal hath possession of.
 My life is sweet, yet will I venture it
 148 At all or nothing. Trust a mother-wit.

150 *Enter Stitch with paper and an inkhorn.*

152 **Stitch.** Here, sir. I would never have men that are
 153 unmarried so unprovided as they should be compelled
 154 to borrow horns of young men, nor would I have
 young men to borrow inkhorns of married men. Oh,
 156 it is perilous when their foreheads proves blushing
 papers to bewray young buds.

158 **Edric.** Sirrah, be gone, but be not far from hence.
 160 I presently shall have occasion
 161 To employ you in some serious business.

162 **Stitch.** I will be absent when you call, I warrant you.

164 *[Exit Stitch.*
 166 *Edricus sits down, writeth and blotteth.]*

168 **Edric.** Nay, try thy wits, thou writest for a wager;
 'Tis not for gold but grace and for thy life,

170 A thing that would put spirit in a block
 And be a whetstone to a blunter head.

172 With what exordion shall I win his heart?
 How shall I tie his ears to my discourse?
 174 A schoolboy hath a readier wit than I.

I never tried my barren sponce till now,
 176 And now I see I am not Edricus,
 But a most blockish and dull-pated hind,

= situation. = ie. to one.
 = who risks.
 143: upon the unpredictable outcome of a roll of a die.
 = ie. the throne of England. = aim. = risk.
 = value.

148: **all or nothing** = this expression's first appearance
 can be traced back at least to 1566, though it remained
 uncommon before the 17th century.
Trust a mother-wit = "I will trust my natural intelli-
 gence or common sense."^{1,3}

152-7: Stitch's nonsense continues.
 = unprepared or badly off.^{1,3} = that.
 = ie. from.

156-7: **their foreheads...buds** = their behorned foreheads
 are evidence that young men (**buds**) have seduced their
 wives.
blushing papers = the reference is likely to the sheet of
 paper attached to the back of convicted criminals undergoing
 punishment, delineating their crimes;¹ here, **blushing papers**
 metaphorically refers to the horns on the cuckolded man's
 forehead, which similarly notify the world at large of his
 shameful status.
 = "do not go too far away."
 = soon. = an opportunity.
 = pronounce as *T' employ*. = likely a trisyllable: *BUS-i-ness*.

163: Stitch is typically absurd; **warrant** = assure.

166: Edricus attempts to compose a letter to Edmund, but his
 uncertainty as to how to phrase his appeal is manifested by
 his repeatedly scribbling over what he writes (ie. **blotting** his
 words).

168: **try thy wits** = "test your cleverness" (said to himself).
 168-9: **thou writest...life** = Edricus is betting his life on
 being able to put together a missive which will earn him
 Edmund's mercy, and hence save his life.
 = ie. a letter. = ie. block of wood.
 171: metaphorically, "and sharpen the thinking of even a
 stupid person (who finds himself in my situation)."
 = introduction, start: a Latin word, one that does not appear
 in the OED or elsewhere in contemporary literature.
 = ie. get Edmund's attention: a nice metaphor.
 = is more resourceful.
 = ie. (truly) tested. = unproductive head (humorous).
 176: Edricus finds he cannot rise to even his own normal
 level of cleverness.
 = stupid. = brained. = boor or peasant.²

178	<u>Gravelled</u> at such an easy enterprise. – What <u>standest</u> thou trifling and delaying time?	= perplexed. ¹ 179: to himself: "why are you wasting time?" <i>standest</i> = pronounce as <i>stand'st</i> .
180	<u>Fetch fire from Heaven</u> and mix it with thy ink, Gather <u>Parnassus'</u> dew and write with that,	180: Sams sees an allusion to Prometheus, the Titan deity who created mankind out of clay, and who then stole fire from the gods to give to man. Contemporary literature sometimes equated <i>fire</i> with knowledge. 181: Edricus hopes for magical words to come to him by using the dew from Greece's <i>Mt. Parnassus</i> (home of the Muses: see the note at line 183 below) as ink.
182	Pluck <u>Cyllen's feathers</u> and make pens with them, Borrow <u>the Muses'</u> aid and let them <u>breathe</u>	182: <i>Cyllen</i> is an alternate name for Mercury, the messenger god, who was said to put <i>feathers</i> on his sandals to help him fly faster. 183: <i>the Muses'</i> = the <i>Muses</i> were nine sister deities who were said to be the protectresses of the arts; the great ancient epic writers, such as Homer and Virgil, began their works by appealing to the Muses for inspiration. <i>breathe</i> = produce a musical sound, ie. sing. ¹
184	Some <u>dulcet</u> and melodious harmony, Some <u>never-heard-of</u> words into thy pate.	= mellifluous, agreeable. ¹ = never-previously expressed.
186	[<i>He writeth and <u>blotteth</u>.</i>]	= the effect of Edricus' continued blotting of his words is equivalent to that of a modern actor seen repeatedly writing and then crumpling up his paper, signifying his failure to get satisfactory words onto the page.
188	Ah, fool, how hard it is to write <u>for life!</u>	= ie. "to save your life."
190	Had I now written for my mistress' love, I could have filled my pen and <u>raised</u> my speech	190-2: if this were a love letter, this would be easy. Note the nice metaphor of <i>raised</i> with the <i>highest step</i> .
192	Unto the <u>highest step</u> of flattery. Had I now written for another man,	193-6: if Edricus were writing a similar letter on behalf of another, this would have been easy too.
194	To save his life or get him into <u>grace</u> ,	= favour with another high-ranked person.
196	Why all the world might have <u>given place</u> to me For <u>sugared</u> lines and phrases <u>past</u> compare.	= "yielded first place"; ¹ <i>given</i> is a monosyllable: <i>gi'n</i> . = eloquent. ¹ = beyond.
198	Had I been now in favour with the king, And had endeavorèd to flatter him, My pen would have distillèd golden drops	
200	And varied <u>terms</u> enchanting <u>Cerberus</u> .	200: "and all sorts of words (<i>terms</i>) which would have charmed <i>Cerberus</i> ," the vicious three-headed dog who guarded Hades.
202	But now I know not how or what to write. To flatter were to aggravate my fault, For anger would sift out my <u>vild</u> intent.	202-3: if Edricus overdoes the flattery, it would only magnify the malignancy of his transgression, and an irate Edmund will recognize his deception. <i>vild</i> = vile.
204	Plainly to write were to accuse myself	204-5: nor can Edricus be too honest or direct, ie. he cannot

	confess fully to having chosen Canutus' side.
	206-9 (below): Edricus plans to write an absolute lie, which by its brief simplicity should make it believable.
206 Yet write I will and in the plainest <u>sort</u> , For that is <u>cousin-german</u> unto truth.	= manner. = first cousin, hence "closely connected"; ¹ german is derived from the French <i>germaine</i> , which means "having the same biological parent". ¹
208 Truth needs no <u>colours</u> . Though I mean to lie, My simple writing shall deceive his eye.	= shading, ie. deception.
210	
	[<i>He writeth.</i>]
212 Aye, <u>so</u> . Oh <u>rare-conceited</u> piece of work!	213-6: Edricus is pleased with his effort. so = expression of approval. ¹ rare-conceited = excellently conceived.
214 How cunningly thou canst convert thy shape Into an angel when thou dost intend	
216 To flatter the plain honest-meaning king.	
218	[<i>He folds it up.</i>]
220 Now for a <u>swift wing-footed messenger</u>	= ie. like Mercury, who wore wings on his sandals to help him fly quickly as he carried out his errands.
To <u>fly in post</u> that I might follow him. –	= travel quickly (to deliver the letter to Edmund). ¹
222 It more <u>behoofes</u> me to be <u>circumspect</u> And with my life to trust none but myself.	222-3: if you want something done right, it is best to do it yourself. behoofes = archaic alternate form of behooves . circumspect = cautious, careful. ¹
224 Swifter than sure is no good messenger, And now I think on't – oh, 'tis excellent –	224: it is better to be certain of success by proceeding cautiously than to risk failure by rushing.
226 I'll for this once deliver it myself, But in disguise of my man's attire,	226-230: Edricus will deliver the letter himself, but disguised as one of his own servants. In this way, he can determine Edmund's reaction to the letter before revealing himself to the English king.
228 So I may safely go and understand How Edmund is <u>addicted</u> unto me	addicted (line 229) = disposed. ³
230 And how all matters now are managed. – Stitch! Stitch!	
232	
	<i>Enter Stitch.</i>
234 Stitch. Your will, sir?	
236 Edric. My will is that you will <u>uncase</u> , for I mean to	= undress.
238 <u>change</u> apparel.	= exchange.
240 Stitch. Why sir, you'll not <u>turn wise-man</u> , will you?	= "turn yourself into a fool (wise-man)". ¹
242 Edric. Yes, fool, for this once. – Come, I say, <u>when</u> ?	= an expression of impatience: Stitch is hesitating.
244 Stitch. Marry, sir, when I see some <u>boot</u> coming <u>roundly</u> from you, for I promise you I will not <u>change</u>	= meaning both (1) the footwear, hence, "a kick"; and (2) benefit or profit, ie. payment, money. ³ = rapidly. ¹ = ie. exchange (clothing).

246 without boot.

248 **Edric.** But I will, sirrah; come, dispatch.

250 **Stitch.** Well sir, since there is shift but I must change

252 shifts, I am contented.

254 [They shift apparel.]

254 By my troth, sir, methinks y'are a properer man by

256 odds in those than ye were in these. – I would I could

258 persuade him to believe me, then it should be known

260 by his apparel what a fool I have made of him. – Sir,

262 shall we change living and lordship and name and all?

Edric. Aye, Stitch, for this once thou shalt be Lord

Edricus and I Stitch. Look you keep in till I come

home, I advise you, and behave yourself like a lord.

Stitch. I warrant you, good Stitch, I'll be lordly

enough. Farewell, honest Stitch; farewell, fool.

[Exit Stitch.]

Edric. Now am I Edricus and Edricus' man,

The secretary and the messenger,

All to effect with counterfeiting guile

Experiments of matchless policy.

Well, this plain suit doth now contain more wit

Than for so mean a piece of cloth is fit.

[Exit Edricus.]

ACT III, SCENE VI.

Worcestershire: Canutus' Camp.

*Enter Stitch in his lord's attire,
with blue-coats after him.*

1 **Stitch.** Come on, ye blue-coated slaves, you that wear

2 satin doublets never but at good times, and wear a blue

coat but once in a year; come on, I say, ye trencher-

= "get it done."

= an effort¹ or a beginning.³

= garments.¹

= exchange; perhaps a deliberate pun in the stage directions!

255: **By my troth** = truly.
properer = more handsome.
255-6: **by odds** = in some way.¹

= wish.

= incomes. = titles.

261: **for this once** = this one time.¹

= "restrain yourself" or "remain inside".^{1,3}

261-2: Sams sees a deliberate bit of wordplay with
"Aye, Stitch" and **"I Stitch"**.

265: **warrant** = assure.
be lordly = meaning to act both (1) like a noble, and
(2) arrogantly.¹

= ie. "I am both". = servant.

= carry out. = feigning deceit or cunning.¹

273: a test of his unmatched craft.¹

274-5: ie. "the person wearing this humble servant's outfit is
too smart for the clothes."

Entering Characters: Stitch, unsurprisingly, has taken his instructions to behave like a nobleman to heart. In this strictly comic scene, Stitch, in a martinetish mood, attempts to get Edricus' servants (**bluecoats**, so called because Elizabethan servants traditionally wore blue coats) to attend to him with as much punctuality and attention to detail as can be squeezed out of them.
after him = following Stitch.

1-2: **you that...good times** = perhaps, when not in uniform, the servants only dress nicely on religious holidays (**good times**).

3: **but once in a year** = ie. rarely.
trencher-scraping = reference to those who scrape

4 scraping cutters, ye cloak-bag carriers, ye sword
and buckler carriers, ye rubbers of horse-heels, ye
6 devourers of fat oxen, ye swillers of March beer; come

after me, I say, take example after my virtue how to

8 mount. I, proceeding from the loins of a man very little
better than a gentleman, am now by my virtue and

10 good education to be your master, your upholder, the
staff of your lives and maintainer of your masterships.

12 Uncover, ye rogues! So. Cover! So. – Sirrah, take my

14 cloak, bear you my rapier! So. – I am somewhat
humorous, and it becomes me well. Follow me,
follow! – How I can play the part! Oh what a fool

16 is my master to change his nobility for my worship.

18 Roger. 'Blood, sir, or Sir Stitch, you must go in;

20 here's a following! We must wait on you, must we?

Stitch. "'Blood, sir, you must go in" – oh, hold me,

22 hold me, I am choleric. Why, ye shake-rag, had ye

never a lord under your girdle? Plain "Sir Stitch"

24 without welt or guard! why, how now, you malapert
knave, have ye forgot all good manners?

26

dishes clean after their use; **trencher** = wooden dish used
for eating.

= cut-throats.¹ = valise.¹ = bearers.

= shield. = an oft-referred to menial job.

6: **March beer** = strong ale brewed in the spring.¹

6-7: **come after me** = ie. "follow me".

7-8: **take example...mount** = "follow my example, how I,
by my overall excellent character (**virtue**), rose in status."

8-9: **I, proceeding...gentleman** = Stitch claims to have
been born into a class that was not much better than
that of the gentry.

11-12: **your master...masterships** = Stitch uses different
expressions to suggest that he is now both in a position of
authority over the others and their primary means of support.

upholder = originally printed as a plural word, emended
as shown by Sams.

staff = support, prop.

12: **Uncover...Cover** = Stitch orders the men to remove their
hats and caps (**uncover** – done as a sign of respect when in
the presence of one's betters), then to replace them.

So = ie. good, done.

= long, thin sword.¹

= moody, capricious.¹

= Stitch is pleased at his own ability to act the noble.

the part = ie. the role of a lord.

= exchange. = ie. me (humorously ironic).¹

18: **Roger** is one of the servants of Stitch's company.

'Blood = ie. God's blood, an oath.

go in = Roger reminds Stitch of their master's
instruction for Stitch to remain indoors (see Act III.
v.262 above).

= the sense is, "what a crew this is!" = attend.

21-22: **oh, hold...choleric** = "stop me from thrashing this
guy, I am enraged!"

22: **shake-rag** = beggar.¹

22-23: **had ye...girdle** = ie. "have you never served under
a lord before?" The expression **under one's girdle** means
"under one's control".¹

23-4: **Plain Sir...guard** = Stitch is "upset" because Roger
has had the temerity to address him without his "proper"
noble title.

without welt or guard = without ornamentation; both
welt and **guard** refer to a bit of decorative trim or fringe
on a garment.¹

= presumptuous, saucy.¹

28 **Roger.** Good manners be your speed.
30 **Stitch.** Why, this 'tis to keep familiar servingman. As
32 I am a Lord, by my honour I swear I will revenge it
with putting you out of my house. – You fellows, take
example by his punishment. Follow me just three foot
behind, not above or beneath, and Roger Rakehell, for
34 your sauciness, come you last.

36 [Exeunt.]

END of ACT III.

27: "I wish you success (*speed*) with that" (ironic).

= "this is what happens when you employ servants who behave so informally or casually", ie. they do not demonstrate the proper level of respect.

= ie. "firing you."

33: *not above or beneath* = neither more nor less.³

Rakehell = a faux name for Roger: a *rakehell* is a scoundrel.¹

= as "punishment", Roger is ordered to the rear of the pack!

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Worcestershire: Edmund's Camp.

*Enter Edmund Ironside, Alfric, Godwin,
and Aylward, with Edricus, disguised.*

1 **Edmund.** [To Edricus]
2 What wind doth cause your master write to us?
All is not well, I doubt. Give me the letter.

4 [Edmund reads the letter.]
6

"Prepare Perillus' bull to punish me

8 *Or some new never-heard-of torturing pain
To scourge me for my foul ingratitude.*

10 *Rumour did raise suspicion in my heart,*

*As it hath lately done within your breast
12 By some who envied my prosperity,
My love and zeal unto your majesty,*

14 *That you were doubtful of my spotless truth,*

*And meant to cut me off by cutting short
16 My headless body with a bloody axe.*

*This on a sudden coming to my ear,
18 It pared my heart and strook me to the quick,*

Causing me flee the court to save my life

Entering Characters: *Edricus*, disguised as a servant, has arrived in *Edmund's* camp to deliver the letter he himself wrote, pleading his case. A convention of the Elizabethan stage permitted characters to assume disguises which were impenetrable even to those who know them well – at least until it served the plot for them to be recognized.

Godwin and *Aylward* are advisors and officers of the English king. Both speak only one line, and Godwin is never mentioned by name, in the play. The author borrowed the names of these two characters (as well as that of *Ulfkettle*, who appears in a later scene), from a list of casualties identified by Holinshed as having occurred at the battle of Ashdon, the final clash between the English and Danish armies of Edmund and Canute.

= ie. "what reason is there which": proverbial. = ie. Edricus.
= suspect.

7: Edricus refers to the notorious instrument of torture invented by the skilled craftsman *Perillus* on the orders of the ancient Sicilian tyrant Phalarus: a victim was locked inside of a hollow brass or bronze statue of a bull, which was then burned over a fire; the bull's design was such that the victim's screams sounded like the bellowing of the bull.

= unprecedented, brand new.
= punish.¹

10-21: Edricus gives an elaborate excuse for his running away from Edmund.

= recently.
= begrudged Edricus' success or good fortune.
= ie. "and my".

14: line 14 directly continues line 10 (*Rumour did raise suspicion in my heart ... That you were...*), lines 11-13 being dependent.

doubtful = suspicious.
spotless truth = untainted loyalty.

15-16: "and meant to have me beheaded."
cut me off = ie. "kill me".¹

17: ie. "when I heard this".

18: the expression **pare to the quick** meant to cut away one's skin so as to expose the underlying tissue, causing agonizing pain.¹

strook = ie. struck, a common alternate form.

20	<i>As sadly as the <u>late-espousèd</u> man</i>	= recently married.
	<i>Grieves to depart from his new-married wife.</i>	
22	<i>How many sighs I <u>fetched</u> at my <u>depart</u>,</i>	22: fetched = heaved; the expression fetch a sigh was a common one.
	<i>How many times I <u>turned to come again</u>,</i>	depart = ie. departure.
24	<i>How oft I <u>plained</u>, how often I did weep,</i>	= started to return.
	<i><u>Were too, too long</u> to write or you to read.</i>	= lamented.
		= would take too long; " too, too " was a common intensifier.
26	<i>But having now <u>considered with myself</u></i>	= reconsidered, thought it over.
	<i>My over-light belief <u>too credulous</u>,</i>	27: ie. Edricus had been too quick to believe the rumours.
28	<i>I <u>come again like to a strayèd</u> sheep</i>	= return. = ie. like.
	<i>Tainted, God <u>wot</u>, with <u>naught but ignorance</u>.</i>	= knows. = ie. no evil intent, only ignorance of the facts.
30	<i>Oh take me to your mercy, or if not so,</i>	
	<i>Kill me yourself. <u>Death is the end of woe</u>."</i>	= proverbial.
32		
	[<i>Finis letter.</i>]	
34		
	Edmund. Hear ye, my lords, this humble supplication? –	
36	[<i>To Edricus</i>] <u>Your master</u> is become an orator;	= ie. Edricus.
	But tell him Edmund is not <u>lunatic</u> ,	= crazy, ie. overly credulous.
38	So like a woman to be won with words.	
40	Edric. [<i>Aside</i>] This <u>cottons</u> [not] according to my mind.	40: literally, "this is not succeeding as I thought it would," ie. Edmund's response to the letter is not the one Edricus was hoping for.
		cottons = prospers. ¹
	The king is angry. See, he faceth me;	
42	His colour comes and goes. I <u>hold</u> my life	= bet.
	He <u>knows</u> me. <u>Would</u> I were well away.	= recognizes. = "I wish".
44		
	Edmund. <u>Hark ye</u> , my lords, what would you say	= "listen up".
46	If <u>yon plain</u> fellow should be Edricus?	= this simple or common. ¹
48	Alfric. I think not so, my lord.	
50	Edmund. I'll quickly know.	
	Come hither, fellow. Tell thy master thus –	
52		
	[<i>He pulls the <u>velvet</u> [<u>patch</u>] off his face.</i>]	53: in the MS, the stage direction reads only, " <i>he pulls off</i>] <i>the velvet</i> ", so that patch is Sams' interpolation.
54		The intent clearly is that Edricus has tried to disguise himself by covering his face with a piece of velvet of some kind. A velvet patch was a small decorative piece of cloth, worn on the face for fashion or to hide a blemish. ¹
	What, Edricus, is't you? I thought no less.	
56	You meant some good, no doubt. Tell me the truth:	
	What was the reason you came thus disguised?	
58		
	Edric. [<i>Aside</i>] Now, wit, or never, help. Poor naked truth	59-60: Poor naked...deceit = the plain truth can remove suspicion of deceit.
60	Hath ta'en away suspicion of deceit.	61-62: I need...thus = "it is too late for cunning (art); I will have to go with the simple truth."
	I need no art; art cannot help me now.	
62	Then plainly thus. – Renownèd sovereign,	
	I came thus <u>plainly</u> to your majesty	= humbly, simply-attired. ^{1,3}

64 Disguised in clown's attire to sound the truth –

66 What opiniön, if good or bad,
66 You had of me; and if I found it good,
68 I had determined to bewray myself;
68 If otherwise, I meant with secret speed
70 To leave my native country and to exile
70 Myself from England, sailing into Spain,
72 Whereas I meant in contemplatiön,
72 In pilgrimage and prayers for your grace,
74 To end my life.

74 *Enter a messenger, running.*

76 **Mess.** Haste, haste, King Edmund, to relieve thy land,
78 Which is oppressed by multitudes of Danes.
78 They swarm along thy coasts like little gnats
80 Over a river in a summer's night,
80 Or like to bees when they begin to flight:
82 So comes these Danes preparèd fit to fight.

Their battle-main of three-score thousand men,

84 With bristle-pointed spears which upright stand
84 Shews like a new-shred grove of ashes tall,
86 Or else a wood of pines and cedars small.
88 Their flags and banners, yellow, blue and red,
88 Resembles much the weeds in ripened corn;
90 Their drums and trumpets, with a dreadful sound
90 Of clashing armour and fire-breathing steeds,
92 Sounds like the fearful thunder sent from Heaven,
92 Mixed with Aeolus' boist'rous northen breath.

94 They prey upon thy subjects cruëly,
94 Like hungry tigers upon silly kids,
96 Sparing not ancient men for reverence,

96 Nor women for [their] imbecility,

98 Nor guiltless babes for their unspotted life,
98 Nor holy men, their madness is so rife.

100 **Edmund.** A sunshine day is quickly overcast;
100 A springing bud is killèd with a blast.
102 I see my state is fickle and unsure;
102 There is nothing in this world can firmly dure.

64: *clown's* = peasant's, fool's.

sound the truth = ie. "determine how I stand;"
sound = measure.

= reveal.

= ie. live out.

= save.

= ie. like. = fly (in swarms).¹

77-82: according to Holinshed, Canute, after the battle at Brentford, removed the army to his ships at Rochester, pillaging the country along the way.

= main force, primary body of troops;¹ this compound term, properly, is *main battle*, but our author inverted the words for purposes of meter.

= ie. standing upright.

= looks like. = newly-pruned.¹ = ie. ash trees.

87-91: note the lack of agreement between subject and verb in these lines, first with line 87's *flags and banners* and its verb *Resembles* in the next line, then with lines 89's *drums and trumpets* with lines 91's *Sounds*.

= ie. the harsh northern wind sent by *Aeolus* (the deity in charge of keeping the winds); *northen* was a less common alternate form of *northern*.

= vulnerable baby goats.

95: they are even slaughtering the elderly, not sparing them out of respect for their age.

96: ie. nor sparing women out of regard for their physical weakness (*imbecility*).¹

= innocent. = sinless.

= clerics. = the Dane's frenzy. = prevalent.¹

100-119 (below): Edmund's entire speech is comprised of rhyming couplets, including lines 112-5, which make up a spectacular rhyming quadruplet!

= strong gust of wind.¹

= situation. = changing. = uncertain.

= read as *There's* = steadily endure, ie. remain unaltered.

138 **Edric.** Traitor? Remember this: malice hath a perfect memory.

140 **Edmund.** Alfric, you are to blame: you do forget yourself.
Age makes ye dote: know I not what to do

142 Without your telling? Go to, hold your peace.

144 **Ayl.** Alfric, your comb is cut, yet will I speak. –

King, I am sworn to counsel thee aright;
146 And though I die, I will not hold my tongue.
Remember he hath often broke his faith
148 And fled away from you; remember too,
He comes from Canutus, thy utter enemy;
150 Remember he is a traitorous flatterer,
A villain, and a damnèd hypocrite.
152

Edmund. Peace, Aylward, hold your tongue:
154 My youth in some things ouerruns your age;
'Tis policy to grant him audience,
156 Nay further, grace, – nay further, if he craves
Perhaps the leading [of] our army too.

158 For thus I think it stands: he hath promised Canutus,
Having the leading of our forces,
160 To yield to him, seeming as though compelled,

Having first given an onset on the foe
162 For colour's sake. But we will over-match him,

164 For whilst the force of Canut[us], on policy
Retires by Edric's drift, then we will take

The opportunity, and rush with speed

138: **malice hath a perfect memory** = people do not forget when others demonstrate ill-will (**malice**) towards them: Edricus threatens Alfric.

= Alfric has spoken out of turn.

141: Edricus accuses Alfric of having become senile with age.

142: **telling** = ie. "instructing me".

Go to = "get out of here", a common expression.

= proverbial: Alfric has been reprimanded, and hence brought down a notch; the allusion is to the rooster's **comb**, its symbol of pride, being cut off.

= justly, correctly,¹ ie. truthfully.

= ie. "it may cost me my life".

= ie. Edricus. = vow to be loyal.

= absolute, complete.

= pronounce as *he's*.

153-171 (below): Edmund speaks with his advisors out of Edricus' hearing.

= outperforms.²

155: "it is good strategy to hear what Edricus has to say."

= ie. even show him favour.

158-162 (below): **For thus...sake** = Edmund guesses Edricus' plan: Edricus, having convinced Edmund of his loyalty, will wheedle his way into field command of the English army; Edricus will then attack Canutus' forces with enough enthusiasm to convince onlookers that he is indeed earnestly seeking to defeat the Danish king, but ultimately intends to hand Canutus the victory.

= "so here is the situation as I believe it stands."

159: Edmund's army, or at least a division's worth.

160: **yield** = surrender or give up his position.

compelled = ie. because Canutus' forces will overwhelm Edricus.

= attacked; **given** is a monosyllable: *gi'n*.

162: **For colour's sake** = as a pretense, to make it look good.
over-match him = craftily outwit him.¹

163-8 (below): Edmund plans to launch a surprise attack on Canutus with his own wing or division of the army as Canutus retreats before Edricus' onslaught.

164: **force** = army.

163-4: **on policy...drift** = pretending, as a part of the plan (**on policy**), to be driven back by Edricus.

drift = driving force or impetus.¹

166	Upon <u>his</u> troops, who unprepared to fight	= ie. Canutus'.
168	And trusting upon Edric's policy, Shall all come prey unto our soldiërs. How like you this?	
170	Alfric. It cannot <u>hap amiss</u> .	= go amiss, ie. go wrong.
172	Edmund. Come hither, Edricus.	
174	[<i>They whisper.</i>]	
176	I' <u>faith</u> , ye lie.	= truly.
178	[<i>They whisper again.</i>]	
180	Tut, tut, it cannot be.	
182	[<i>They whisper again.</i>]	
184	If this be true, I pardon thee for all, And will reward thee with deservèd grace. I will not doubt it, faith, I <u>think</u> 'tis true	= believe.
186	<u>Though</u> it were not, in hope thou wilt <u>amend</u> .	= even if. = ie. "mend your ways," reform.
188	Go, let us <u>in</u> and let all quarrels end, For now I mean indeed to <u>credit</u> thee	= ie. go in. = entrust. ¹
190	By being <u>captain-general</u> of my army.	= commander-in-chief. ¹
192	Edric. Duty and thanks I give, 'tis all I have.	
194	[<i>Aside</i>] See what dissimulation brings to pass, How quickly I can make the king an ass.	195-6: a provocative rhyming couplet ends the scene.
196	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	Edricus Restored: as mentioned previously, after the draw at Scorastan in Worcestershire, the armies met again soon after in Brentford (in modern West London), where Edmund won a smashing victory. According to Holinshed, the reconciliation between Edricus and Edmund occurred after this latter fight: <i>"Moreover, Earl Edrike, perceiving the great manhood of King Edmund, began to fear, lest in the end he should subdue and vanquish the Danes, wherefore he sought means to conclude a peace, and take such order with him as might stand with both their contentations [ie. satisfaction], which ere long he brought about. This was done...by the consent of Cnute...to the intent that Edrike being put in trust with king Edmund, might the more easily devise ways how to betray him."</i>
<u>ACT IV, SCENE II.</u>		
<i>London.</i>		
<i>Enter Emma, her two sons Alfred and Edward in each hand, Gunthranus <u>going before</u>.</i>		
Entering Characters: <i>Emma</i> is Edmund's stepmother; <i>Alfred</i> and <i>Edward</i> are the young teenage sons of Ethelred and Emma, and thus Edmund's half-brothers. <i>Gunthranus</i> is		

1 **Emma.** Sweet boys, born to be crossed before your time,

2 Oh let me kiss you ere you go away.
Cursed be the cause of our departing thus,

4 The persecution of these bloody Danes,
Whose unrelenting eyes delight to see

6 The full conclusion of our tragedy.

8 **Alfred.** Good mother, sorrow not though we depart:
We shall be welcome to our uncle Richard,
10 And safer there than in this troubled isle,
Which like the reeling sea is tossed with war.

12 Here we are ever in continual broils,
There in tranquility, in peace and rest;
14 Here in the midst of unknown enemies,
There in the arms of true-approved friends;
16 Here danger imminent doth compass us,
There friends and friendly counsel shall defend us;
18 Therefore rejoice we are escaped the Danes,
Whose greedy maws devours the Saxons' blood
20 Like hungry lions, void of any good.

22 **Emma.** Good boy, in whom thy father's feature lives,
Though Death hath seized him in his wasteful arms.

24 If I could moderate my grievèd mind
Without remembrance what ere now I was,

26 Then should my grief diminish with my tears;
But memory, the afflicter of the soul,

a trusted but fictional family friend.

Emma is sending the boys out of England and to France for safekeeping.

going before = ie. entering first.

Genealogy: the year of **Edmund Ironside's** birth is uncertain, as various sources put forth dates ranging from 980 to 993 A.D. Edmund's parents were the previous English king, **Ethelred the Unready**, and his first wife, **Aelfgifu of York**, who died in 1002. That same year, Ethelred remarried, taking as his bride the much younger **Emma of Normandy**, whose uncertain birth date is thought to have been at some time between 984 and 990 A.D. The new queen gave birth to **Edward** c. 1003 and **Alfred** in 1005.

The events depicted in our play took place in 1016, making Edward and Alfred perhaps 13 and 11 years old respectively. Edmund was thus a decade or more older than his half-brothers.

Edward would later become the English king known as Edward the Confessor, ruling 1043-1066.

= ie. destined to have things go badly for them (that is, robbed of their right to live proper royal lives) in their youth.

crossed = thwarted.

= before.

= the MS originally printed *your* here, but the *y* was then deleted; as a result, *departing* means "separation".¹

4: ie. the Danes' violent oppression of the English.

= merciless.¹

5-6: this speech and the next two end with rhyming couplets (lines 19-20 and 36-37).

= Emma's brother Richard II, Duke of Normandy.

= rolling.¹

= ie. in England. = quarrels, turmoil.

= ie. in Normandy.

= proven.

= surround.

= jaws. = ie. English.

= destitute.¹

22: ie. Alfred looks like his father, Ethelred.

23: personified **Death**, who took Ethelred, is proficient in laying waste and devastation (hence is *wasteful*) to England.

24-25: "if I could temper the intensity of my mourning, by not thinking about my former situation" (ie. "if I could just stop thinking about how happy we were when I was queen").

= pronounce as *th' afflicter*.

28	<u>Bids me</u> remember how I was a queen, How Egelredus was my lawful lord,	= "compels me to".
30	How <u>Norman's</u> Duke was my <u>renowndèd sire</u> ,	30: Emma's famous father (renowned sire) was <i>Richard I (the Fearless)</i> , Duke of Normandy (932-996). <i>Norman's</i> = ie. Normandy's,
32	How England was my pleasure's paradise, And how time was when time did wait on me.	32: "and how there was a time when time served me," ie. when she did as she wished with her time.
	All these are but bellows to the fire	33-34: All these...heart = metaphorically, "such thoughts only serve to increase my grief".
34	To burn my heart, <u>consumed afore with sighths</u> .	= "(already) wasted away with sighs;" but consumed also means "burnt", continuing the metaphor begun with bellows . <i>sighths</i> = <i>sighth</i> was an alternate spelling of the late Middle English word <i>sithe</i> , itself a variant of <i>sigh</i> . ¹
36	Alfred, Ned is a child: thou art of age To take example by my misery Not to believe foul Fortune's <u>flattery</u> .	35-37: thou art...flattery = "you are old enough to learn, through my example, not to believe Fortune when she smiles on you," ie. the lesson here is that good times are never guaranteed to last. flattery = deception. ¹
38		
40	Edward. Good mother, weep not; if ye do, I'll cry.	
42	Emma. Ah, my pretty heart, Hast thou a feeling of my passiön? Then will I weep the more to ease my heart; I'll mourn for thee, for him, and for myself, For England and for Edmund Ironside, Whose part God prosper, Heaven defend the right.	42: "are you capable of sharing my grief?" = whose side may God take or favour.
48	Gunth. Madam, your <u>helpless</u> tears are but a means To draw more tears from us to drown our hearts.	= futile.
50		
52	Emma. Why, man, I weep to ease and not to <u>load</u> . I <u>trow</u> the more I shed, the <u>less</u> I have; And as my tears <u>waste</u> , so my <u>cares</u> consume. To <u>dam</u> my eyes were but to drown my heart	= burden. = know. = ie. fewer tears. = "are spent". ¹ = anxiety disappears. ¹ = dam up, ie. block up.
58	Like Hecuba, the woeful Queen of Troy, Who having no avoidance for her grief, <u>Ran mad for sorrow</u> 'cause she could not weep; –	55-57: although Elizabethan literature frequently alluded to Hecuba's having gone mad, there is actually no classical authority for this claim. ⁴ We may point out the appearance of the line, " <i>I have read that Hecuba of Troy ran mad for sorrow</i> " in Shakespeare's <i>Titus Andronicus</i> , noting how the boldfaced words also appear in the present play in line 57.
60	But, good Gunthranus, <u>to omit vain talk</u> ,	= ie. "so as to skip conversation that is not to the point." vain = unprofitable. ¹
62	Since I have heretofore <u>approved thy faith</u> ,	= "tested and confirmed your loyalty (to me and my family)".
64	I make a choice of thee amongst the rest Of many friends to guide my little boys And to conduct them into Normandy. <u>Entreat</u> my brother for <u>to entreat</u> them well; They are his nephews, and <u>his sister's</u> joy. If anything amiss should <u>light on</u> them, The same on me should be <u>redoublèd</u> .	60-61: amongst the...friends = ie. "out of all my friends". = ask. = to treat; pronounce as <i>t'entreat</i> . Note the wordplay. = ie. Emma's own. = fall on, ie. happen to. 66: ie. Emma would feel the burden twice as heavily.

68 **Gunth.** Madam, even by the living God I vow
I will attend and watch them as my soul,
70 Knowing Duke Richard will accommpt of them
As nigh of blood unto his royal self.

72
74 **Emma.** Then farewell, boys, the comfort of my life.

[*They offer to depart.*]

76 Yet come again, ye shall not so depart.
78 If that we die, we'll choose to die together:
Dying or living, we will be together. –
80 [*To herself*] Fond woman, bless them and then let them go;
That is the safest way to keep them safe: –
82 Then farewell again. God bless you both.

[*They offer to depart.*]

84
86 But soft awhile, I have not said my mind.

88 First let me wash your face in mother's tears,
Then sob out sighths to overload the earth
And cast a misty fog upon the air,

[*She embraceth them.*]

92 That no inquiring foe may find you out.

94 Oh let your sanctuary be my lap,

[*She sits down, setting Edward on her knee
and Alfred in her arm.*]

98 Your refuge, your sepúlchres and your graves.
100 A cradle fits you better than a ship.

102 **Gunth.** See, see Dame Nature's operation,
What force it breeds within a mother's mind.
104 None feels a mother's sorrow but a mother.
This queen hath not her peer upon the earth
106 For wisdom, suffering, and for patiënce,
For cloaking sorrow and dissembling grief,

108 And bearing all things with a constant mind;
Yet can she not conceal affection so,
110 But that it breaketh forth like hidden fire.

[*Emma riseth.*]

114 **Emma.** Fie, fie, hide nature's fond indulgency. –
Depart, sweet boys. God keep you in your way.

redoubled = likely pronounced with four syllables:
re-DOUB-el-ed.

= consider.

= near in blood, ie. closely related.

= begin.

= "come back".

= foolishly tender.¹

86: **soft awhile** = "wait a bit", a common expression.
said my mind = "told you everything on my mind."

88-89: in the 16th and early 17th century, sighs (**sighths**)
were frequently described as *smoky*, meaning **misty** or
foggy; we also find in a work from 1596 the collocation
"foggie sighes".

93: "so that no enemy may recognize you while searching
for you;" Emma's conceit is to cast a concealing fog, born
of her sighs, over the boys.

= stressed on its second syllable.

= "is more appropriate for you" (though the boys have long
since outgrown infancy).

= ie. how Mother Nature works.

= ie. no one else can feel.

= equal.

107: for hiding her sadness from others and pretending to
be happy.

= steady.

= ie. "even she cannot". = ie. her love for her sons.

114: **fie, fie** =for shame! (to herself).

hide = put away.

	<p><i>1st Sold.</i> I'll venture hard to <u>make Joan my wife a lady</u>.</p>	<p>= <i>make Joan my wife a lady</i> = ie. via the 1st Soldier's anticipated promotion to knighthood. <i>Joan</i> = this was not necessarily the name of the soldier's wife; <i>Joan</i> was used as well in this period as a generic name for any female peasant.¹</p>
16	<p><i>2nd Sold.</i> The king shall <u>'scape</u> my fingers <u>narrowly</u>.</p>	<p>= escape. = barely, ie. not at all.</p>
18	<p><i>3rd Sold.</i> <u>Mass</u>, if I had steel sides as he hath Ironsides, I would gore him <u>then</u>, that I would.</p>	<p>= a common oath. = the MS prints <i>thim</i> here, emended as shown by Sams.</p>
20	<p><i>4th Sold.</i> <u>What if [I] miss the king</u>, I'll have a duke, An earl, a lord, a knight or gentleman.</p>	<p>= ie. "if I cannot capture or slay Edmund".</p>
22	<p><i>South.</i> Or nobody, and then you'll hit it.</p>	<p>25: ie. "if you had said, '<i>I won't capture anyone of note</i>', then you would be correct."</p>
24	<p><u>Tell</u> not your chickens, sirs, <u>ere</u> they be hatched,</p>	<p>26: this still popular expression can be traced back to at least the mid-16th century. <i>Tell</i> = count. <i>ere</i> = before.</p>
26	<p>Perchance the eggs are rotten in the nest; Then all your <u>brooding hopes is</u> cast away, And you remain <u>as rich as new-shorn sheep</u>. I never loved to gain by treachery, For that again was lost by treachery.</p>	<p>= hatching.¹ = note the subject-verb mismatch. = ie. "not at all": a common expression. 30-31: ie. anything gained through treachery can be counted on to be lost by treachery.</p>
28	<p>I do remember hardy Hannibal Did use these words at won Tarentum's loss: <i>Eadem arte qua prius coepimus</i> <i>Tarentum amisumus.</i></p>	<p>32-37: Southampton punctuates his admonition with an example from ancient history: the Roman historian Polybius reports that Hannibal was able to capture the Roman-occupied port city of Tarentum (modern Tarento) with the help of some native Tarentines who, after overpowering the Roman guards, admitted Hannibal's forces through the gate, allowing the Carthaginian to take control of the city.¹⁰</p>
30		<p>Plutarch, in his <i>Lives</i>, relates how the Romans employed their own devious means to recapture Tarentum: the Roman general Fabius sent a small band of soldiers into a neighbouring region to lure Hannibal out of Tarentum with his army. The ruse worked, allowing Fabius, with some inside help, to walk in and easily take back the city.¹¹</p>
32		<p>Lines 34-35: <i>Latin</i> = "we lost Tarentum by the art with which we first entered." Working in a pre-internet age, Sams was at a loss as to where the Latin quotation came from; however, using the Early English Books Online database, we can trace the appearance of the quote to a 1573 work, <i>The Pilgrimage of Princes</i>, by one Lodowick Lloyd. On page 148, we find the following:</p>
34		<p>"<i>Hannibal in Italy...that subdued Tarentum, in so much that Hannibal was wont to say, when the Romans had again won Tarentum, Eadem arte qua prius coepimus Tarentum amisimus: for by craft Hannibal vanquished the Tarentines, and by craft did the Romans win the same again.</i>"</p>
36	<p>Fraud won Tarentum, fraud Tarentum lost, So Hannibal reaps his labour for his cost.</p>	<p>36-37: the lesson ends with a nice rhyming couplet.</p>
38		

40	<i>[The drums sound afar off.]</i>	
42	Canut. So, Edmund, so thou comst unto thy cost. Thy roaring drum <u>presageth thy mishap</u> , Ringing thy soul's knell with a <u>hollow</u> voice.	= "portends thy misfortune". 43: metaphorically, ringing Edmund's death knell with a sepulchral (hollow) ¹ sound. = ie. "your drums".
44	As <u>thine</u> doth mourn, so let our drum rejoice.	
46	<i>[The drums sound. Enter Edmund with Edricus, other lords and soldiers.</i>	
48	<i>They fight. <u>Canutus gives et exeunt.</u></i>	= the Danish king retreats and everyone exits.
<u>ACT IV, SCENE IV.</u>		
<i>Ashdon, Shire of Essex.</i>		
<i>Enter at one door Canutus and at th' other Edricus.</i>		
1	Canut. Edricus!	
2		
4	Edric. My lord! <u>Hie</u> , <u>cheer</u> your <u>flying</u> troops, And bid them stay a while for victory.	= hurry. = give hope to, encourage. ¹ = fleeing.
6	<u>Whenas</u> you see me lead my men <u>aloof</u> , Then take <u>occasion</u> and <u>assail</u> the <u>prince</u> ;	= when. = ie. away from Edmund's division. = the opportunity. = attack. = Edmund.
8	And I'll be absent when he needs me most, And present for your best avail. Make haste.	8: "but close by (when needed) to act as best benefits you; hurry!"
10	Canut. How much I love thee, Edricus, heavens do know, And I with gifts one day will <u>manifest</u> .	= ie. "demonstrate so."
12		
14	<i>[Exit Canute.]</i>	
16	Edric. So, Edric, now thy <u>plotform</u> is <u>afoot</u> ,	15: speaking to himself: "now your scheme is about to play out". plotform = a variant of platform , meaning "plan of action". afoot = in operation. ¹
18	And <u>one</u> shall die; it <u>skills no matter</u> which. If Edmund, Canut[us] shall quickly <u>follow</u> him;	= ie. either Canutus or Edmund. = ie. matters not. = pursue.
20	If Canut[us], then Edmund shall not stay behind. Whilst they with eager blows assail each other, I here remain <u>a neuter</u> , free from fear,	= neutral, ie. out of the battle. = sides.
22	Not taking <u>part</u> with Canut[us], nor Ironside, Before I see who gets the victory. –	
24	Yet had I rather have Canutus conquer, And <u>privily</u> will aid him with <u>supplies</u> , Rather than Edmund should escape the field.	= secretly. = reinforcements (ie. additional soldiers).
26		
28	<i>[Alarm. Enter Edmund chasing off Canutus. Edricus <u>backs</u> Canutus. Edmund flies.</i>	= joins in support.
30	<i>Exeunt and return Canutus with Edricus.]</i>	27-29: Holinshed reports that the battle at Ashdon was an overwhelming victory for Canute, thanks to the duplicity of Edricus, who " <i>fled to the comfort of the Danes.</i> " In fact,

32 **Canut.** Thanks, worthy Edric, for this victory.
 This day had made an end of me and mine,

34 Hadst thou not backed us with thy warlike troops.
 Know ye if Edmund be escaped or no?

36 **Edric.** Edmund is gone, and I must after him.
 To stay long here would breed suspiciõn.
 38 Then, mighty Canut[us], live long a conqueror;
 And when thou hast the crown, remember me.

40 **Canut.** If I forget thee, God forget my suit
 42 When like a sinner I do humbly pray.
 Forget thee, Edric? God above doth see
 44 How good a heart I ever bore to thee.

46 **Edric.** Then, noble Canutus, I pawn a soldier's faith.
 By my best blood and by my after-hopes,

48 I will remain to thee and to thy heirs
 As true, as false to Edmund Ironside.
 50 Let us not linger here. Muster your men
 And make them ready for a new assault.
 52 I will to Edmund and excuse myself,
 And how I served him now I'll serve him then.

54

[*Exeunt.*]

END of ACT IV.

Canute may be said to have crushed Edmund, whose troops were surrounded and "*slain in heaps*", so that "*few escaped from the dreadful bloody battle.*" Edmund himself escaped, but a great many of his officers and nobles lost their lives in the slaughter.

32: **had made an end** = would have been the end.

mine = "all that is mine", ie. "my army"
 = supported, reinforced.

= go after, ie. rejoin.

= petition, prayers.

= wager or pledge a soldier's (ie. his own) loyalty.
 = expectations of what will take place after this battle, ie. in the future, or hope for God's salvation.

= loyal. = disloyal.

= ie. make an excuse for his apparent treachery.
 ie. "in the same way I rendered service to".

Disaster at Ashdon: the loss at Ashdon was calamitous for Edmund and the English, one on the scale of the Scottish defeat at Flodden in 1513. Holinshed provides a lengthy list of those who perished in the fight, including "*Duke Afrike and Duke Goodwine, with Earl Ulfkettle...and, to be brief, all the flower of the English nobility.*" Many clerics were also amongst the dead, including the "*Bishop of Lincoln, and the Abbot of Ramsey, with others.*"

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Edmund's Camp, Gloucestershire.

*Enter Edmund Ironside, Alfric, Ulfkettle,
Godwin, with others.*

1 **Edmund.** Vild Edricus, all this proceeds from him;
2 I saved his life, and he doth thirst for mine.
3 Ungrateful wretch, hellish incarnate devil!
4 For sure no man was ever so unkind
5 Unto his king and loving countrymen. –
6 Disloyal and unfaithful sycophant,
7 It grieves my vexèd soul to think on thee.

8
9 **Alfric.** Let it not grieve you: rather joy to think
10 You are escapèd from the hands of him
11 That sought like Judas to betray his lord
12 Into the hands of [the] bloodthirsty Danes.

13
14 **Ulf.** Surely, my lord, you are highly favourèd
15 Of God, who sees each human actiön,
16 That He hath given you warning with small loss

17 Of the contagious mind of Edricus.

18
19 *Enter Edricus with his hand in a scarf,
20 halting, with him Stitch.*

21
22 **Stitch.** Master, I would not wish you halt.

23
24 **Edric.** Why so?

25
26 **Stitch.** Marry, sir, you know Alfric is a cripple, and
27 the proverb is '*tis ill halting before a cripple*. He'll
28 perceive it.

29
30 **Edric.** Had he as many eyes as Juno's bird,

31 Or could pierce millstones with his searching sight,

32 He (by his leave) should not my halting find.

Scene I: after the catastrophe at Ashdon, Edmund, one of the few survivors of the battle, fled west to Gloucestershire.

This scene is comprised of an entertaining blend of broad comedy (in the form of Stitch's plentiful absurd asides and commentary) and high drama.

Entering Characters: *Ulfkettle*, another of Edmund's advisors, is, like *Godwin*, never mentioned by name in the play, though each man speaks one brief line in this scene.

= vile. = originates with.

= the devil embodied in flesh.

= ungrateful.¹

6-7: an apostrophe, spoken to the absent Edricus.

= "about you."

= be glad to know.

= the apostle *Judas* betrayed *his lord*, and the Lord, Jesus, to the latter's enemies. See the note below at lines 42-43.

= read as a single syllable: *y'are*.

= by.

= few casualties (to his army); note that the author has contradicted the *Histories'* account of the staggering English casualties at Ashdon.

= diseased, as with a *contagious* malady; injurious.

= sling (holding Edricus' wounded arm).

= limping.

26-28: this common adage may be translated as, "it is a bad idea to limp in front of a cripple". Stitch is warning Edricus that Alfric, being genuinely lame, will be able to perceive that Edricus' limping is feigned.

30: *Juno's bird* was the peacock; *eyes* refers both to anatomical eyes and to the spots on the peacock's tail feathers. *Juno* is the queen of the gods.

eyes = the MS prints *birds* here, emended to *eyes* by Sams.

31: ie. or if his penetrating or keen eyesight had the power to see through rock.

32: "he would not see me limping."

by his leave = with his permission, a common polite expression, used here lightly mockingly.

34 I halt not in the thigh but in the mind. –
All hail unto my gracious sovereign!

36 **Stitch.** Master, you'll bewray yourself: do you say
38 “all hail” and yet bear your arm in a scarf? That's hale indeed.

40 **Edric.** All hail unto my gracious sovereign!

42 **Edmund.** Judas, thy next part is to kiss my cheek
44 And then commit me unto Caiäphas.

Edric. I understand not what your highness means.

46 **Edmund.** Oh heavens, oh impudent, ungodly wretch!

48 **Edric.** I hope your grace doth not exclaim on me.

50 **Edmund.** On thee? Hence, graceless wretch, *grace* me
no more. –

52 Is there none here that will lay hold on him?
His sight, his breath, his fell infectious tongue

54 Is venomer than is the basilisk's.

56 **Edric.** Is this a guerdon for my scars and hurts,
For all my bruises and my broken joints?
58 Is this a hire for my hardiness
And valiant onset on the enemies?
60 Are these my wages which I won with blood,
Blood of myself and proudest Dane that fought?
62 Doth Edmund thus reward his followers
That pawn their lives for him and in his cause?
64 Then bootless have I skirmishèd so long
And sent so many Danes unto their graves;
66 In vain have I lift up my wasting arm
And brandishèd my fawchion o'er thy foes;
68 In vain this curtle-axe was reared aloft,
Which made a lane throughout thy foemen's troops;

36-38: Stitch's pun is based on the differing meanings of the homonyms **hail** and **hale**: Stitch pretends to understand Edricus' common expression of greeting (**all hail**) as "all hale", ie. "all is (ie. I am) in good health", which is hardly accurate given his supposed injuries; hence, he will betray, or reveal (**bewray**), the fact that his wounds are faked!

40ff: Edricus, and in fact all the scene's other characters, will completely ignore Stitch's wry comments.

42-43: the apostle Judas notoriously identified Christ for his arresting officers by **kissing** Him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

part = act.²

Caiaphas = Jewish high priest who arranged the plot to kill Jesus.

= accuse.¹

51: **Hence** = "away with you!"

graceless = depraved, wicked.^{1,3}

grace me no more = "do not call me *your grace* anymore!"³

= take hold of, seize.

= stare or gaze.^{1,3} = treacherous, villainous.¹

54: **venomer** = more poisonous; this may be a unique use of the word **venomer** as an adjective, as it appears nowhere else as such in contemporary literature, nor is it in the OED (there is, however, an entry in the OED for **venomer** as a noun, meaning "one who poisons").

basilisk's = the **basilisk** was a small mythological reptile whose glance (**sight**) and breath were each thought to be fatal.

= reward.

58: **a hire** = "my payment"; **hire** is a likely disyllable: *HI-er*.

hardiness = courageousness.¹

= attack.

= ie. "and of the". = ie. "I fought".

= risk.

= futilely, for no purpose.

= devastation-causing.

= ie. falchion or broad sword;¹ along with *fauchion*, a common alternate form.

= slashing sword.¹ = raised up high.

= cut a path. = enemy's.

70	In vain my lance did <u>overthrow and spoil</u> ; In vain I live, to be <u>requited</u> thus.	= conquer and ravage. ¹ = repaid.
72	<i>Stitch.</i> In vain – what a <u>vain vein</u> my master is in!	= foolish humour.
74	<i>Edmund.</i> Did'st thou not <u>fly</u> , vild traitor, to <u>my foe</u> ?	= flee. = ie. Canute's side.
76	<i>Edric.</i> Who, I?	
78	<i>Edmund.</i> Even thou.	
80	<i>Edric.</i> Thus <u>forward</u> friends are quitted with suspect;	81: "this is how eager (<i>forward</i>) allies are repaid with sus- picion."
82	Thus <u>envy blasts</u> the well-deserving <u>wight</u> ; Thus the unskillful blames the warrior;	= ill-will, malice. = discredits. ¹ = person. 83: those who know nothing about fighting blame the sol- diers for the loss. ^{1,3}
84	Thus, thus, <u>detractio</u> <u>hinders</u> virtuous course. – Fled I, my lord? Canutus can report	= slander. ¹ = belittles or injures. ¹
86	'Twas he that should have fled had <u>succour come</u> . – Fled I, my lords? Your eyes were witnesses How far my heart was free from <u>dastard flight</u> ; But this it is to be a man-at-arms When his <u>desert</u> is recompensed with hate, And resolution wronged with ignorance.	86: Edricus claims that if his forces had received any help – implying that Edmund was lax in coming to his aid – then together they could have driven Canutus off the field. <i>succour come</i> = assistance arrived.
92	For shame, my lords, <u>spurn not against</u> the truth; Thirst not to drink the blood of innocents.	= cowardly. = merit.
94	<i>Edmund.</i> Why, Edricus, can'st thou deny <u>thy flight</u> ?	91: "and (my) firmness in purpose misjudged due to (your) ignorance (of the true facts)." = literally, "do not kick against", ¹ ie. "do not reject".
96	<i>Edric.</i> No, gracious lord, I must confess I fled, Forced from Canutus, not to him, for aid; And that 'tis true, I <u>by your grace's leave</u>	= "that you ran away?" = ie. "with your permission".
100	Will prove <u>on him</u> that dares <u>affirm a no</u> .	100: Edricus challenges any man present who disbelieves his account to a duel. <i>on him</i> = ie. "to any man here". <i>affirm a no</i> = maintain that this is not true.
102	<i>Edmund.</i> I saw thee flee myself with these my eyes.	
104	<i>Ulf.</i> And I, my lord, am witness to the same.	
106	<i>Godw.</i> And I, my lord, will prove it, by your favour.	106: Godwin accepts Edricus' challenge. A later hand crossed out "Godwin" as the speaker of this line and reassigned it to Alfric.
108	<i>Edric.</i> I <u>would</u> the king would give me leave to speak.	= desire.
110	<i>Stitch.</i> And you will prove them blind, I <u>hold</u> my life.	110: a wise-guy's comment: Edricus will prove that they did not see what they saw. <i>hold</i> = bet.
112	<i>Edmund.</i> I give thee leave: speak for thyself and spare not.	112: <i>spare not</i> = ie. "tell us everything, even the bad."

114	Edric. Seeing your grace so <u>forward</u> to the fight, Viewing the Dane to march so bravely on,	= eager.
116	<u>Pricked forth with shame</u> , I as the foremost man	= Edricus claims to have been spurred to act by his previously shameful behaviour.
118	(Not <u>suffering</u> the Dane to <u>set on</u> us Or to approach <u>your grace</u> without a blow)	117-8: Edricus' goal was to assault Canutus with his own division before it attacked (<i>set on</i>) either his own or Edmund's division (<i>your grace</i>). <i>suffering</i> = willing to permit.
120	Stepped forth intending to encounter them And to assail the rearward with my band Till you upon the forefront <u>held them play</u> ;	120-1: Edricus intended to attack Canutus from behind, while Edmund's division kept Canutus occupied (<i>held them play</i>). ¹
122	But see how <u>good intents</u> are ever thwarted.	= good intentions always go awry.
124	Ere I could <u>get the wind</u> to <u>compass</u> them, Your drums' <u>retreat</u> did cause your forces flee; Yet fled not I a foot until such time	= before. = find their scent, ie. locate them. ¹ = trap. ¹ = sounding the tattoo for retreat.
126	As quite <u>bereft</u> of hope I was <u>compelled</u> . Witness this arm, this <u>serviceable</u> arm,	= robbed. = forced (to flee). = diligent in rendering service. ¹
128	That <u>in despite of</u> death did save my life: Witness these scars, which if your grace will see,	= in spite of, ie. in the face of.
130	They'll tell <u>my foes</u> unto their face they lie.	= ie. those who think he ran away.
132	Stitch. Oh horrible scars, <u>scars like blazing stars</u> : well counterfeited, master.	= ie. scars which look like comets; this odd rhyming simile may have been inspired by a clause appearing in Thomas Cooper's well-known 1578 <i>Thesaurus Linguae</i> – "a face full of scars like to stars in the sky." The <i>Thesaurus</i> was a frequent source of language and information for Elizabethan dramatists.
134	Edmund. If this be true, I was too <u>credulous</u> .	= ie. quick to believe the worst.
136	Edric. If it be true, my lord? Assure yourself,	
138	Your grace was misinformed if <u>otherwise</u> ,	= ie. "anyone suggested that what I told you happened is false".
140	And that <u>my man</u> can verify.	= "my servant", ie. Stitch.
142	Stitch. <u>Take heed</u> what ye say, master: I can verify nothing. <u>Marry</u> , I can verify anything. If you'll say so, I'll swear to it, – <u>that 'tis false</u> , I mean.	= be careful. = a common oath. = ie. "that what you say is a lie".
144	Edmund. Then, Edricus, 'twas I that wrongèd thee,	
146	And I that will in all things make amends. Bury unkindness in oblivïon ,	
148	And ne'er remember our suspiciön.	148: "and forget that I ever suspected you."
		150-3 (below): Edricus wisely accuses Edmund's advisors for slandering him to the king, rather than lay any fault on the shoulders of the king himself.

150 **Edric.** 'Twas not your highness but some fawning mate
That put mistrust into your grace's head,
152 Hoping by my downfall to raise himself;
But heavens defend the wrongèd innocent.

= sycophantic fellow (*mate* is opprobrious).

= "rise in your estimation."

154 **Edmund.** Let this suffice; thou hast confirmed our love,
156 And, Edricus, we mind to honour thee
With public notice of thy loyalty.

= ie. "reinforced my affection for you".¹

= intend.

= a public proclamation.¹

158 **Edric.** [*Aside*] See, see, what wit and will can bring about.
160 Canutus pays me for my villainy,
And Edmund loves me for my treachery.

159-161: Edricus is gleeful that he has earned the love of both Edmund and Canutus, even as he played them against each other.

162 **Stitch.** Give a man luck and cast him over the gallows.

163: according to Sams, this is a variation on the proverb, "give a man luck and throw him into the sea," an adage used to describe someone who has experienced unexpected luck, and then goes on to tempt fate. However, the proverb quoted by Sams does not seem to have appeared in contemporary literature until 1620.

164 [Exeunt omnes.]

Edricus Recovers: it is in Grafton that we read of Edricus skillfully re-insinuating himself into Edmund's favour, after treacherously helping Canute win the battle at Ashdon:

"*But when this was laid to the charge of Edricus, he by his untrue means, so excused himself, that no man might charge him with any default.*"

ACT V, SCENE II.

Deerhurst, Gloucestershire: Camp of Canutus.

Scene II: Edmund raised a new army at Gloucestershire, to where he was pursued by Canute. The two armies once again squared off at the town of Deerhurst, which sits on the east bank of the River Severn.

Enter Canutus reading of letter.

*With him Southampton, Archbishop of Canterbury,
Egina, Uskataulf and Swetho, with soldiers.*

1 **Canut.** [*Reading letter from Edricus*]
2 "My lord, my heart is firmly bound to you,
And I am pressed to do you any service;
4 But Edmund is grown strange to me of late,
And I am not familiar with his thoughts.
6 When I have once regained opiniön,
I will not fail to be your faithful agent;
8 In meantime make ye strong to hold him play,
For he is coming with a mighty power."

= ready.

= aloof (ie. out of suspicion). = recently.

5: "I do not know what he is thinking."

= (Edmund's) esteem.

= "reinforce yourself so that you may hold off Edmund's forces."

= army.

10 [Finis letter.]

12 [*Aside*] By'r lady, this goes hard, these news are naught.

13: *By'r lady* = ie. "by our lady", an oath.

this goes hard = "this is distressing".

these news are naught = "this is bad (*naught*) news."

Note how *news* is treated as a plural word, as was commonly done throughout the 16th century. The use of *news* as a singular word gained traction in the early 17th century, and

14 Is Edmund now grown wary? Then I doubt
 15 I ne'er shall see the day I long have sought;
 16 But I must bear a semblance of good news,
 Lest these perceive our hopes to falter,

18 And that would clean discourage all their hearts,
 For all presume on Edric's policy.

20 **South.** Son, is't good news?

22 **Canut.** My lord, exceeding good.

24 **Egina.** Give me the letter.

26 **Canut.** Not for all the world.
 28 I dare not trust myself with reading it,
 29 Lest I, o'er-cloyed with joy, should play the blab.
 30 Let this suffice: I am now confident,
 31 Upon sure-grounded confirmatiöns,
 32 That Edmund is my own. He writes to me
 33 That he is coming with a mighty host,
 34 But (saith he) be not you discomfited,

For were they millions, half should fight for you,
 36 And turn their weapons upon Ironside.

38 **South.** [*Aside*]
 39 'Tis strange the prince should be so credulous.

42 [*The drum sounds afar off.*]

44 **Canut.** Yon drum doth tell us Edmund Ironside,
 45 Unwitting of his overthrow at hand,
 46 Comes gallantly attended on by troops
 47 Of horse and footmen to his funeral. –

48 Oh that thou knew'st thy dying day so nigh,
 49 That thou mightest make thee fit to go to God. –
 50 In faith, it grieves [me] at the very heart
 To see him come so unprepared for death.

52 *Enter Edmund, Emma, Archbishop of York,*
Edricus, Alfric, Godwin, Aylward, Ulfkettle,
 54 *Leofric and Turkillus.*]

56 **Edmund.** Behold where Canut[us] comes marching
 bravely on.
 57 Methinks yon sight would make a sick man sound.

58 [*They march along the stage, one [after] another.*]

by the 1750's became almost exclusively so.
 = circumspect (of danger).¹ = suspect.
 = "gives the appearance that this is".
 17: ie. "lest my followers recognize that I am becoming disheartened."
 = completely.
 19: "because everyone is depending on Edricus' strategy for our success."
 = ie. Canutus is Southampton's son-in-law.
 = gorged. = ie. (unintentionally) reveal what the letter says.
 = well-grounded.
 = ie. that he has Edmund where he wants him. = ie. Edricus.
 = ie. Edmund. = army.
 = discouraged.
 35-36: even if Edmund's army consisted of millions of soldiers, half of them would be ready to defect to the Danish army.
 39: Southampton is perplexed as to why Canutus would believe anything Edricus tells him; of course, Canutus has discreetly invented the contents of the letter
 = yonder.
 44: not realizing his defeat is near.
 = calvary. = infantry.
 47-50: Canutus pretends to be saddened that Edmund will die without having properly prepared to meet his maker, ie. via confession. The Dane apostrophizes to the absent Edmund in lines 47-48.
nigh (line 47) = near.
mightest = pronounce as *might'st*.
 56-57: ie. Edmund is glad to finally have Canutus within his grasp.
 = healthy.
 = the MS prints only *one an other* here; the interpolation

60 Canutus!

62 **Canut.** Edmund!

64 **Edmund.** The ground thou standst upon is Ironside's.

66

68 **Canut.** The ground I stand on, Edmund, is mine own,
Fallen to me not successively indeed,

But by forfeiture as copyhold,

70 Rent-run and wanting reparatiöns,
72 Falls to the lord. Even so thy father's land,
For want of tribute-paying long since due,
I seize upon as lord to thee and that.

74 **Edmund.** But for thou shalt perceive that Edmund can

76 Temper the unruly stomach of his rage,
And moderate his lusty youthful blood,
78 Which springs through every vein to fly at thee,

80 Not half these words without controlling strokes
Should from thy lips have vomited their spleen.

82 Oh, how my heart beats! Much ado I have
To make it quiet till I answer thee.
Art thou the lord of me and of my land?

84 Uncivil Canutus, knowest thou to whom thou speakest?

86 This heart scorns all subjection,
And this head looks o'er the world; these feet
Were made to tread o'er kings, Canutus, over thee. –
88 Nay, storm not, Canutus. Learn how to mix thy speech

90 With more beseeming terms, and govern thou
Thy surly terms with reason, not with rage.
I say I am a king; so art not thou;
92 Therefore I am thy better. I say more –
I have a kingdom: this I stand upon
94 Is mine. Thou standst upon my ground.
I say this land is mine, Canutus, it is mine.

is Sams'.

= the kings will address each other with the insulting *thou*.

67-73 (below): employing a lengthy legal metaphor, Canutus explains that Edmund is in the position of a tenant who, having failed to pay his rent (ie. tribute), must vacate his property in favour of the landlord.

67-68: Canutus did not receive his crown through inheritance.

successively = through succession.

69: but by default, as on a lease.³

copyhold = an ancient and obscure form of tenure.¹

= the rent past due, or unpaid.¹ = needing repair.³

= reverts to the landlord (*lord*). = in a similar way.

72: for failing to pay to the Danes the long-overdue tribute.

73: "I reclaim the land as the lord of you, my vassal."

75-78: briefly, "if it were not for the fact that I want you to see that I can keep my temper".³

= moderate. = reference to the *stomach* as the seat of emotion.¹

= vigorous.

78: Edmund's blood is violently flowing with a desire to attack Canutus.

79-80: Canutus would not have gotten halfway through his rash speech without suffering Edmund's curbing or overpowering blows (*controlling strokes*).^{1,2} The image of line 80 is of uncontrolled speech.³

spleen = hot temper.¹

81-82: Edmund finds it very difficult to control himself.

= rude, unrefined.^{1,2} Sams suggests pronouncing *knowest* and *speakest* as monosyllables, ie. *know'st* and *speak'st*.

85: Edmund disdains to submit to anyone else.

88: *storm not* = "do not rage".

88-89: *Learn how...terms* = ie. learn to speak in a more seemly (*beseeming*) manner.

= control.

= imperious or ill-humoured words.¹

= superior (in rank).

= "maintain", but also meant literally.

96	<i>Canut.</i> By usurpation thine, by conquest mine.	
98	Who knows not <u>conquest is inheritance</u> ?	= possession via conquest is as legitimate as by inheritance.
100	<i>Edmund.</i> So <u>rape</u> and theft is true possession If malefactors go unpunished.	100-1: Edmund belittles Canutus' argument, suggesting that possession via conquest is only legitimate if the conqueror goes unpunished. He is implying that Canutus is no better than a common thief who claims that he now owns an item he has stolen, because he has escaped justice. <i>rape</i> = robbery. ¹
102		
104	<i>Canut.</i> It seems indeed possession is <u>of force</u> , For by possession you withhold my crown.	= valid in law, a legal term. ³
106	<i>Edmund.</i> Nay, you and Swaine, your <u>gripple-minded dad</u> ,	106: <i>gripple-minded</i> = greedy. ⁸ <i>dad</i> = an insultingly informal name for a father.
		107-110 (below): Edmund, perhaps confused, now complains that the Danes conquered England through the treasonous act of an Englishman, rather than by (honest and open) military conquest; Sams notes that Edmund is now confirming Canutus' argument (that conquest is a legitimate way by which to take over territory), which he had rejected just moments ago.
108	By treason, not <u>by force of valiant arms</u> ,	
110	Against all justice, law and equity, Did first intrude yourselves and then <u>extrude</u> Our woeful subjects from their native home, And that I come to <u>prove</u> , and therefore thus –	= expel. ¹ = establish. ¹
112		
114	[<i>He draweth.</i>]	
116	<i>Canut.</i> Then to <u>confute</u> thy <u>forged</u> argument, Thus argue I; my sword is reason's proof.	= prove false. ¹ = false.
118		
120	[<i>He draweth.</i>]	
122	<i>Edmund.</i> That is, of force to put back reason's proof, Which proves you, like your sword, <u>unreasonable</u> .	120: ie. Canutus must rely on force to refute a logically demonstrated truth. = irrational, incapable of reason.
124	[<i>They <u>train</u> their soldiers [about] the stage.</i>]	= march. ¹
126	<i>Edric.</i> [<i>Aside</i>] Edmund is strong, Canutus <u>is</u> weak <u>in p[art]</u> ,	126: <i>is</i> = may be omitted to correct the line's meter. <i>in p[art]</i> = perhaps meaning "on his part"; only the <i>p</i> appears in the MS: <i>part</i> is Sams' suggestion.
128	Edmund gracious in the people's eyes; Canutus is not so: what had I best to do? <u>Fain</u> would I have Canutus win, and he is weak;	
130	I would have Edmund lose, and he is strong. –	129-130: the suggestion that Edmund was physically more powerful than Canutus came from Holinshed; see line 261 below. <i>Fain</i> = gladly.
132	Oh <u>gracious stars</u> , inspire my nimble wit With some <u>device</u> , and as I ever have,	= with this apostrophe, Edricus appeals to the <i>stars</i> in their role as determiners of men's fates. = idea.

134 I will employ it to some villainy. –
Soft, let me see – oh, it is excellent!

136 Fountain of wit, the spring of policy,
The flower of treason and of villainy.

138 How much undecent is it that this cap,
This homely cape should overload this crow
When thou deservest a crown of beaten gold.

140 But to the matter. So it needs must fadge,

142 For can I bring them to a single fight,
Whosoever hath the better, yet shall I
Be gracious in his eye, as who should say
144 I was the causer of his victory.

146 Besides, I shall insinuate myself
Into the bosom of opiniõn,
And be esteemed my country's buckler.

148 Well, I'll about it, meaning no man good,
But that my speech may shed king Edmund's blood.

150
152 *[The armies make towards one another
when Edricus standing between them.]*

154 **Edric.** Renownèd Edmund, first I speak to thee.
Let these my words, proceeding from true zeal,
156 Beg at thy ears a little audience;
And worthy Canutus, sheathe up thy slaught'ring sword
158 Till I have spoke my mind, that all may see
My words proceed from perfect piety.

160
162 **Edmund.** Edricus, be brief.

164 **Canut.** Go to, I'll stay a little; but be not tedious.

166 **Alfric.** When the fox preaches, then beware the geese.

134: wait a moment: Edricus has an idea!

135-6: Edricus refers to the traits of cleverness and intelligence (*wit*) as the source of cunning (*policy*),¹ which in turn leads one to acts of betrayal and other infamous acts.

Fountain = spring.

137-8: how unbecoming or offensive (*undecent*)¹ it is for a man of Edricus' brilliance to be wearing what he implies to be such an undignified outfit.

cap = the MS prints *cappe*, which could be either *cap* or *cape*. Sams goes with *cap*, assuming no repetition of *cape* was intended.

homely = simple, plain.

crow = ironic: Edmund had called Edricus a *crow* at Act IV.i.108.

deservest = pronounce as a disyllable: *de-serv'st*.

= "in this way my plans must succeed (*fadge*)".¹

141-4: Edricus has a new plan: he must convince Edmund and Canutus to settle the whole war in a one-on-one fight (single combat). Whoever wins will be grateful to Edricus for the idea.

145-7: in this way, Edricus can also wheedle his way into a good reputation as his country's shield (*buckler*), or defender.

= get to it, give it a try. = intending to help neither king.

149: in his heart, Edricus still hopes that Canutus will emerge victorious.

= approach.

= arising from, ie. spoken out of.

= dutifulness.¹

= expression of impatience. = pause.

165: Alfric recites the traditional formula for the adage which was previously alluded to at Act IV.i.112-3 above; the point of the proverb is to admonish men to be wary of the hidden agendas of others.

beware the geese = ie. the geese should beware.

167-202 (below): although the author has assigned this manipulative speech to Edricus as a way to further develop the latter's scheming nature, the *Histories* make it clear that this speech, which is recreated in full by both Holinshed and

168 **Edric.** What strive you for, imperious Ironside?
Renowèd Canutus, what do you level at?

170 We daily to appease your mortal wars
Offer our slaughtered bodies to the sword,

172 Yet neither of you have the upper hand.
Today he that was foiled tomorrow foils;
He that even now did faintly sound retreat
174 Renews again the fight with double force:
Thus in quandaries hangs the victory,
176 And wavering Fortune frowns and smiles on both.

Canutus is not to be overcome,

178 Because his brother Swaine doth succour him;

And Edmund likewise is invincible,
180 For force and valour hews him through his foes.

What then is th' end of this your endless grudge?

182 None other but when all your men be slain,
You then must fight alone or else accord,
184 And he that then is king shall rule no men
Nor govern nations, for consuming war

186 Will quite devour this solitary isle,
Not leaving any over whom to rule,
188 Nor to resist foreign invasiöns.
If love of kingdoms be the cause of this,
190 Suppress the boiling of your haughty minds;

You have approved your soldiers' forwardness:

192 Then now at last shake hands and join in league;
Agree like noble kings and part the land;
194 Have now compassion of this little isle,
Whose soil is manured with carcasses,
196 And made a sea with blood of innocents;
But if your emulation be so great
198 That either scorns to have competitors,
And brook not equals in your dignities,

200 Fight then alone that would be kings alone:
Let not all perish for the wills of two,

Grafton, was given by an unknown speaker, it being uncertain even whether the speaker was English or Danish.

= emperor-like.¹
= aim.

169-170: Edricus compares the daily sacrifice of all the kings' soldiers' bodies to a religious sacrifice.

We = all the followers of Edmund and Canutus.

mortal wars = deadly wars, wars fought to the death; similar to the modern expression **mortal combat**.¹

= defeated. = defeats the other.

= timidly.¹

= ie. a larger army.

= uncertainty.¹

176: fickle **Fortune** sometimes gives one or the other the advantage.

= defeated.

178: a bit of a mysterious line; the identity of **Swaine** (if indeed this is the correct name here) is unknown.

succour = help.

180: because his strength and courage allow him to cut through or down his enemies.

181: "to where will all of this hostility (**grudge**)¹ inevitably lead?" Note also the line's wordplay with **then**, **th' end**, and **endless**.

= be reconciled.¹

= wasting, destroying; but **consume** also means "to eat" or "to ingest", tying in to **devour** in the next line.

= isolated.¹

= ie. any subjects.

189-190: "if you are so obsessed with ruling a kingdom, then restrain the raging of your aspiring (**haughty**) minds".¹

191: **approved** = proved, demonstrated.

forwardness = "eagerness (to fight on your behalves)".

= alliance.

= divide.

= possibly a disyllable. = fertilized.

= ambition.

= ie. "each of you".

199: "and cannot bear (**brook**) to see another with the same titles (**dignities**) as you have".

= "you who prefer to be kings by yourselves should fight by yourselves."

= ie. "everyone else".

202 But let your swords decide whose title's best.

204 **Edmund.** Edric, thou hitst the mark I level at.

Thy counsel, coming from a zealous heart,
 206 Fits in all points our expectatiön.

Know I accept thereof, and offer here
 208 To prove even hand in single fight
 Which of us two shall wear the diadem.

210 **Canut.** Edmund, Report shall never whet her tongue
 212 Upon Canutus to eternize thee.

I scorn to stain my reputatiön
 214 With abject titles of pale cowardice

To make thee famous in opinion's mouth.
 216 I here accept thy challenge and his speech,
 Glad of so fit a time to be revenged
 218 For all those foul dishonours thou hast done,
 And glad for sparing of that guiltless blood
 220 Which in our quarrels this day had been shed.
 Oh, had this day been but a year ago,
 222 Many a tall man had been now alive,
 Many a salt tear had been now unshed
 224 By fathers for their sons' unhappy deaths,
 By mothers for their children's wretched ends,
 226 And widows for their husbands' timeless want;
 But I am glad this long-expected hour
 228 At last is come.

230 **Egina.** My lord, you shall not fight.

232 **Canut.** My lady, but I will. Will you fight for me?
 Give her my sword and shield.

234

[Edmund and Emma talk together.
 236 Edmund turns a[way].]

238 **Emma.** Yet hear me, good my lord;
 Will you on whom the state doth sole depend
 240 Our welfare, all the realm's, your friends, and kinsfolk,
Hazard the loss of all upon the chance
 242 Of fickle Fortune, since the better man

167-202 (above): it is clear that the author consulted both Grafton's and Holinshed's versions of this speech to craft that of Edricus, thanks to the obvious borrowings of words, phrases and ideas. See Postscript II below for a detailed comparison of the speeches.

204: ie. "you have identified exactly what I want;" an archery metaphor: **mark** = target, and **level** = aim.

= an enthusiastic.

206: "matches in every respect my own ideas of what should be done."

= on equal footing.¹

211-2: Canutus will not give personified Reputation (**Report**) the opportunity to increase Edmund's prestige and good name at his expense. Canutus' image of his own person being the whetstone upon which Report shall sharpen (**whet**, like a sword) her tongue is a powerful one.

eternize = give eternal fame to.

213-4: Canutus refuses to harm his own good name by being called a coward.

abject titles = despicable labels.²

= ie. Edricus'.

= ie. to spare. = innocent.

= brave.

= unfortunate.

= premature. = absence.^{1,3}

= "in my place".

= from here to the end of the play, there are a number of places in the MS where the ends of the lines are missing. The hard brackets will indicate Sams' suggestions for filling in the missing letters.

= alone.

= risk.

= yet another allusion to the unpredictability attendant on **Fortune's** dispensing of good and bad luck.

<p>244 Is sooner killed by <u>over-hardiness</u> Than an <u>advised</u> coward? Good my lord, It is <u>undecent</u> you should fight with him, 246 <u>Being</u> no king nor having <u>ought</u> to lose.</p> <p>248 Edmund. Madam, his life is even to him as <u>dear</u> As <u>mine</u> to me. Besides, he is a prince 250 Of noble blood and <u>high-resolvèd</u> spirit; And if he were not, yet my cause being g[ood], 252 And justice on my side, I would not fear – Nay, could not with my honour but accept</p> <p>254 The speech of Edric and in single fight <u>Approve</u> my title lawful, good and right. 256 Then madam, be content, and you shall see The God in whom I trust will <u>succour</u> me.</p> <p>258 Were he <u>Golias</u>, I the little king,</p> <p>I would not fear, him on his knees to bring; 260 But he hath rather cause to doubt of me, I being big and far more strong than he.</p> <p>262 <i>[Egina talks with Canutus, Canutus turns away.]</i></p> <p>264 Canut. I had rather fight with him than scold with you.</p> <p>266 Egina. I cannot speak but <u>straight</u> you say I scold.</p> <p>268 Canut. Then, <u>sweeting</u>, you must learn your tongue to hold. –</p> <p>270 Nay, now you'll <u>blubber</u>. <u>Go to</u>, take this kiss</p> <p>And pray for me. – <u>Why stay you</u>, Ironside?</p> <p>272 Edmund. Because I think thou art not fit to die, 274 But rather with Egina fit to cry. – My lords, I do command you, <u>for your lives</u>, 276 None be so <u>hardy</u> as to <u>succour</u> me, Or to approach us ere the fight be done; 278 But if I die, to make my sepulchre Even in the place <u>whereas</u> I took my death, 280 Setting my crown upon Canutus' head, And do to him as to your sovereign.</p> <p>282 Canut. <u>Even so</u>, brave followers, I <u>will</u> you do 284 To Edmund here if Edmund conquer me. – Sound drums and trumpets with your warlike noise! 286 Either begin my joy or end my joys.</p>	<p>= being rash or over-confident.¹ = "than is a cautious".¹ = unfitting, unbecoming. = ie. "Canutus being". = anything.</p> <p>= valuable. = ie. "mine is". = fully-determined.</p> <p>253: "nay, I have no choice, but, to protect my honour, accept".</p> <p>= prove.</p> <p>= help.</p> <p>258: ie. "if Canutus were Goliath (<i>Golias</i>), and I David". Various spellings of <i>Goliath</i> were common in the 16th century, including, <i>Golias</i>, <i>Goliah</i>, <i>Goloas</i> and <i>Golias</i>, but <i>Goliath</i> was the form that appeared in all the old English Bibles, including the <i>Great</i>, <i>Geneva</i>, <i>Coverdale</i>, <i>Bishop's</i> and <i>Matthew</i> Bibles.</p> <p>261: Holinshed wrote that Canute "<i>was a man of mean</i> (ie. small) <i>stature, but yet strong and hardy.</i>"</p> <p>= immediately.</p> <p>= common term of endearment. Note the rhyming couplet formed by lines 268 and 270, which emphasizes Canutus' amused approach to his wife.</p> <p>270: blubber = weep.¹ Go to = expression expressing impatience, used by Canutus playfully here.¹</p> <p>= "what are you waiting for".</p> <p>273-4: Edmund employs a taunting rhyming couplet.</p> <p>= ie. "at the risk of losing your lives". = presumptuous, eager.¹ = assist.</p> <p>278-281: if Canutus slays Edmund, his followers should accept the Dane as their king. wheras (line 279) = where.</p> <p>= likewise. = desire.</p>
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288	[<i>The trumpets sound. The armies <u>do compass</u> the two kings in the <u>midst</u>. They fight.</i>]	= surround. = middle, center. Holinshed tells us that the single combat between the kings took place on a small island called Oldney, located in the River Severn.
290	Stay, hold thy hand, I prithee, breathe awhile.	291: Canutus asks for a break.
292	Edmund. Not till thou yieldst or dies[t].	
294	[<i>Edmund drives Canutus about.</i>]	
296	Canut. Stay, Edmund,	
298	'Tis not for I fear thy fortitude	299-300: Canutus' request for a pause does not stem from fear of Edmund's strength (fortitude), ¹ but rather because he is out of breath.
300	That thus I crave thee stay, but that I <u>want</u> The use of breath to <u>prosecute</u> the fight.	want = lack. prosecute = carry on, continue. ¹ Holinshed reports that Canute was " <i>far too weak to deal with a man of such strength as Edmund was known to be.</i> "
302	Edmund. Then <u>breathe</u> awhile: I give thee <u>leave</u> to rest.	= relax. = permission.
304	Edric. [<i>Aside</i>] I fear Canutus will be <u>overcome</u> ;	304-6: if Canutus is defeated (overcome), Edricus will regret that he suggested the idea of the single-combat.
306	Then shall I wish my tongue, the cause thereof,	
308	Had been cut out when it began to speak, For I desire to drink king Edmund's blood Because he ever sought to do me good.	307-8: Edricus ironically resents Edmund for having always helped him, a point building on Edricus' explanation of the source of his hostility towards the English king which he began at Act I.ii.44-49.
310	South. Egina, be content. I <u>warrant</u> you, aye, Canutus will do well enough.	= assure.
312	Egina. I fear <u>him</u> much.	= ie. "for him".
314	Edmund. What, are ye ready?	
316	Canut. Aye, to be thy death.	
318	[<i>They fight again.</i>]	
320	[<i>Edmund drives Canutus back about the stage.</i>]	319-320: Holinshed's dramatic description of the single combat is worth reproducing: <i>The two champions manfully assailed either other, without sparing. First, they went to it on horseback, and after on foot...[Canute] receiving a great blow by the hand of his adversary, which caused him somewhat to stagger; yet recovered himself, and boldly stept forward to be revenged. But perceiving he could not find advantage, and that he was rather too weak, and shrewdly overmatched, he spake to Edmund with a loud voice on this wise</i> " (followed by Canute's speech of surrender).
322	<u>Stay</u> , Edmund, stay, Canutus yields to thee.	= stop.
324	Edric. What, will he <u>basely</u> yield? <u>The devil forfend</u> .	324: basely = servilely, like a slave. The devil forfend = ie. the devil forbid; the usual expression is "God forfend", but Edricus' variation

326 **Canut.** Take which of these thou wilt, my hand or sword:
My hand brings friendship firm, immovable;
328 My sword brings enmity irrevocable.

330 **Edmund.** Brave Canutus, in yielding thou hast won.
That which thy sword could never do,
332 Thy tongue hath brought to pass by gentle speech.

Canutus, take my hand; here lies my sword.

334 Edmund is thine, his thine, himself and all;

Now let us strive who shall demerit best
336 By mutual kindness who shall be termed a friend.

338 **Canut.** How pleasant are these speeches to my ears,
Aeolian music to my dancing heart,

340 Ambrosian dainties to my starvèd maw,

Sweet-passing nectar to my thirsty throat,

342 Rare cullises to my sick-gluttèd mind,

344 Refreshing ointments to my wearied limbs,
And heavenly physic to my earth-sick soul,

Which erst was surfeited with woe and war.

346 **Edmund.** Let me embrace thee, war-begotten friend.

348 [They embrace.]

350 God grant as brothers we may long embrace; –
352 And, sweet Egina, for thy husband's sake,
In sign of love, this kiss from Edmund take.

354 [Edmund kisses Egina.]

emphasizes his tacit alliance with the dark side.

devil = a disyllable: *de'l*.

= unalterable.

330-2: ie. Canutus has won Edmund's friendship with a gentleman-like speech, something he never could have gained through battle.

= Edmund places his sword on the ground.

= ie. "what belongs to him you may call your own" (Sams, p. 192).³ Another clear borrowing from Holinshed, who, however, had ascribed these words to Canute: "*and let us deal so friendly, that thou may'st use my things as thine own, and I thine as though they were mine.*"

335-6: Edmund invites Canutus to test which of them can, through their acts of comradery, deserve (**demerit**)¹ more to be called (**termed**) "friend."

338-345 (below): with numerous metaphors, Canutus expresses his relief: Edmund's offer of friendship is a balm to his soul.

339: with an allusion to **Aeolus**, the Greek god of the wind, Canutus describes the wind as pleasantly musical.

340: **Ambrosian** = **ambrosia** was the food of the gods.
dainties = delicacies.
maw = stomach.

341: **Sweet-passing** = that which passes sweetly down the throat.
nectar = drink of the gods.

342: **Rare cullises** = ie. excellent nourishing or healing concoctions; a **cullis** was a strong meat broth frequently administered to sick persons.¹
sick-gluttèd = very sick.

344: **heavenly** = a disyllable: *he'n-ly*.
physic = medicine.
earth-sick = weary of this world.³

= "before this moment". = gluttèd.

= a friend born in war.

356	But, lords, why stand you still? grieve you to see	
358	Canutus and your king so well agree?	
360	Alfric. The <u>inward solace</u> which our hearts conceive To see peace grow where foul <u>debate</u> was sown,	= internal delight. ¹ 361: note the agricultural metaphor with grow and sown . debate = strife. ¹ = harmony.
362	To see sweet <u>concord</u> spring from discord's womb, To see war bring forth love and amity,	
364	To see two mortal foes prove faithful friends, And <u>Mars</u> drink milk instead of <u>purple blood</u> ,	= the god of war. = a common collocation.
366	Doth force our tongues, <u>our hearts' chief orators</u> ,	= ie. the tongue as the speaker which expresses what one feels in one's heart.
	To shew with silence joy unspeakable. –	
368	Yet, lords, behold, even as you do embrace, So <u>in dumb shews</u> we all unite our hearts.	= ie. in silence, without words.
370		
	[<i>The lords embrace.</i>]	371: from Holinshed: " <i>King Edmund, with those words of his adversary was so pacified, that immediately he cast away his sword, and coming to Canute, joined hands with him. Both the armies by their example did the like.</i> "
372		
374	Turk. Remember, Leofric, <u>our children's loss</u> .	= the slicing off of their noses and hands.
376	Leo. Turkillus, I do, and must <u>serve the time</u> And <u>wait upon occasion</u> for revenge.	= ie. "act as required now". = wait for the right opportunity.
378	A day of mirth begins a woeful year, As sudden storms do follow sunshine clear.	377-8: by analogy, Leofric grimly predicts that tragedy will follow the celebrations of the present moment.
380	Edmund. Now, noble lords, let us like friends <u>consult</u> Upon partition of this noble isle. –	= ie. negotiate. 381: how to divide up Britain.
382	[<i>To Canutus</i>] Yourself shall choose which part you think is best: The east or west, the right hand or the left.	= Sams sees an allusion to Genesis 13:9: " <i>Is not the whole land before thee?...if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou go to the right hand, then I will take the left.</i> "
384	My court <u>is yours</u> , my counselors are yours, My friends your friends, thy foe my enemy,	= ie. "is at your command".
386	My people yours, my treasure and myself All are your own, for you shall all command.	
388		
390	Canut. Thanks, noble brother and <u>my second self</u> . In all thy <u>acts</u> thou dost excel thyself.	= common expression describing a bosom-friend. 390: "you are outdoing yourself in everything you do." acts = appears as arts in the MS, emended as shown by Sams.
392	Foul shame on them that are thy enemies, And vengeance <u>light</u> on them that think thee ill.	= fall, descend.
394	Edmund. Go [we] unto our <u>coasts</u> and feast us there, And there conclude an everlasting peace. –	= ie. individual halves of the island. 394-5: according to Holinshed, Edmund took the eastern half of the kingdom, the remainder falling to Canute.
396	Sound drums and trumpets! Here ends w[oeful war]. Thus <u>hand in hand</u> and <u>heart in heart</u> w[e go].	397: hand in hand = perhaps meaning "arm in arm". heart in heart = interesting occasionally-used companion expression to <i>hand-in-hand</i> .
398		

Edric. And I for one. 'Tis meet it should be s[o].

400 [Aside.] Thus wise men can dissemble what they th[ink],
And till occasion fits them, sleeping win[k].

402 But I have sworn and I will keep my vo[w],
By Heaven I'll be revenged on both of you.

404

406 [They go hand-in-hand out of th[e stage],
Edricus leading the drum.]

FINIS

399: *And I for one* = ie. "and I act for myself;" compare this 1575 quote: "*every man for himself and I for one.*" *meet* = appropriate.

401: *occasion fits them* = they find the right opportunity (to act self-servingly).

sleeping wink = Sams suggests the meaning of this enigmatic collocation to be that Edricus will close his eyes to that which he does not wish to see.

Postscript I.

Edmund did not get to enjoy the newly-recovered peace of his kingdom for long, dying at the end of November 1016, leaving rule over the entire realm to **Canute**. Ancient historians disagree as to the cause of English king's death: some wrote that he died a natural death from sickness, but others asserted, more memorably, that he was murdered at Oxford, "*as he sat on a privy to do the necessaries of nature*" (Holinshed). Moreover, reports existed that the deed was done by either **Edricus**, or perhaps his sons.

Some who assigned the murder to Edricus further wrote that he actually confessed his crime to Canutus, who, depending which chronicler one believes, had the wicked counselor executed, or promoted him to Governor of Mercia. Holinshed observes the impossibility of determining the truth of the matter.

Canute, meanwhile, having as yet no legitimate children, in a move calculated to consolidate the Danish and English claims to the throne of England, married Edmund's widowed mother **Emma** (Emma's brother **Richard II**, Duke of Normandy, in turn married Canute's sister **Hestritha!**). By general consent, it was intended that the crown would then pass to the descendants of Canute and Emma.

On Canute's death in 1035, however, the throne passed to his bastard son **Harold Harefoot**, his only surviving son who was present in England at the time. When Harold died in 1040, the crown passed to **Hardicnut**, the son of Canute and Emma; but when Hardicnut died in 1042, the throne reverted to **Edward**, the son of Ethelred and Emma, and half-brother to Edmund. Hardicnut was the last Danish king of England.

Edward is remembered today by the sobriquet **Edward the Confessor**.

Postscript II.

Edricus' Speech of Peace: at Act V.ii.167-202, Edricus gives a lengthy speech in which he tries to convince the warring kings Edmund and Canutus to either put aside their differences and make peace, or to end the war by engaging in single combat between themselves.

The author of *Edmund Ironside* was clearly inspired by Holinshed and Grafton, both of whom printed their own versions of this speech in their respective *Histories* (we may note that it was normal for early chroniclers to invent important historical speeches, a habit dating back to ancient times).

It is fascinating to inspect how our dramatist borrowed and weaved language from both *Histories* into Edricus' harangue. Below, we reprint Edricus' speech, and quote the specific lines from the older *Histories* which he adapted (**H** stands for Holinshed, **G** for Grafton):

From *Edmund Ironside*, Act V.ii:

Author's source, either Holinshed [H] or Grafton [G] (spelling modernized):

167 *Edric.* What strive you for, imperious Ironside?
168 Renownd Canutus, what do you level at?
We daily to appease your mortal wars
170 Offer our slaughtered bodies to the sword,
Yet neither of you have the upper hand.
172 Today he that was foiled tomorrow foils;
He that even now did faintly sound retreat
174 Renews again the fight with double force:

Thus in quandaries hangs the victory
176 And wavering Fortune frowns and smiles on both.
Canutus is not to be overcome
178 Because his brother Swaine doth succour him;
And Edmund likewise is invincible,
180 For force and valour hews him through his foes.
What then is th' end of this your endless grudge?

182 None other but when all your men be slain,

You then must fight alone or else accord,

184 And he that then is king shall rule no men
Nor govern nations, for consuming war
186 Will quite devour this solitary isle,
Not leaving any over whom to rule
188 Nor to resist foreign invasions.
If love of kingdoms be the cause of this,
190 Suppress the boiling of your haughty minds;
You have approved your soldiers' forwardness,
192 Then now at last shake hands and join in league;
Agree like noble kings and part the land;

169: *daily we die...* [G]

172-4: *If one of you win the battle, he pursueth him that is overcome; and if he chance to be vanquished, he resteth no till he have recovered new strength to fight eftsoons [ie. again] with him that is victor.* [H]

177-180: *For Edmond maye not be overcome for his great strength, and Canutus maye not be overcome for favour of fortune.* [G]

181: *What shall then be the fruit of this continual strife?* [G]

182: *none there but when the knights been all slain on either party...* [G]

183: *then the dukes compelled by need will accord, or else they must fight alone without knights.* [G]

184-8: *lest if all men fight, all men be slain, by mean whereof no men shall be left to be under the Lordship or leading of Dukes, nor yet to defend kings against their strong enemies or nations.* [G]

194 | Have now compassion of this little isle,
Whose soil is manured with carcasses,
196 | And made a sea with blood of innocents;
But if your emulation be so great
198 | That either scorns to have competitors,
And brook not equals in your dignities,

200 | Fight then alone that would be kings alone:

Let not all perish for the wills of two,
202 | But let your swords decide whose title's best.

197-9: *If their coveteousness and greedy desire of Lordships be so great, that either hath indignation to take and part with other, or else the one to be under that other...* [G]

200: *then let them fight alone, that will be the Lords alone...* [G]

201-2: *devise the way whereby ye may without so great slaughter, and without such pitiful bloodshed of both your guiltless peoples, try whether of you is most worthy to be preferred.* [H]

FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the annotations correspond as follows:

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2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
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