

ElizabethanDrama.org

presents

a Theatre Script of

EDMUND IRONSIDE

ANONYMOUS

Perhaps Performed c. 1590

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EDMUND IRONSIDE

ANONYMOUS

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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.

NOTES 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A. Edmund Ironside: an Anonymous and Unpublished Play.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. A Pre-History: 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 *Danegelt*, 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 the 16th century chronicles of Raphael Holinshed and Richard Grafton. All quotes are from Holinshed unless noted otherwise.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. Optional Textual Changes.

A list of optional emendations to the text can be found at the end of this play.

EDMUND IRONSIDE

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

Southampton: Camp of Canutus.

*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.
Yourselves, lords spiritual and temporal,
8 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
Curb your proceedings with untutored words,

16

[He riseth.]

18

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

24

26 **A. of Cant.** Indeed, his rashness is unportable,
And merely nothing but a proud contempt

28 Against us of the clergy and the rest,
 That have for public profit of the realm,
 For peace, for quiet and utility,
 30 Elected prince Canutus for our king,
 Whose valour we have proved unto our cost,
 32 Whose love unto the church we need not doubt,
 Whose care for all we may rely upon,
 34 And whose true bounty is so notable
 That even his foes admire and honour him,
 36 When th' other what he is I need not tell,
 'Tis too well known. I would I could say well;
 38 But this I say and swear – were I myself

40 [He riseth.]

42 Professed a soldier or a man at arms,
 As I am one deprived from the world
 44 And from my cradle called to serve the Lord,
 I would with lance approve his title naught
 46 And plead your coronation with my sword.

48 **Canut.** Stout-hearted bishop, spoken like a man!
 Would all the English lords were of thy mind.

50 **South.** Am I not ready to defend your right
 52 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 **Edric.** Had I not been a help unto your father
 58 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.
 'Twas I that first did counsel Egelred
 62 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.
 I had a navy once (the time when 'twas
 66 In Egelredus' days, your father living),
 With which I should have met you on the sea
 68 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
 74 Of all the councils of King Egelred

76 Unto your father? Did not I, I pray,
 Feign sickness, weakness, disadvantages
 Whenas the king sent me to fight with him?
 78 Was I not causer of your good success
 In all your actions since your father's death,
 80 As namely in that battle lately fought
 Between yourself and Edmund Ironside,
 82 Where I fled from him and did succour you?
 Then since the only ladder upon which
 84 Your father climbed to get and you to hold
 This gotten kingdom was my diligence,
 86 I hope you will not the least motiön
 Of an ill thought creep in to hinder me,
 88 Nor do I think you used this speech by me.

90 **Canut.** Why, what need all this repetitiön?
 Good faith, I meant no harm in saying so.
 92 Why should I doubt you? Wherefore should I fear?
 You never yet deceivèd me.
 94 I cannot speak, but some or other straight
 Miscónsters me.
 96 Why, by my troth, my lord, I meant not you,
 But those that cleave to Edmund Ironside
 98 And hang in part against my government.
 Calm ye, therefore, and be not discontent.

100 **South.** In token then you mean as you have said,
 102 Honour my castle with the name of court,
 And take a subject's welcome from his heart
 104 To signify you love my town and me.

106 *[Uskataulf whispereth in Canutus' ear.]*

108 **Uska.** Why, that's a trifle, mighty sovereign.
 Yield unto him in this petitiön.
 110 It will confirm the people's hearts to you
 And make him live and die to honour you.

112 **Canut.** *[To Southampton]*
 114 I willingly descend to your request,
 And will this night be with you at your place.

116 **South.** I'll go before, to countenance your grace.

118 *[Exit Southampton.]*

120 *Enter a company of countrymen making a noise.*

122

124 **Countrymen.** Where is the king, that he may right our
wrong?

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 **Ist Count.** Renowndèd Canutus, we are all Danes by birth,
130 The remnant of thy needy followers,
Who when thy father lived, lived here secure
132 And dwelt among the fattest of this land.
We then did yoke the Saxons and compelled
134 Their stubborn necks to ear the fallow fields.
We then did force them honour us as lords
136 And be our slaves, our drudges and our dogs.
But now (I know not what the cause should be,
138 Unless the instigation of their prince,
Young Ironside, or else their stubborn nature)
140 They all rebel, and with conjoinèd force
Assault us manly, and from every part
142 Of this perturbèd island banish us.
We are not able to resist their powers,
144 But fall like leaves before the northen wind.
Huge heaps of us lie dead in every place,
146 And we, unless you help, shall all be slain.

148 **All Cry.** Help, help, Canutus, help and succour us!

150 **Canut.** Good countrymen, Canutus will not see you
wronged,
For yet the spirit of my father Swaine
152 Runs in these veins, which I will shed,
Even drop by drop, ere I will see you harmed.
154 Go in, good friends, and pacify yourselves.
Be confident in me, and if I live,
156 I plant you in your former quiet states. —
Swetho, look to them; they shall be your care.

158 [Exeunt Swetho with the poor Danes.]

160 Now, lords, let not this sudden rumour daunt
162 Your manly hearts. Though Edmund be so strong,
We are as strong, and stronger far than he.
164 Then tell me, shall we now assail him?
Say, Uskataülf, what is to be done?

166 **Uska.** You may, my lord, yet be remembered now
168 Against what nation you are bound to war,

170 A generation like the chosen Jews:
Stubborn, unwieldy, fierce and wild to tame,
172 Scorning to be compelled against their wills,
Abhorring servitude as having felt
174 The overloading burden of the same.

Edric. Indeed my countrymen are factiöus,
176 And must be reinèd with a marking-stall.
Curb them, my lord, and bridle but their wills,
178 And you shall find them mild and tractable.
If that you use them as your father did,
180 They dare not, nay they will not look awry,
But serve you as your slaves by conquest due.
182 But if you lay the team upon their necks,
And let them have but any scope to run,
184 Why then be sure they'll gad as they were galled,
And neither know themselves nor yet your grace,
186 For lenity doth cause them to rebel
'Cause they are ignorant of living well.

Uska. List how this flattering mate soothes up the king
190 And doth abuse his gracious sufferance.
Base, vild, insinuating sycophant,
192 Degenerate bastard, falsely bred,
Foul mother-killing viper, traitor, slave,
194 The scum of vices, all the ill that may be.
Who would excite the king to tyranny
196 Against his countrymen, but only he? –
I am a Dane, renownèd sovereign:
198 You have experience of my loyalty,
And that my counsel is not mercenary.
200 If I were wise enough to give advice,
You should not prove a tyrant, but a king.
202 A tyrant is abhorred of God and man,
Whenas a king lovèd and honourèd. –
204 Accompt'st thou, Edricus, the Saxons fools,
Or rather, hardy, wise and valorous?
206 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;
In peace, as soft as wax, wise, provident.
210 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 Uskataülf, 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
 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 hence, my lords: by this the earl
 244 | Expects us at Southampton; there we'll rest
 Till we consult if peace or war be best.

246 | *[Exeunt omnes.
 248 | Leofric pulls Turkillus by the sleeve
 as he is going and stays him.]*

250 | **Leo.** A word, my lord.

252 | **Turk.** So you use no blows.

254 | **Leo.** I think you noble, virtuous, secret, wise;
 256 | Else would I not have opened my intent,
 Which doth so much concern our private good,
 258 | To you in private. So it is, my lord.
 I have oft noted your discontented gait,
 260 | Which, measured by my own, do well declare
 The mind that rules your body is not pleased;
 262 | And since so sweet a symphony appears

264 Betwixt our bodies' discontent, I judge
 Our mind's disturbance to be only one,
 Caused from the sad neglect of these strange days.
 266 Oh what a grief is it to noble bloods
 To see each base-born groom promoted up,
 268 Each dunghill brat arrearèd to dignity,
 Each flatterer esteemèd virtuous,
 270 When the true, noble, virtuous gentlemen
 Are scorned, disgraced and held in obloquy.
 272 Base Edricus, a traitor to his king,
 Is held in honour: we two trusty subjects
 274 Are feared, suspected, and have liberty
 Only to live, yet not in liberty;
 276 For what is it but prisonment or worse
 Whenas our children, blood of our own blood,
 278 Are kept close prisoners, pledges for our faiths?
 King Edmund, who indeed is our true king,
 280 For good regard of merit and desert,
 For honour, fame and true nobility,
 282 Is rightly termed "mirror of majesty".
 Canutus is a prudent, noble prince,
 284 And loves to hear him called so, too, too much
 But I will tell you this – as long as we
 286 Take part against our sovereign Ironside,
 We are but traitors, therefore –
 288
Turk. Stay, noble Chester, for I spy your drift.
 290 To heap as many titles on your head
 As you have poured on mine, were but your due;
 292 Yet to cut off such troyting thieves of time,
 I say "Amen" to your intention,
 294 Which is to leave Canutus and his court,
 And fly to Edmund, our true, lawful king;
 296 But lest you should suspect my secrecy
 By being won so soon to your device,
 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 Fie, 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,
 Possess my dukedom and Canutus' grace,
 10 And am the chief of all his counselors;
 Whenas my betters are exiled the court,
 12 Being discountenanced and out of grace.
 They cannot so dissemble as I can:
 14 Cloak, cozen, cog and flatter with the king;
 Crouch and seem courteous; promise and protest;
 16 Say much, do naught, in all things use deceit;
 Tell troth to no man; carry tales abroad;
 18 Whisper close secrets in the giddy air;
 Be a news-monger; feed the king with sooths;
 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 hard my story from the end –
 24 How many treasons I have practicèd,
 How many vild things I have brought to pass
 26 And what great wonders have been compassèd
 By this deep-reaching pate, – would think I wis
 28 I had been bound apprentice to Deceit,
 And from my birthday studied villainy.
 30 I understand Prince Edmund's up in arms,
 Lays hold upon occasion's sluggy lock;
 32 And whilst Canutus here securely sleeps,
 He wins with ease what we with pain have got.
 34 Mass, if he do, and fortune favour him,
 I will so work as I'll be in his grace
 36 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;
 And yet indeed, to say the very troth,
 40 Rather of both I love Canutus best,

42 For Edmund's father first did raise me up,
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.*

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

44 **Edmund.** Rise up, Turkillus; Leofric, arise.
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
50 Is more welcome to me than forty other. –
Oh that when strangers cannot conquer us,
52 We should conspire with them against ourselves!
England, if ever war thy face doth spoil,
54 Thank not thy outward foe but inward friend;
For thou shalt never perish till that day
56 When thy right hand shall make thy heart away.
Go in, brave lords: your sight doth me more joy
58 Than Agamemnon when he conquered Troy.
60 [*Exeunt omnes.*]

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.
Half this expense would well have satisfied
4 The homely stomachs of our soldiërs,
And entertained ourself right royally.
6 Where is your daughter?

8 **South.** She shall give attendance
To wait upon your grace at dinner time.

10 **Canut.** Nay, good my lord: unless you give her leave
12 To sit at board and find me table talk,
I shall not think myself a welcome guest.

14 **South.** May I crave pardon of your majesty.
16 My daughter, being young in years and manners,
Is far unfit to keep a queen's estate.

18 **Canut.** I' faith, my lord, you are too scrupulous,
20 Too unadvised, too fearful without cause,
To stand upon such nice excuses.
22 I love to see a table furnishèd,
And sure I will not sit till she comes in.

24 **South.** Egina, daughter, come away, sweet girl.

26 *Enter Egina.*

28 The king will have thee dine with him today.
30 Be not too coy, nor yet too flexible.
If chance he proffer any courtesy,
32 Behave yourself in honourable sort
And answer him with modesty and mirth.
34 A means may be to make thee queen.

36 **Canut.** What, is your daughter come? – Welcome, fair lady.
Your presence is as welcome as the day

38 | 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,
 Some other Cadmus bird worse than himself
 Might hap to broach some new commotiön
 And trouble all the state with mutinies,
 Where if he lives till you have conquered him,
 None after him dares renovate the wars.

58 | **Canut.** Sweetly and wisely answered, noble queen,
 For by that name, if Heaven and thou consent,
 By sunset all the camp shall wish thee health. –
 My lord, what say you to this motiön?

62 |

64 | **South.** As it shall please your royal majesty,
 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 |

72 | **Canut.** Then for a manual seal receive this kiss,
 The chief dumb utterer of the heart's intent; –

74 | [*He kisseth her.*]

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

84 |

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

88 | **Canut.** Faith, I am pleased.
90 | **A. of Cant.** But what say you?
92 | **Egina.** I say a woman's silence is consent.
94 | **Canut.** Why, here's a match extempore, small ado
96 | About a weighty matter. Some, perhaps,
98 | Would have consumèd millions to effect
100 | What I by some spent breath have compassèd. —
102 | Lords, let us in, for I intend to be
Espoused tonight with all solemnity.
After our marriage, we do mean to go
To meet in open field our open foe.
[*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?

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
12 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 supplicatiōn.

44

Edrick. Oh sir, ye know me well enough: I am
46 goodman Edrick, your father.

48

Edric. My father, grout-head? Sir knave, I say you lie,
You whoreson cuckold, you base vagabond,
50 You slave, you mongrel peasant, dolt and fool,
Can'st thou not know a duke from common men?

52

Wife. [*Aside*] By my troth, I learned him all these
54 names to call his father when he was a child, and see
if he can forget them yet! Oh he is a wise man, for in
56 faith my husband is none of his father, for indeed a
soldier begot him of me as I went once to a fair. –
58 But son, know ye me?

60

Edric. Thee, old hag, witch, quean, slut, drab, whore and
thief:
How should I know thee, black Egyptian?

62

Wife. This is his old tricks, husband. – Come, come,
64 son: I am sure ye know [me].

66

Edric. Aye, if not too well.
Wherefore comes yon sheep-biter? –

68

[*To Stitch*] You, sir knave,
You are my brother, are ye not I pray?

70

Stitch. No sir, and it like ye.

72

Edric. It likes me very well. What is your name?
74 Wherefore came ye hither?

76

Wife. His name is Stitch, my son, we came with him
To help him to your service.

78

Edric. You answer for him, gossip – wants he tongue?

80

Stitch. No sir, I have tongue enough if that be good.

82

[*He shews his tongue.*]

84

Edric. What can ye do?

86

Stitch. Anything: dress a horse, scour a chamber pot,
88 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;
 And as thou shalt prove secret, trusty, true,
 120 | I will reward thee with some higher place.
 But first, to try thee, fetch the constable. –
 122 | Yet stay awhile. – They would suspect the truth. –
 I'll have thee, when thou seest me gone away,
 124 | Beat these two beggars hence, and teach them how
 They shall hereafter choose a meaner son.
 126 | Wilt thou be trusty? wilt thou cudgel them?

128 | **Stitch.** Never take care for that; I'll beat them, they
 were never better beaten since they were born.

130 | **Edric.** Aye, do so, Stitch, I preethee beat them well,
 132 | Hark ye, 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.

136 | [Exit Edricus.]

138 | **Edrick.** Oh son, son, stay!

140 | **Stitch.** "Son", "son", with a pestilence. You are much
142 | like to be his father and you his mother. You brought
me hither –

144 | **Edrick.** Aye.

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 my lord is.

150 | *[He beats them about the stage.]*

152 | **Wife.** He *is* my son. – Oh! Oh! Oh good Stitch, hold
thy hand!

154 |

[Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE III.*Southampton.**Enter Canutus, Archbishop, Edricus,
Uskataulf, and Swetho.*

- 1 **Canut.** Then are they gone: 'tis certain they are fled?
 2 Turkillus and Leofric, who would have thought it?
 Did I not use them well, gave them good words,
 4 Rewarded their endeavors, and besides
 Graced them as much as any parson here?
 6
- Edric.** You used them but too well, and let me say
 8 Your lenity did cause them run away.
- 10 **Canut.** Have we not pledges of their loyalty?
- 12 **Edric.** Ye have, my lord.
- 14 **Canut.** Their eldest sons, I think?
- 16 **Edric.** True, but they know you are too merciful.
- 18 **Canut.** They are deceived, for since they have disturbed
 The settled solace of our marriage day,
 20 And daunted our determined merriments
 With causeless flight, to plague their fathers' fact,
 22 I'll lay the treason on their children's back,
 And make their guiltless shoulders bear the burthen. —
 24 Fetch me the pledges, Swetho, and with them
 Some bloody varlet from the Danish host,
 26 And let him bring an axe, a block and knife
 Along with him, but do it quickly, Swetho,
 28 And come again as fast.
- 30 **Edric.** What doth your grace intend to do with them?
- 32 **Canut.** I'll cut their hands and noses off.
- 34 **Edric.** Your judgment doth not far enough extend
 Unto the height of runaways' desert.
 36 Death is too light a punishment for traitors,
 And loss of hands and nose is less than death.
 38
- Uska.** If an honest man had said so, I would
 40 Have liked it never the worse.
- 42 **Canut.** This punishment is worse than loss of life,

44 For it is a stinging corsive to their souls
As often as they do behold themselves
Lopped and bereft of those two ornaments
46 Which necessary use doth daily crave.
Again, it giveth others daily cause
48 To think how traitors should be handled,
Whereas the memory of present death
50 Is quickly buried in oblivion,
Doing no good but whilst it is in doing.
52 A traitor may be likened to a tree,
Which being shred and topped when it is green,
54 Doth for one twig which from the same was cut
Yield twenty arms, yea twenty arms for one,
56 But being hacked and mangled with an axe,
The root straight dies and piecemeal rots away.
58 Even so of traitors: cut me off their heads,
Still more out of the self-same stock will sprout,
60 But plague them with the loss of needful members
As eyes, nose, hands, ears, feet or any such;
62 Oh these are cutting cards unto their souls,
Earmark to know a traitorous villain by,
64 Even as a brand is to descry a thief.
These desperate persons, for example's sake,
66 These ruffians, these all-daring lusty bloods,
These court appendixes, these madcap lads,
68 These nothing-fearing hotspurs that attend
Our royal court – tell them of hanging cheer,
70 They'll say it is a trick or two above ground;
Tell them of quartering or the heading axe,
72 They'll swear beheading is a gallant death,
And he is a dastard 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 shallow fear makes their quivering tongues
To speak abruptly – "rather let us die,
78 Than we should suffer this vild ignomy."
A valiant heart esteemeth light of death,
80 But honourable minds are jealous
Of honourable names: then to be marked,
82 Which robs them of their honours, likewise robs
Their hearts of joy; and like to irksome owls,
84 They will be bashful to be seen abroad.

86 *Uska.* Alas, poor souls, it was against their wills
That their hard-hearted fathers broke the league.

88 *Edric.* Alas, poor souls, it is against their wills

90 | That they must lose their noses and their hands.

92 | *Enter Swetho, the two pledges, and Stitch with an axe.*

94 | **Canut.** Come on, gentlemen: 'cause I have found
 Your fathers trusty 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 report
 Did suffer torments for their country's good.
 100 | Come on, I say, prepare your visages
 To bear the tokens of eternity;
 102 | Prepare your noses, bid your hands adieu,
 Because your sires have proved themselves so true.
 104 |

1st Pledge. Rather than this, oh kill us presently;
 106 | These being gone, we do abhor our lives,
 And having these, we loathe to live accursed,
 108 | Accompted traitors to our native soil.
 Suffer us first to try our stripling force
 110 | With any giant of your Cyclops' size,
 And let our arms fight once before our deaths
 112 | To wreak their malice on their masters' foes,
 So let us perish like to gentlemen,
 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;
 118 | Even so your tears doth add unto my rage,
 And makes it hotter when it 'gins to cool.
 120 | 'Tis not my pleasure you should suffer death,
 'Cause I believe 'twould ease your fathers' griefs;
 122 | 'Tis not my pleasure you should try your powers
 So I should give you honours undeserved,
 124 | And you perchance might so redeem yourselves;
 But you shall see our judgments straight performed. –
 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 play with kings,
 130 | Presuming on their mercy: – come I say,
 What trifle ye? 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 change beards with

138 | me?

140 | **Ist Pledge.** You shall not touch my nose with those base
hands:

By Heaven, I'll sooner cut it off myself!

142

144 | **Stitch.** You will think a worse pair than these a good
pair ere night. – How they'll look when their noses
be off! Everyone will take them for Frenchmen.

146

148 | **Canut.** Dispatch, I say, I must not stay so long:
The more you delay the time, the worse you speed.

150 | **Ist Pledge.** Give me the axe, I'll quickly execute
This direful judgment on my guiltless hands.

152

Stitch. With all my heart, you save me a labour.

154

156 | **Canut.** [*To Stitch*] Stay, unadvisèd villain, hold thy hand,
Or I will hack thee piecemeal with thy axe.
Why, art thou mad, to give thy enemy
158 | An instrument to kill thyself and me?
Cut off his hands first, then deliver it him.

160

[*Stitch cuts off one hand.*]

162

So, cut off th' other.

164

[*Stitch cuts off the other hand.*]

166

Now, sir, fight your fill.

168

170 | **Ist Pledge.** Let these my stumps crave vengeance at thy
hands,
Thou judge of judges and thou king of kings!

172 | **Canut.** Cut off his nose, then let him pray again:
Perchance his praying mitigates his pain.

174

[*Stitch cuts off his nose.*]

176

178 | **Ist Pledge.** Pour thy vengeance on this bloody Dane,
And let him die some unheard monstrous death!

180 | **Canut.** Make quick dispatch to execute the other. –
I am sure you will not now be pardonèd?

182

184 | **2nd Pledge.** Not I, thou murdering stony-hearted Dane.
I am resolved to suffer this and more

186 To do my father or my country good;
They gave me life; for them I'll shed my blood.

188 [Stitch cuts off his hands and nose.]

190 **1st Pledge.** Now thou hast spit thy venom, bloody king,
We do return defiance in thy face.

192 **Canut.** Sirs, temper well your tongues and be advised;
194 If not, I'll cut them shorter by an inch.
Remember that you both have lost your hands
196 Because your fathers did abuse their tongues
In perjury; go quickly away
198 And tell your traitorous fathers what I say.

200 **2nd Pledge.** We go but to thy cost, proud Danish Canute,
Throughout this isle thy tyranny to bruit.

202 **1st Pledge.** We go thy cruël butchery to ring. –
204 Oh England, never trust a foreign king.

206 [Exeunt Pledges.]

208 **Edric.** Ha, ha, ha.

210 **Canut.** Why laughest thou, Edricus?

212 **Edric.** I cannot choose, to see the villains rave.

214 **Stitch.** And I must needs laugh to bear my master
company.

216 [Enter a messenger running.]

218 **Canut.** What news with thee?

220 **Mess.** Renownèd Canutus, thy forces in the north,
222 Which thou didst send 'gainst Edmund Ironside,
Are clean dispersed and piecemeal overthrown
224 By him, as these letters signify.

226 [Canutus reads letters.]

228 **Canut.** 'Tis wonderful, what, twenty thousand slain
Of common soldiers? This unwelcome news
230 Nips like a hoary frost our springing hopes
And makes my fearful soldiers hang their heads. –
232 Come hither, Edricus, void the company
That you and I may talk in secrecy.

234

[Exit omnes; manet Canutus and Edricus.]

236 Ah, Edricus, what had I best to do
238 To race out this dishonourable blot
Out of the brass-leaved book of living fame?
240 Shall it be said hereafter when Report
Shall celebrate my noble father's acts,
242 That Canutus did lose what noble Swanus got?
Shall it be said that Edmund Ironside,
244 Unfriended, poor, forsaken, desolate,
Did overthrow the power of mighty Canutus,
246 Whose wealth was great, friends more, but forces most?
Never since Edmund was of force to bear
248 A massy helmet and a curtle-axe
Could I return a victor from the field,
250 Unless, as I remember, thou betrayedst
The gallant stripling once into our hands.
252 Then had not valour hewed him through our troops,
That day had made an end of all our griefs;
254 But now, what now? Oh tell me if thou knowest
How shall I extribute my stock and name
256 That after-age may not report my shame?

258 **Edric.** Despair not, noble king, time comes in time.
Know ye not 'tis a deed of policy
260 In fickle Chance to cross your mightiness,
For else in time you might dismount the queen,
262 And throw her headlong from her rolling stone,
And take her whirling wheel into your hand.
264 I tell your grace, Chance ever envies wise men
And favours fools, promoting them aloft.
266 But as for this flea-spot of dishonour,
The greatest monarchs have endured more,
268 Even blinking Philip's son, and many more
Whose repetition were needless to recite.

270 **Canut.** I preethee flatter still, on, on, what more?
272 Speak we of Fortune, honest sycophant?
Chance favoureth not a fool in favouring thee;
274 Thy flattery is gracious in her eye. –
Come hither, Edricus. Oh strange miracle:
276 See you not in the heavens prodigious signs?
Look how the sun looks pale, the moon shines red,
278 The stars appear in the perturbèd Heaven
Like little comets, and not twelve o'clock.
280 What is the cause then, that the stars are seen?

282 | **Edric.** I see them well, my lord, yet know no cause,
Unless it shews the fall of Ironside.

284 | **Canut.** Surely it doth. Look now, they are all gone.

286 | 'Tis night, 'tis dark, beware ye stumble not;
Lend me your hand, but first go fetch a torch
288 | To light me to my tent; make haste I pray. –

290 | *[Exit Edricus.]*

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

294 | *Enter Edricus.*

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

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

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.

308 | **Edric.** It stands not with my zeal and plighted faith
Otherwise to say than as your highness saith:
310 | Your grace is able to give all their due,
To make truth lie and likewise make lies true.

312 | **Canut.** I would it lay in me to make thee true,
314 | But who can change the Ethiopian's hue?

316 | *[Exeunt.]*

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 dominions
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 damnation.

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 commission
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,
A parasite, an enemy to peace,
24 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 heap'st thou coal of fire upon thy head
44 | And blessest 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 crosier 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.

54 | [Exit York.]

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

58 | [Exit Canterbury.]

ACT III, SCENE II.

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.
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 **1st 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
Ere we will let him enter in these gates,
30 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
48 **1st Bail.** You have your answers. – Soldiers, guard the gate.

[*Bailiffs depart; Herald returneth.*]

50
52 **Herald.** Their answer, good my lord, is negative,
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?

[*Assail the walls.*]

64
66 *Enter a Messenger.*

68 **Mess.** Worthy commander of these warlike troops,
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
To yield himself without compulsion.
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
88 **Uska.** This day shall manifestly be known
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 renowned 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
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 armed 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

124

[*Alarum. They fight.*
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.
 He flies to Worcester; Edmund follows him.
 4 The way is long, and I am waxen faint.
 I fain would have you understand the truth
 6 And see the battles acted on the stage,
 But that their length will be too tedious;
 8 Then in dumb shews I will explain at large
 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.

[Alarums.

14 *Enter Canutus flying, Edmund following.*
They fight. The two kings parley,
 16 *sound a retreat and part.]*

18 **Chorus.** Canutus is beholding to the gracious sun,
 Who, grieved to see such heaps of carcasses
 20 Lie mangled and besmearèd in their gore,
 Made haste and went to rest before his time,
 22 So that the kings for want of light agreed
 To part until Aurora raise the lark,
 24 And now 'tis morning and they join to fight.

*[Alarum. Enter Canutus at one door
 and Edmund at the other. They fight.*

28 *Canutus gives back and flies.*

30 *Enter the soldiers of Edmund pursuing Canutus
 and his lords.*

32 *Edricus takes a dead man's head upon his
 sword's point, holding it up to Edmund's soldiers.*

34 *They fly.*

36 *Enter Edmund again, cheering them up,
 and makes Canutus fly.]*

38 **Chorus.** Edricus, perceiving Canutus to have the worst,
 And Edmund like to triumph in their fall,
 40 Out of the bowels of a traitorous heart
 Brought forth this subtle dangerous stratagem:
 42 Whilst the two battles dealt the dole of death,

44 And Edmund in the forefront stoutly fought
With words encouraging his soldiërs,
And with rude strokes discouraging the Danes,
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 despiteful 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,
That hath thus discomfited my foes
4 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,
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 dunhill 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,
 Or dastards fearèd with a sudden fray.
 16
- Edric.** Renownèd sovereign, do not fret yourself.
 18 Fortune in turning will exalt your state,
 And change the countenance of her cloudy brow.
 20 Now you must hope for better still and better,
 And Edmund must expect still worse and worse.
 22 A louring morning proves a fairer day.
 Fortune's ill-favoured frown shews she will smile
 24 On you and frown on Ironside.
- 26 **Canut.** What tellst thou me of Fortune and her frowns,
 Of her sour visage and her rolling stone?
 28 Thy tongue rolls headlong into flattery. –
 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 braggadocios,
 And I accursed to be the general
 36 Of such a flock of fearful runaways.
- 38 **South.** Remember you have lost ten thousand men,
 All English-born except a thousand Danes.
 40 Your pensive looks will kill them that survive
 If thus to choler you give liberty.

42

Canut. It were no matter if they all were slain;
Then they should never run away again.

46

Uska. My noble lord, our countrymen are safe.
In all these broils English 'gainst English fight.
The Danes or none or very few are slain.

50

Canut. [*Turns towards Uskataulf*]
It was a sign ye fled and did not fight.
Is't not a dishonour unto you
To see a foreign nation fight for me,
Whenas my home-bred countrymen do run,
Leaving their king amongst his enemies?

56

Edric. Give not such scope to humorous discontent:
We are all partners of your private griefs;
Kings are the heads, and if the head but ache,
The little finger is distemperèd;
We grieve to see you grieved, which hurteth us,
And yet avails not to assuage your grief.
You are the sun, my lord, we marigolds,
Whenas you shine we spread ourselves abroad
And take our glory from your influence,
But when you hide your face or darken it,
With th' least encounter of a cloudy look,
We close our eyes as partners of your woes,
Drooping our heads as grass down-weighed with dew.
Then clear ye up, my lord, and cheer up us;
For now our valours are extinguishèd,
And all our force lies drowned in brinish tears
As jewëls in the bottom of the sea.
I do beseech your grace to hear me speak.

76

[*Edricus talks to him.*]

78

South. I do not like this humour in my son;
'Twill quite discourage all his followers.

80

Uska. He stops his ears to all persuasiöns;
His council cannot be admitted speech:
His father Swaine was much more patiënt,
And could as well brook loss as victory.

86

Canut. These words proceed not from a shallow brain.

88

Edric. Praise the event, my lord: the end is all.
In the meantime, I'll go write to Ironside,
Craving forgiveness, and insinuate

90

92 His yielding favour. He is pitiful,
And I am rare in moving passiön.
I know the prince will quickly credit me
94 And put affiance in my smooth pretense,
But whatsoe'er he doth or minds to do,
96 You shall be sure to have intelligence;
But, good my lord, leave me a little while
98 To private contemplation, for my head
Swims full of plots and other stratagems
100 Of great avail, and I must empty it.

102 **Canut.** God prosper what thou dost intend.

104 **Edric.** Pray to the devil: God is not my friend.

106 *[Exit Canutus. Manet Edricus.]*

108 Stitch, what, Stitch, call in Stitch!

110 *Enter Stitch.*

112 **Stitch.** Here's a stitching indeed, you have made
Stitch have a stitch in his side with coming so hastily
114 after dinner.

116 **Edric.** Why, villain, dar'st thou eat meat in these
troublesome times?

118 **Stitch.** Dare I eat meat? Aye, and eat Time, be he
120 never so troublesome. My lord, were Mars himself
made of beef and brewis, I durst in this choleric
122 stomach devour him quick.

124 **Edric.** Sure, ye are a tall man.

126 **Stitch.** Aye, sir, at the end of a fray and beginning of a
feast.

128 **Edric.** Well, fetch me paper and a cornegraph.

130 **Stitch.** A horn-grafter? What's that, sir?

132 **Edric.** Sirrah, I mean an inkhorn.

134 **Stitch.** You mean well, sir. A blackhorn, you have
136 dipped your pen in many a man's inkhorn besides
your own.

138 *[Exit Stitch.]*

140

142 **Edric.** My state may be comparèd unto his
 That ventures all his credit and his wealth
 Upon the fickle hazard of a die.
 144 The crown I level at; I venture life,
 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
 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 occasiön
 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,
 178 Gravelled at such an easy enterprise. –
 What stand'st thou trifling and delaying time?
 180 Fetch fire from Heaven and mix it with thy ink,
 Gather Parnassus' dew and write with that,
 182 Pluck Cyllen's feathers and make pens with them,
 Borrow the Muses' aid and let them breathe
 184 Some dulcet and melodious harmony,
 Some never-heard-of words into thy pate.

186 *[He writeth and blotteth.]*

188

Ah, fool, how hard it is to write for life!
190 Had I now written for my mistress' love,
I could have filled my pen and raised my speech
192 Unto the highest step of flattery.
Had I now written for another man,
194 To save his life or get him into grace,
Why all the world might have given place to me
196 For sugared lines and phrases past compare.
Had I been now in favour with the king,
198 And had endeavorèd to flatter him,
My pen would have distillèd golden drops
200 And varied terms enchanting Cerberus.
But now I know not how or what to write.
202 To flatter were to aggravate my fault,
For anger would sift out my vild intent.
204 Plainly to write were to accuse myself
And be a witness 'gainst my guilty soul.
206 Yet write I will and in the plainest sort,
For that is cousin-german unto truth.
208 Truth needs no colours. Though I mean to lie,
My simple writing shall deceive his eye.

210

[*He writeth.*]

212

Aye, so. Oh rare-conceited piece of work!
214 How cunningly thou canst convert thy shape
Into an angel when thou dost intend
216 To flatter the plain honest-meaning king.

218

[*He folds it up.*]

220 Now for a swift wing-footed messenger
To fly in post that I might follow him. –
222 It more behooves me to be circumspect
And with my life to trust none but myself.
224 Swifter than sure is no good messenger,
And now I think on't – oh, 'tis excellent –
226 I'll for this once deliver it myself,
But in disguisement of my man's attire,
228 So I may safely go and understand
How Edmund is addicted unto me
230 And how all matters now are managèd. –
Stitch! Stitch!

232

Enter Stitch.

234

Stitch. Your will, sir?

236

238 **Edric.** My will is that you will uncase, for I mean to
change apparel.

240 **Stitch.** Why sir, you'll not turn wise-man, will you?

242 **Edric.** Yes, fool, for this once. – Come, I say, when?

244 **Stitch.** Marry, sir, when I see some boot coming
roundly from you, for I promise you I will not change
246 without boot.

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

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

252

[*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
persuade him to believe me, then it should be known
258 by his apparel what a fool I have made of him. – Sir,
shall we change living and lordship and name and all?

260

Edric. Aye, Stitch, for this once thou shalt be Lord
262 Edricus and I Stitch. Look you keep in till I come
home, I advise you, and behave yourself like a lord.

264

Stitch. I warrant you, good Stitch, I'll be lordly
266 enough. Farewell, honest Stitch; farewell, fool.

268

[*Exit Stitch.*]

270 **Edric.** Now am I Edricus and Edricus' man,
The secretary and the messenger,
272 All to effect with counterfeiting guile
Experiments of matchless policy.
274 Well, this plain suit doth now contain more wit
Than for so mean a piece of cloth is fit.

276

[*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
3 coat but once in a year; come on, I say, ye trencher-
4 scraping cutters, ye cloak-bag carriers, ye sword
5 and buckler carriers, ye rubbers of horse-heels, ye
6 devourers of fat oxen, ye swillers of March beer; come
7 after me, I say, take example after my virtue how to
8 mount. I, proceeding from the loins of a man very little
9 better than a gentleman, am now by my virtue and
10 good education to be your master, your upholder, the
11 staff of your lives and maintainer of your masterships.
12 Uncover, ye rogues! So. Cover! So. – Sirrah, take my
13 cloak, bear you my rapier! So. – I am somewhat
14 humorous, and it becomes me well. Follow me,
15 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;
19 here's a following! We must wait on you, must we?

20 **Stitch.** "'Blood, sir, you must go in" – oh, hold me,
21 hold me, I am choleric. Why, ye shake-rag, had ye
22 never a lord under your girdle? Plain "Sir Stitch"
23 without welt or guard! why, how now, you malapert
24 knave, have ye forgot all good manners?

26 **Roger.** Good manners be your speed.

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

36 [Exeunt.]

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
20 *As sadly as the late-espoused man*
Grieves to depart from his new-married wife.
22 *How many sighs I fetched at my depart,*
How many times I turned to come again,
24 *How oft I plained, how often I did weep,*
Were too, too long to write or you to read.
26 *But having now considered with myself*
My over-light belief too credulous,
28 *I come again like to a strayèd sheep*
Tainted, God wot, with naught but ignorance.
30 *Oh take me to your mercy, or if not so,*
Kill me yourself. Death is the end of woe."

32
[Finis letter.]

34 **Edmund.** Hear ye, my lords, this humble supplication? –
36 [To Edricus] Your master is become an orator;
But tell him Edmund is not lunatic,
38 So like a woman to be won with words.

40 **Edric.** [*Aside*] This cottons [not] according to my mind.
 The king is angry. See, he faceth me;
 42 His colour comes and goes. I hold my life
 He knows me. Would I were well away.

44 **Edmund.** Hark ye, my lords, what would you say
 46 If yon plain fellow should be Edricus?

48 **Alfric.** I think not so, my lord.

50 **Edmund.** I'll quickly know.
 Come hither, fellow. Tell thy master thus –

52
 [He pulls the velvet [patch] off his face.]

54
 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.** [*Aside*] Now, wit, or never, help. Poor naked truth
 60 Hath ta'en away suspicion of deceit.
 I need no art; art cannot help me now.
 62 Then plainly thus. – Renowned sovereign,
 I came thus plainly to your majesty
 64 Disguised in clown's attire to sound the truth –
 What opinion, if good or bad,
 66 You had of me; and if I found it good,
 I had determined to bewray myself;
 68 If otherwise, I meant with secret speed
 To leave my native country and to exile
 70 Myself from England, sailing into Spain,
 Whereas I meant in contemplation,
 72 In pilgrimage and prayers for your grace,
 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.
 They swarm along thy coasts like little gnats
 80 Over a river in a summer's night,
 Or like to bees when they begin to flight:
 82 So comes these Danes prepared fit to fight.
 Their battle-main of three-score thousand men,
 84 With bristle-pointed spears which upright stand
 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,
 Resembles much the weeds in ripened corn;
 90 Their drums and trumpets, with a dreadful sound
 Of clashing armour and fire-breathing steeds,
 Sounds like the fearful thunder sent from Heaven,
 92 Mixed with Aeolus' boist'rous northen breath.
 They prey upon thy subjects cruëlly,
 94 Like hungry tigers upon silly kids,
 Sparing not ancient men for reverence,
 96 Nor women for [their] imbecility,
 Nor guiltless babes for their unspotted life,
 98 Nor holy men, their madness is so rife.

100 **Edmund.** A sunshine day is quickly overcast;
 A springing bud is killèd with a blast.
 102 I see my state is fickle and unsure;
 There is nothing in this world can firmly dure.
 104 Yet courage, lords, we were and are the same;
 Our hearts are sound, our bodies are not lame;
 106 Then let not fear dismay your warlike might.
 God fights for us, God will defend the right. –
 108 Base Edricus, thou wert the fatal crow
 That by thy horrid voice this news did show
 110 Thou cam'st to gain with cursèd "treachery",
 The surname of vild nickname – "Policy".
 112 Right did I think whenas the fox did preach,
 He meant to get a goose within his reach;
 114 Right did I guess, when with thy oily speech,
 Thou didst my pardon and my grace beseech,
 116 Some mischief was abroach. But God above
 Doth always at a pinch my patron prove,
 118 And we have now learned, though to our bale,
 Not to believe each smooth-face forgèd tale.

120 **Edric.** Now, my most gracious lord, as God shall help me,
 122 My coming was only for this intent:
 To unfold Canutus' coming and bewray
 124 Matters of secret to your majesty,
 Counsels of great avail, rare stratagems
 126 Plotted by Canutus, which now shall die with me
 If you seem any whit suspiciöus.

128 **Edmund.** I prithee hark, let me hear some of them.

130
 132 *[Edricus talketh with Edmund secretly.
 Alfric pulls Edricus back.]*

134 **Alfric.** Traitor, darst thou presume
 To speak unto thy sovereign? – Good my lord,
 136 As God shall help me, you will be entrapped.

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 overruns 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,
 For whilst the force of Canut[us], on policy
 164 Retires by Edric's drift, then we will take
 The opportunity, and rush with speed
 166 Upon his troops, who unprepared to fight
 And trusting upon Edric's policy,
 168 Shall all come prey unto our soldiërs.
 How like you this?

170 **Alfric.** It cannot hap amiss.

172 **Edmund.** Come hither, Edricus.

174 [They whisper.]

176 I' faith, ye lie.

178 [They whisper again.]

180

182 Tut, tut, it cannot be.

[*They whisper again.*]

184

186 If this be true, I pardon thee for all,
186 And will reward thee with deserved grace.
188 I will not doubt it, faith, I think 'tis true
188 Though it were not, in hope thou wilt amend.
190 Go, let us in and let all quarrels end,
190 For now I mean indeed to credit thee
192 By being captain-general of my army.

192 **Edric.** Duty and thanks I give, 'tis all I have.
194 [*Aside*] See what dissimulation brings to pass,
196 How quickly I can make the king an ass.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE II.*London.**Enter Emma, her two sons Alfred and Edward
in each hand, Gunthranus going before.*

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,
28 Bids me remember how I was a queen,
How Egelredus was my lawful lord,
30 How Norman's Duke was my renownèd sire,
How England was my pleasure's paradise,
32 And how time was when time did wait on me.
All these are but bellows to the fire
34 To burn my heart, consumed afore with sighths.
Alfred, Ned is a child: thou art of age
36 To take example by my misery
Not to believe foul Fortune's flattery.

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 passion?
 Then will I weep the more to ease my heart;
 44 I'll mourn for thee, for him, and for myself,
 For England and for Edmund Ironside,
 46 Whose part God prosper, Heaven defend the right.

48 **Gunth.** Madam, your helpless tears are but a means
 To draw more tears from us to drown our hearts.

50 **Emma.** Why, man, I weep to ease and not to load.
 52 I trow the more I shed, the less I have;
 And as my tears waste, so my cares consume.
 54 To dam my eyes were but to drown my heart
 Like Hecuba, the woeful Queen of Troy,
 56 Who having no avoidance for her grief,
 Ran mad for sorrow 'cause she could not weep; –
 58 But, good Gunthranus, to omit vain talk,
 Since I have heretofore approved thy faith,
 60 I make a choice of thee amongst the rest
 Of many friends to guide my little boys
 62 And to conduct them into Normandy.
 Entreat my brother for to entreat them well;
 64 They are his nephews, and his sister's joy.
 If anything amiss should light on them,
 66 The same on me should be redoublèd.

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

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

74 [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.

84 [They offer to depart.]

86 But soft awhile, I have not said my mind.
 First let me wash your face in mother's tears,
 88 Then sob out sighths to overload the earth

90 And cast a misty fog upon the air,
[*She embraceth them.*]
92
94 That no inquiring foe may find you out.
Oh let your sanctuary be my lap,
96 [She sits down, setting Edward on her knee
and Alfred in her arm.]
98
100 Your refuge, your sepúlchres and your graves.
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.
112 [Emma riseth.]
114 **Emma.** Fie, fie, hide nature's fond indulgency. –
Depart, sweet boys. God keep you in your way.
116 [They offer to depart.]
118
120 Come hither, Alfred. Ned, I prithee, stay.
I will go with you to the foaming haven
And take my farewell of my darlings there.
122 [Exeunt omnes.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

Ashdon, Shire of Essex: the Danish Camp.

*Enter Canutus with a letter in his hand,
with him Uskataulf, Swetho, Southampton,
Archbishop of Canterbury, Egina, with soldiers.*

1 **Canut.** Courage, brave captains, conquest is at hand.
2 This letter comes from trusty Edricus
And certifies me that he is in grace
4 With Edmund Ironside, and how he leads
The vantguard of the prince's army.
6 Now he assures me of the victory
Without the loss of many soldiërs,
8 For he will disappoint the warlike youth
And flee to us, leaving him desolate;
10 Wherefore, brave soldiers, put forth all your might
To quail their stomachs at the first approach.
12 He that doth take the prince in fight or flight
Shall have his ransom and [be] dubbed a knight.
14
16 **1st Sold.** I'll venture hard to make Joan my wife a lady.
18 **2nd Sold.** The king shall 'scape my fingers narrowly.
20 **3rd Sold.** Mass, if I had steel sides as he hath Ironsides,
I would gore him then, that I would.
22 **4th Sold.** What if [I] miss the king, I'll have a duke,
An earl, a lord, a knight or gentleman.
24
26 **South.** Or nobody, and then you'll hit it.
Tell not your chickens, sirs, ere they be hatched,
Perchance the eggs are rotten in the nest;
28 Then all your brooding hopes is cast away,
And you remain as rich as new-shorn sheep.
30 I never loved to gain by treachery,
For that again was lost by treachery.
32 I do remember hardy Hannibal
Did use these words at won Tarentum's loss:
34 *Eadem arte qua prius coepimus*
Tarentum amisumus.
36 Fraud won Tarentum, fraud Tarentum lost,
So Hannibal reaps his labour for his cost.

38

[The drums sound afar off.]

40

Canut. So, Edmund, so thou comst unto thy cost.

42

Thy roaring drum presageth thy mishap,

Ringing thy soul's knell with a hollow voice.

44

As thine doth mourn, so let our drum rejoice.

46

[*The drums sound.*

Enter Edmund with Edricus, other lords and soldiers.

48

They fight. Canutus gives et exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

Ashdon, Shire of Essex.

Enter at one door Canutus and at th' other Edricus.

1 **Canut.** Edricus!

2

3 **Edric.** My lord! Hie, cheer your flying troops,
4 And bid them stay a while for victory.
5 Whenas you see me lead my men aloof,
6 Then take occasion and assail the prince;
7 And I'll be absent when he needs me most,
8 And present for your best avail. Make haste.

10 **Canut.** How much I love thee, Edricus, heavens do know,
11 And I with gifts one day will manifest.

12

[Exit Canute.]

14

15 **Edric.** So, Edric, now thy platform is afoot,
16 And one shall die; it skills no matter which.
17 If Edmund, Canut[us] shall quickly follow him;
18 If Canut[us], then Edmund shall not stay behind.
19 Whilst they with eager blows assail each other,
20 I here remain a neuter, free from fear,
21 Not taking part with Canut[us], nor Ironside,
22 Before I see who gets the victory. –
23 Yet had I rather have Canutus conquer,
24 And privily will aid him with supplies,
25 Rather than Edmund should escape the field.

26

*[Alarm. Enter Edmund chasing off Canutus.
Edricus backs Canutus. Edmund flies.
Exeunt and return Canutus with Edricus.]*

28

30

31 **Canut.** Thanks, worthy Edric, for this victory.
32 This day had made an end of me and mine,
33 Hadst thou not backed us with thy warlike troops.
34 Know ye if Edmund be escaped or no?

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

40

41 **Canut.** If I forget thee, God forget my suit
42 When like a sinner I do humbly pray.

44 | Forget thee, Edric? God above doth see
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.*]

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.
Ungrateful wretch, hellish incarnate devil!
4 For sure no man was ever so unkind
Unto his king and loving countrymen. –
6 Disloyal and unfaithful sycophant,
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
That sought like Judas to betray his lord
12 Into the hands of [the] bloodthirsty Danes.

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

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

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

24 **Edric.** Why so?

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

30 **Edric.** Had he as many eyes as Juno's bird,
Or could pierce millstones with his searching sight,
32 He (by his leave) should not my halting find.
I halt not in the thigh but in the mind. –
34 All hail unto my gracious sovereign!

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

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

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

44 **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 venomous 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;

70 In vain my lance did overthrow and spoil;
In vain I live, to be requited thus.

72 **Stitch.** In vain – what a vain vein my master is in!

74 **Edmund.** Did'st thou not fly, vild traitor, to my foe?

76 **Edric.** Who, I?

78 **Edmund.** Even thou.

80 **Edric.** Thus forward friends are quitted with suspect;
Thus envy blasts the well-deserving wight;

82 Thus the unskillful blames the warrior;
Thus, thus, detraction hinders virtuous course. –

84 Fled I, my lord? Canutus can report
'Twas he that should have fled had succour come. –

86 Fled I, my lords? Your eyes were witnesses

88 | How far my heart was free from dastard flight;
But this it is to be a man-at-arms
90 | When his desert is recompensed with hate,
And resolution wronged with ignorance.
92 | For shame, my lords, spurn not against the truth;
Thirst not to drink the blood of innocents.
94 |
Edmund. Why, Edricus, can'st thou deny thy flight?
96 |
Edric. No, gracious lord, I must confess I fled,
98 | Forced from Canutus, not to him, for aid;
And that 'tis true, I by your grace's leave
100 | Will prove on him that dares affirm a no.
102 | **Edmund.** I saw thee flee myself with these my eyes.
104 | **Ulf.** And I, my lord, am witness to the same.
106 | **Godw.** And I, my lord, will prove it, by your favour.
108 | **Edric.** I would the king would give me leave to speak.
110 | **Stitch.** And you will prove them blind, I hold my life.
112 | **Edmund.** I give thee leave: speak for thyself and spare not.
114 | **Edric.** Seeing your grace so forward to the fight,
Viewing the Dane to march so bravely on,
116 | Pricked forth with shame, I as the foremost man
(Not suffering the Dane to set on us
118 | Or to approach your grace without a blow)
Stepped forth intending to encounter them
120 | And to assail the rearward with my band
Till you upon the forefront held them play;
122 | But see how good intents are ever thwarted.
Ere I could get the wind to compass them,
124 | Your drums' retreat did cause your forces flee;
Yet fled not I a foot until such time
126 | As quite bereft of hope I was compelled.
Witness this arm, this serviceable arm,
128 | That in despite of death did save my life:
Witness these scars, which if your grace will see,
130 | They'll tell my foes unto their face they lie.
132 | **Stitch.** Oh horrible scars, scars like blazing stars: well
counterfeited, master.
134 |
Edmund. If this be true, I was too credulous.
136 |

138 **Edric.** If it be true, my lord? Assure yourself,
Your grace was misinformed if otherwise,
And that my man can verify.

140
142 **Stitch.** Take heed what ye say, master: I can verify
nothing. Marry, I can verify anything. If you'll say so,
I'll swear to it, – that 'tis false, I mean.

144
146 **Edmund.** Then, Edricus, 'twas I that wrongèd thee,
And I that will in all things make amends.
Bury unkindness in oblivïön ,
148 And ne'er remember our suspiciön.

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.

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

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

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

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT V, SCENE II.

Deerhurst, Gloucestershire: Camp of Canutus.

*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,
3 And I am pressed to do you any service;
4 But Edmund is grown strange to me of late,
5 And I am not familiar with his thoughts.
6 When I have once regained opiniön,
7 I will not fail to be your faithful agent;
8 In meantime make ye strong to hold him play,
9 For he is coming with a mighty power."

[*Finis letter.*]

12 [*Aside*] By'r lady, this goes hard, these news are naught.
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,
17 Lest these perceive our hopes to falter,
18 And that would clean discourage all their hearts,
19 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,
35 For were they millions, half should fight for you,
36 And turn their weapons upon Ironside.

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

40

[*The drum sounds afar off.*]

42

Canut. Yon drum doth tell us Edmund Ironside,
Unwitting of his overthrow at hand,
Comes gallantly attended on by troops
Of horse and footmen to his funeral. –
Oh that thou knew'st thy dying day so nigh,
That thou might'st make thee fit to go to God. –
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,
Leofric and Turkillus.*

54

56

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

58

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

60

Canutus!

62

Canut. Edmund!

64

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

66

Canut. The ground I stand on, Edmund, is mine own,
Fallen to me not successively indeed,
But by forfeiture as copyhold,
Rent-run and wanting reparatiöns,
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
Temper the unruly stomach of his rage,
And moderate his lusty youthful blood,
Which springs through every vein to fly at thee,
Not half these words without controlling strokes
Should from thy lips have vomited their spleen.
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?
Uncivil Canutus, know'st thou to whom thou speak'st?
This heart scorns all subjection,
And this head looks o'er the world; these feet

86

88 Were made to tread o'er kings, Canutus, over thee. –
 Nay, storm not, Canutus. Learn how to mix thy speech
 With more beseeming terms, and govern thou
 90 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.

96 **Canut.** By usurpation thine, by conquest mine.
 98 Who knows not conquest is inheritance?

100 **Edmund.** So rape and theft is true possession
 If malefactors go unpunished.

102 **Canut.** It seems indeed possession is of force,
 104 For by possession you withhold my crown.

106 **Edmund.** Nay, you and Swaine, your gripple-minded dad,
 By treason, not by force of valiant arms,
 108 Against all justice, law and equity,
 Did first intrude yourselves and then extrude
 110 Our woeful subjects from their native home,
 And that I come to prove, and therefore thus –

112 [He draweth.]

114 **Canut.** Then to confute thy forged argument,
 116 Thus argue I; my sword is reason's proof.

118 [He draweth.]

120 **Edmund.** That is, of force to put back reason's proof,
 Which proves you, like your sword, unreasonable.

122 [They train their soldiers [about] the stage.]

124 **Edric.** [Aside]
 126 Edmund is strong, Canutus is weak in p[art],
 Edmund gracious in the people's eyes;
 128 Canutus is not so: what had I best to do?
 Fain would I have Canutus win, and he is weak;
 130 I would have Edmund lose, and he is strong. –
 Oh gracious stars, inspire my nimble wit
 132 With some device, and as I ever have,
 I will employ it to some villainy. –
 134 Soft, let me see – oh, it is excellent!

136 Fountain of wit, the spring of policy,
 The flower of treason and of villainy.
 How much undecent is it that this cap,
 138 This homely cape should overload this crow
 When thou deserv'st a crown of beaten gold.
 140 But to the matter. So it needs must fadge,
 For can I bring them to a single fight,
 142 Whosoever hath the better, yet shall I
 Be gracious in his eye, as who should say
 144 I was the causer of his victory.
 Besides, I shall insinuate myself
 146 Into the bosom of opiniön,
 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 **Edmund.** Edricus, be brief.

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

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

166 **Edric.** What strive you for, imperious Ironside?
 168 Renownèd 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 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,
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
236 *[Edmund and Emma talk together.
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
Is sooner killed by over-hardiness
244 Than an advisèd coward? Good my lord,
It is undecent you should fight with him,
246 Being no king nor having aught to lose.

248 **Edmund.** Madam, his life is even to him as dear
As mine to me. Besides, he is a prince
250 Of noble blood and high-resolvèd 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
254 The speech of Edric and in single fight
Approve my title lawful, good and right.
256 Then madam, be content, and you shall see
The God in whom I trust will succour me.
258 Were he Goliath, I the little king,
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.

262
264 *[Egina talks with Canutus, Canutus turns away.]*

266 **Canut.** I had rather fight with him than scold with you.

268 **Egina.** I cannot speak but straight you say I scold.

Canut. Then, sweeting, you must learn your tongue to hold.
–
270 Nay, now you'll blubber. Go to, take this kiss
And pray for me. – Why stay you, Ironside?
272

274 **Edmund.** Because I think thou art not fit to die,
But rather with Egina fit to cry. –
My lords, I do command you, for your lives,

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,
 Refreshing ointments to my wearied limbs,
 344 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.*]

356 But, lords, why stand you still? grieve you to see
 358 Canutus and your king so well agree?

360 **Alfric.** The inward solace which our hearts conceive
 To see peace grow where foul debate was sown,
 362 To see sweet concord spring from discord's womb,
 To see war bring forth love and amity,
 364 To see two mortal foes prove faithful friends,
 And Mars drink milk instead of purple blood,
 366 Doth force our tongues, our hearts' chief orators,
 To shew with silence joy unspeakable. –
 368 Yet, lords, behold, even as you do embrace,
 So in dumb shews we all unite our hearts.

370 [*The lords embrace.*]

372

374 **Turk.** Remember, Leofric, our children's loss.

376 **Leo.** Turkillus, I do, and must serve the time
 378 And wait upon occasion for revenge.
 A day of mirth begins a woeful year,
 As sudden storms do follow sunshine clear.

380 **Edmund.** Now, noble lords, let us like friends consult
 Upon partition of this noble isle. –

382 [To Canutus] Yourself shall choose which part you think is
 best:
 The east or west, the right hand or the left.

384 My court is yours, my counselors are yours,
 My friends your friends, thy foe my enemy,
 386 My people yours, my treasure and myself
 All are your own, for you shall all command.

388

Canut. Thanks, noble brother and my second self.
 390 In all thy acts thou dost excel thyself.
 Foul shame on them that are thy enemies,
 392 And vengeance light on them that think thee ill.

394 **Edmund.** Go [we] unto our coasts and feast us there,
 And there conclude an everlasting peace. –

396 Sound drums and trumpets! Here ends w[oe]ful war].
 Thus hand in hand and heart in heart w[e] go].

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

[They go hand-in-hand out of th[e stage],
 406 Edricus leading the drum.]

FINIS

Optional Textual Changes.

The texts of the Scripts prepared for our website, *ElizabethanDrama.org*, generally lean towards keeping the language of the plays' earliest editions. Where obvious errors in typography have occurred, the emendations suggested by early and modern editors are usually accepted without comment.

Words and syllables have in some cases been added to the original text; such additions appear within hard brackets [], and may be omitted at a director's discretion. Such additions may be made for one of two reasons: (1) where words or syllables have clearly been omitted from the original text by accident, and are needed for a line to make sense; and (2) where words or syllables are added to repair a line's meter.

The text of this Script may be confidently adopted by a theatre group without further revision; however, we present below a list of changes a director may wish to consider, if he or she feels any of them would make the language more sensible, etc. Most of these emendations represent suggestions of later editors of the play, and a few represent restoring original language from the quartos.

Explanations for all these possible emendations can be found in the annotated edition of this play found on our website.

Universal Emendations:

1. modernize *shew(s)* to *show(s)* everywhere.
2. modernize *vild* to *vile* everywhere.
- 3: emend *Canutus* to *Canute* at the following locations:
 - Act III.i.37
 - Act III.iii.1
 - Act IV.i.126.

Act I, Scene i.

1. line 86: emend *will not the* to *will not let the*.
2. line 144: modernize *northen* to *northern*.
3. line 194: omit *may*.
4. line 208: emend *more than* to *much more than*.

Act I, Scene ii.

1. line 23: modernize *hard* to *heard*.

Act I, Scene iii.

1. line 4: emend *pince* to *pinch*.

Act II, Scene ii.

1. line 131: emend *preethee* to *prithee*.

Act II, Scene iii.

1. line 5: modernize *parson* to *person*.
2. line 23: modernize *burthen* to *burden*.
3. line 183: modernize *murthering* to *murdering*.
4. line 232: emend *Edricus* to *Edric*.
5. line 271: emend *preethee* to *prithee*.

Act III, Scene i.

1. line 22: emend *a Pharisee* to *Pharisee* (ie. omit *a*).
2. line 48: modernize *crosier* to *crozier*.

Act III, Scene ii.

1. line 87: emend *be known* to *be made known*.

Act III, Scene v.

1. line 222: modernize *behoofes* to *behooves*.

Act IV, Scene i.

1. line 18: modernize *strook* to *struck*.
2. line 92: modernize *northen* to *northern*.

Act IV, Scene ii.

1. lines 34 and 88: modernize *sighths* to *sighs*.

Act IV, Scene iii.

1. line 5: modernize *vanguard* to *vanguard*.

Act IV, Scene iv.

1. line 15: modernize *plotform* to *platform*.

Act V, Scene i.

1. line 67: modernize *fawchion* to *falchion*.

Act V, Scene ii.

1. line 126: emend *Canutus is* to *Canutus* (ie. omit *is*).