

THE BIRTH OF MERLIN
or
The Childe Hath Found His father

by

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DRAMMATIS PERSONAE

AURELIUS, King of Brittain
VORTIGER, King of (Welsh) Brittain
UTER PENDRAGON the Prince, Brother to Aurelius
DONOBERT, a Nobleman, and Father to Constantia and Modestia
The EARL OF GLOSTER, and Father to Edwin
EDOL, Earl of Chester, and General to King Aurelius
CADOR, Earl of Cornwall, and Suitor to Constantia
EDWIN, Son to the Earl of Gloster, and Suitor to Modestia
TOCLIO and OSWOLD, Two Noblemen
MERLIN the Prophet
ANSELME the Hermit, after Bishop of Winchester
CLOWN, Brother to Joan, Mother of Merlin
SIR NICHODEMUS NOTHING, a Courtier
The DEVIL, Father of Merlin
OSTORIUS, the Saxon General
OCTA, a Saxon Nobleman
PROXIMUS, a Saxon Magician
Two BISHOPS
Two SAXON LORDS
Two of Edols CAPTAINS
Two GENTLEMEN
A Little Antick SPIRIT
ARTESIA, Sister to Ostorius the Saxon General
CONSTANTIA and MODESTIA, Daughters to Donobert
JOAN GOE-TOO'T, Mother of Merlin
A WAITING-WOMAN to Artesia
LUCINA, Queen of the Shades

The Scene: Brittain.

ACT I

SCENE I

CADOR

You teach me language, sir, as one that knows
The debt of love I owe unto her vertues;
Wherein like a true courtier I have fed
My self with hope of fair success, and now
Attend your wisht consent to my long suit.

DONOBERT

Believe me, youthful lord,
Time could not give an opportunity
More fitting your desires, always provided,
My daughters love be suited with my grant.

CADOR

'Tis the condition, sir, her promise seal'd.

DONOBERT

Ist so, Constantia?

CONSTANTIA

I was content to give him words for oathes;
He swore so oft he lov'd me--

DONOBERT

That thou believest him?

CONSTANTIA

He is a man, I hope.

DONOBERT

That's in the trial, girl.

CONSTANTIA

However, I am a woman, sir.

DONOBERT

The law's on thy side then: sha't have a husband,
I, and a worthy one. Take her, brave Cornwall,
And make our happiness great as our wishes.

CADOR

Sir, I thank you.

GLOSTER

Double the fortunes of the day, my lord,
And crown my wishes too: I have a son here,
Who in my absence would protest no less
Unto your other daughter.

DONOBERT

Ha, Gloster, is it so? what says Lord Edwin?
Will she protest as much to thee?

EDWIN

Else must she want some of her sisters faith, sir.

MODESTIA

Of her credulity much rather, sir:
My lord, you are a soldier, and methinks
The height of that profession should diminish
All heat of loves desires,
Being so late employ'd in blood and ruine.

EDWIN

The more my conscience tyes me to repair
The worlds losses in a new succession.

MODESTIA

Necessity, it seems, ties your affections then,
And at that rate I would unwillingly
Be thrust upon you; a wife is a dish soon cloyes, sir.

EDWIN

Weak and diseased appetites it may.

MODESTIA

Most of your making have dull stomachs, sir.

DONOBERT

If that be all, girl, thou shalt quicken him;
Be kinde to him, Modestia: Noble Edwin,
Let it suffice, what's mine in her speaks yours;
For her consent, let your fair suit go on,
She is a woman, sir, and will be won.

EDWIN

You give me comfort, sir.

Enter TOCLIO.

DONOBERT

Now, Toclio?

TOCLIO

The king, my honor'd lords, requires your presence,
And calls a council for return of answer
Unto the parling enemy, whose ambassadors
Are on the way to court.

DONOBERT

So suddenly?
Chester, it seems, has ply'd them hard at war,
They sue so fast for peace, which by my advice
They ne're shall have, unless they leave the realm.
Come, noble Gloster, let's attend the king.
It lies, sir, in your son to do me pleasure,
And save the charges of a wedding dinner;
If you'll make haste to end your love affairs,
One cost may give discharge to both my cares.

Exit DONOBERT, GLOSTER.

EDWIN

I'll do my best.

CADOR

Now, Toclio, what stirring news at court?

TOCLIO

Oh, my lord, the court's all fill'd with rumor, the city with
news, and the country with wonder, and all the bells i'th'
kingdom must proclaim it, we have a new holy-day a coming.

CONSTANTIA

A holy-day! for whom? for thee?

TOCLIO

Me, madam! 'sfoot! I'de be loath that any man
Should make a holy-day for me yet:
In brief, 'tis thus: there's here arriv'd at court,
Sent by the Earl of Chester to the king,
A man of rare esteem for holyness,
A reverent hermit, that by miracle
Not onely saved our army,
But without aid of man o'rethrew
The pagan host, and with such wonder, sir,
As might confirm a kingdom to his faith.

EDWIN

This is strange news, indeed; where is he?

TOCLIO

In conference with the king, that much respects him.

MODESTIA

Trust me, I long to see him.

TOCLIO

Faith, you will finde no great pleasure in him, for ought that I can see, lady. They say he is half a prophet too: would he could tell me any news of the lost prince; there's twenty talents offer'd to him that finds him.

CADOR

Such news was breeding in the morning.

TOCLIO

And now it has birth and life, sir. If fortune bless me, I'll once more search those woods where then we lost him; I know not yet what fate may follow me.

(Exit)

CADOR

Fortune go with you, sir. Come, fair mistriss, Your sister and Lord Edwin are in game, And all their wits at stake to win the set.

CONSTANTIA

My sister has the hand yet; we had best leave them: She will be out anon as well as I; He wants but cunning to put in a dye.

Exit CADOR, CONSTACIA.

EDWIN

You are a cunning gamester, madam.

MODESTIA

It is a desperate game, indeed, this marriage, Where there's no winning without loss to either.

EDWIN

Why, what but your perfection, noble lady, Can bar the worthiness of this my suit? If so you please I count my happiness From difficult obtaining, you shall see My duty and observance.

MODESTIA

There shall be place to neither, noble sir; I do beseech you, let this mild reply Give answer to your suit: for here I vow, If e're I change my virgin name, by you It gains or looses.

EDWIN

My wishes have their crown.

MODESTIA

Let them confine you then,
As to my promise you give faith and credence.

EDWIN

In your command my willing absence speaks it.
(Exit)

MODESTIA

Noble and vertuous: could I dream of marriage,
I should affect thee, Edwin. Oh, my soul,
Here's something tells me that these best of creatures,
These models of the world, weak man and woman,
Should have their souls, their making, life, and being,
To some more excellent use: if what the sense
Calls pleasure were our ends, we might justly blame
Great natures wisdom, who rear'd a building
Of so much art and beauty to entertain
A guest so far incertain, so imperfect:
If onely speech distinguish us from beasts,
Who know no inequality of birth or place,
But still to fly from goodness: oh, how base
Were life at such a rate! No, no, that power
That gave to man his being, speech and wisdom,
Gave it for thankfulness. To him alone
That made me thus, may I whence truly know,
I'll pay to him, not man, the love I owe.
(Exit)

SCENE II

*Flourish cornets. Enter AURELIUS King of Brittain,
DONOBERT, GLOSTER, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, OSWOLD,
and ATTENDANTS.*

AURELIUS

No tidings of our brother yet? 'Tis strange,
So ne're the court, and in our own land too,
And yet no news of him: oh, this loss
Tempers the sweetness of our happy conquests
With much untimely sorrow.

DONOBERT

Royal sir,
His safety being unquestion'd should to time
Leave the redress of sorrow: were he dead,
Or taken by the foe, our fatal loss
Had wanted no quick herald to disclose it.

AURELIUS

That hope alone sustains me,
Nor will we be so ingrateful unto heaven
To question what we fear with what we enjoy.
Is answer of our message yet return'd
From that religious man, the holy hermit,
Sent by the Earl of Chester to confirm us
In that miraculous act? For 'twas no less:
Our army being in rout, nay, quite o'rethrown,
As Chester writes, even then this holy man,
Arm'd with his cross and staff, went smiling on,
And boldly fronts the foe; at sight of whom
The Saxons stood amaz'd: for, to their seeming,
Above the hermit's head appear'd such brightness,
Such clear and glorious beams, as if our men
March't all in fire; wherewith the pagans fled,
And by our troops were all to death pursu'd.

GLOSTER

'Tis full of wonder, sir.
Oh, Gloster, he's a jewel worth a kingdom.
Where's Oswald with his answer?

OSWOL

'Tis here, my royal lord.

AURELIUS

In writing? will he not sit with us?

OSWOL

His orizons perform'd, he bad me say,
He would attend with all submission.

AURELIUS

Proceed to council then; and let some give order,
The ambassadors being come to take our answer,
They have admittance. Oswald, Toclio,
Be it your charge!--

(Exeunt OSWOLD and TOCLIO)

And now, my lords, observe
The holy council of this reverend hermit:

(Reads)

As you respect your safety, limit not
That onely power that hath protected you;
Trust not an open enemy too far,
He's yet a looser, and knows you have won;
Mischiefs not ended are but then begun.
Anselme the Hermit.

DONOBERT

Powerful and pithie, which my advice confirms:
No man leaves physick when his sickness slakes,
But doubles the receipts: the word of peace

(MORE)

DONOBERT (cont'd)

Seems fair to blood-shot eyes, but being appli'd
With such a medicine as blinds all the sight
Argues desire of cure, but not of art.

AURELIUS

You argue from defects; if both the name
And the condition of the peace be one,
It is to be prefer'd, and in the offer,
Made by the Saxon, I see nought repugnant.

GLOSTER

The time of truce requir'd for thirty days
Carries suspicion in it, since half that space
Will serve to strength their weakned regiment.

CADOR

Who in less time will undertake to free
Our country from them?

EDWIN

Leave that unto our fortune.

DONOBERT

Is not our bold and hopeful general
Still master of the field, their legions faln,
The rest intrencht for fear, half starv'd, and wounded,
And shall we now give o're our fair advantage?
'Fore heaven, my lord, the danger is far more
In trusting to their words then to their weapons.

Enter OSWOLD.

OSWOL

The ambassadors are come, sir.

AURELIUS

Conduct them in.
We are resolv'd, my lords, since policy fail'd
In the beginning, it shall have no hand
In the conclusion.
That heavenly power that hath so well begun
Their fatal overthrow, I know, can end it:
From which fair hope my self will give them answer.

Flourish cornets. Enter ARTESIA with the SAXON LORDS.

DONOBERT

What's here? a woman orator?

AURELIUS

Peace, Donobert!--Speak, what are you, lady?

ARTESIA

The sister of the Saxon general,
Warlike Ostorius the East Anglese king;
My name Artesia, who in terms of love
Brings peace and health to great Aurelius,
Wishing she may return as fair a present
As she makes tender of.

AURELIUS

The fairest present e're mine eyes were blest with!--
Command a chair there for this Saxon beauty:--
Sit, lady, we'l confer: your warlike brother
Sues for a peace, you say?

ARTESIA

With endless love unto your state and person.

AURELIUS

Ha's sent a moving orator, believe me.--
What thinkst thou, Donobert?

DONOBERT

Believe me, sir, were I but yong agen,
This gilded pill might take my stomack quickly.

AURELIUS

True, thou art old: how soon we do forget
Our own defects! Fair damsel,--oh, my tongue
Turns traitor, and will betray my heart--sister to
Our enemy:--'sdeath, her beauty mazes me,
I cannot speak if I but look on her.--
What's that we did conclude?

DONOBERT

This, royal lord--

AURELIUS

Pish, thou canst not utter it:--
Fair'st of creatures, tell the king your brother,
That we, in love--ha!--and honor to our country,
Command his armies to depart our realm.
But if you please, fair soul--Lord Donobert,
Deliver you our pleasure.

DONOBERT

I shall, sir:
Lady, return, and certifie your brother--

AURELIUS

Thou art too blunt and rude! return so soon?
Fie, let her stay, and send some messenger
To certifie our pleasure.

DONOBERT

What meanes your grace?

AURELIUS

To give her time of rest to her long journey;
We would not willingly be thought uncivil.

ARTESIA

Great King of Brittain, let it not seem strange,
To embrace the princely offers of a friend,
Whose vertues with thine own, in fairest merit,
Both states in peace and love may now inherit.

AURELIUS

She speakes of love agen:
Sure, 'tis my fear, she knows I do not hate her.

ARTESIA

Be, then, thy self, most great Aurelius,
And let not envy nor a deeper sin
In these thy councellors deprive thy goodness
Of that fair honor we in seeking peace
Give first to thee, who never use to sue
But force our wishes. Yet, if this seem light,
Oh, let my sex, though worthless your respect,
Take the report of thy humanity,
Whose mild and vertuous life loud fame displayes,
As being o'recome by one so worthy praise.

AURELIUS

She has an angels tongue.--Speak still.

DONOBERT

This flattery is gross, sir; hear no more on't.--
Lady, these childish complements are needless;
You have your answer, and believe it, madam,
His grace, though yong, doth wear within his breast
Too grave a councellor to be seduc't
By smoothing flattery or oyly words.

ARTESIA

I come not, sir, to wooe him.

DONOBERT

'Twere folly, if you should; you must not wed him.

AURELIUS

Shame take thy tongue! Being old and weak thy self,
Thou doat'st, and looking on thine own defects,
Speak'st what thou'dst wish in me. Do I command
The deeds of others, mine own act not free?
Be pleas'd to smile or frown, we respect neither:
My will and rule shall stand and fall together.

(MORE)

AURELIUS (cont'd)

Most fair Artesia, see the king descends
To give thee welcome with these warlike Saxons,
And now on equal terms both sues and grants:
Instead of truce, let a perpetual league
Seal our united bloods in holy marriage;
Send the East Angles king this happy news,
That thou with me hast made a league for ever,
And added to his state a friend and brother.
Speak, dearest love, dare you confirm this title?

ARTESIA

I were no woman to deny a good
So high and noble to my fame and country.

AURELIUS

Live, then, a queen in Brittain.

GLOSTER

He meanes to marry her.

DONOBERT

Death! he shall marry the devil first!
Marry a pagan, an idolater?

CADOR

He has won her quickly.

EDWIN

She was woo'd afore she came, sure,
Or came of purpose to conclude the match.

AURELIUS

Who dares oppose our will? My Lord of Gloster,
Be you ambassador unto our brother,
The brother of our queen Artesia;
Tell him for such our entertainment looks him,
Our marriage adding to the happiness
Of our intended joys; mans good or ill
In this like waves agree, come double still.

(Enter HERMIT)

Who's this? the hermit? Welcome, my happiness!
Our countries hope, most reverent holy man,
I wanted but thy blessing to make perfect
The infinite sum of my felicity.

HERMIT

Alack, sweet prince, that happiness is yonder,
Felicity and thou art far asunder;
This world can never give it.

AURELIUS

Thou art deceiv'd: see here what I have found,
Beauty, alliance, peace, and strength of friends,
(MORE)

AURELIUS (cont'd)

All in this all exceeding excellence:
The league's confirm'd.

HERMIT

With whom, dear lord?

AURELIUS

With the great brother of this beauteous woman,
The royal Saxon king.

HERMIT

Oh, then I see,
And fear thou art too near thy misery.
What magick could so linck thee to this mischief?
By all the good that thou hast reapt by me,
Stand further from destruction.

AURELIUS

Speak as a man, and I shall hope to obey thee.

HERMIT

Idolaters, get hence! fond king, let go:
Thou hug'st thy ruine and thy countries woe.

DONOBERT

Well spoke, old father; too him, bait him soundly.
Now, by heavens blest Lady, I can scarce keep patience.

1 LORD

What devil is this?

2 LORD

That cursed Christian, by whose hellish charmes
Our army was o'rethrown.

HERMIT

Why do you dally, sir? Oh, tempt not heaven;
Warm not a serpent in your naked bosom:
Discharge them from your court.

AURELIUS

Thou speak'st like madness!
Command the frozen shepherd to the shade,
When he sits warm i'th' sun; the fever sick
To add more heat unto his burning pain:
These may obey, 'tis less extremity
Then thou enjoynst to me. Cast but thine eye
Upon this beauty, do it, I'll forgive thee,
Though jealousie in others findes no pardon;
Then say thou dost not love; I shall then swear
Th'art immortal and no earthly man.
Oh, blame then my mortallity, not me.

HERMIT

It is thy weakness brings thy misery,
Unhappy prince.

AURELIUS

Be milder in thy doom.

HERMIT

'Tis you that must indure heavens doom, which faln
Remember's just.

ARTESIA

Thou shalt not live to see it.--How fares my lord?
If my poor presence breed dislike, great prince,
I am no such neglected soul, will seek
To tie you to your word.

AURELIUS

My word, dear love! may my religion,
Crown, state, and kingdom fail, when I fail thee.
Command Earl Chester to break up the camp
Without disturbance to our Saxon friends;
Send every hour swift posts to hasten on
The king her brother, to conclude this league,
This endless happy peace of love and marriage;
Till when provide for revels, and give charge
That nought be wanting which make our triumphs
Sportful and free to all. If such fair blood
Ingender ill, man must not look for good.

Exit all but HERMIT. Florish.

Enter MODESTIA, reading in a book.

MODESTIA

How much the oft report of this blest hermit
Hath won on my desires; I must behold him:
And sure this should be he. Oh, the world's folly,
Proud earth and dust, how low a price bears goodness!
All that should make man absolute shines in him.
Much reverent sir, may I without offence
Give interruption to your holy thoughts?

HERMIT

What would you, lady?

MODESTIA

That which till now ne're found a language in me:
I am in love.

HERMIT

In love? with what?

MODESTIA

With vertue.

HERMIT

There's no blame in that.

MODESTIA

Nay, sir, with you, with your religious life,
Your vertue, goodness, if there be a name
To express affection greater, that,
That would I learn and utter: reverent sir,
If there be any thing to bar my suit,
Be charitable and expose it; your prayers
Are the same orizons which I will number.
Holy sir,
Keep not instruction back from willingness,
Possess me of that knowledge leads you on
To this humility; for well I know,
Were greatness good, you would not live so low.

HERMIT

Are you a virgin?

MODESTIA

Yes, sir.

HERMIT

Your name?

MODESTIA

Modestia.

HERMIT

Your name and vertues meet, a modest virgin:
Live ever in the sanctimonious way
To heaven and happiness. There's goodness in you,
I must instruct you further. Come, look up,
Behold yon firmament: there sits a power,
Whose foot-stool is this earth. Oh, learn this lesson,
And practise it: he that will climb so high,
Must leave no joy beneath to move his eye.

(Exit)

MODESTIA

I apprehend you, sir: on heaven I fix my love,
Earth gives us grief, our joys are all above;
For this was man in innocence naked born,
To show us wealth hinders our sweet return.

(Exit)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

SCENE I

Enter Clown and his sister great with childe.

CLOWN

Away, follow me no further, I am none of thy brother. What, with childe? great with childe, and knows not whose the father on't! I am asham'd to call thee sister.

JOAN

Believe me, brother, he was a gentleman.

CLOWN

Nay, I believe that; he gives arms, and legs too, and has made you the herald to blaze 'em: but, Joan, Joan, sister Joan, can you tell me his name that did it? how shall we call my cousin, your bastard, when we have it?

JOAN

Alas, I know not the gentlemans name, brother. I met him in these woods the last great hunting; He was so kinde and proffer'd me so much, As I had not the heart to ask him more.

CLOWN

Not his name? why, this shoves your country breeding now; had you been brought up i'th' city, you'd have got a father first, and the childe afterwards: hast thou no markes to know him by?

JOAN

He had a most rich attire, a fair hat and feather, a gilt sword, and most excellent hangers.

CLOWN

Pox on his hangers, would he had bin gelt for his labor.

JOAN

Had you but heard him swear, you would have thought--

CLOWN

I, as you did; swearing and lying goes together still. Did his oathes get you with childe? we shall have a roaring boy then, yfaith. Well, sister, I must leave you.

JOAN

Dear brother, stay, help me to finde him out, I'll ask no further.

CLOWN

'Sfoot, who should I finde? who should I ask for?

JOAN

Alas, I know not, he uses in these woods, And these are witness of his oathes and promise.

CLOWN

We are like to have a hot suit on't, when our best witness's but a knight a'th' post.

JOAN

Do but enquire this forrest, I'll go with you; Some happy fate may guide us till we meet him.

CLOWN

Meet him? and what name shall we have for him, when we meet him? 'Sfoot, thou neither knowst him nor canst tell what to call him. Was ever man tyr'd with such a business, to have a sister got with childe, and know not who did it? Well, you shall see him, I'll do my best for you, Ile make proclamation; if these woods and trees, as you say, will bear any witness, let them answer. Oh yes: If there be any man that wants a name will come in for conscience sake, and acknowledge himself to be a whore-master, he shall have that laid to his charge in an hour, he shall not be rid on in an age; if he have lands, he shall have an heir; if he have patience, he shall have a wife; if he have neither lands nor patience, he shall have a whore. So ho, boy, so ho, so, so.

PRINCE UTER

(Within)

So ho, boy, so ho, illo ho, illo ho.

CLOWN

Hark, hark, sister, there's one hollows to us; what a wicked world's this! a man cannot so soon name a whore, but a knave comes presently: and see where he is; stand close a while, sister.

Enter PRINCE UTER.

PRINCE

How like a voice that Eccho spake, but oh,
My thoughts are lost for ever in amazement.
Could I but meet a man to tell her beauties,
These trees would bend their tops to kiss the air
That from my lips should give her praises up.

CLOWN

He talks of a woman, sister.

JOAN

This may be he, brother.

CLOWN

View him well; you see, he has a fair sword, but his hangers
are faln.

PRINCE

Here did I see her first, here view her beauty:
Oh, had I known her name, I had been happy.

CLOWN

Sister, this is he, sure; he knows not thy name neither. A
couple of wise fools yfaith, to get children, and know not
one another.

PRINCE

You weeping leaves, upon whose tender cheeks
Doth stand a flood of tears at my complaint,
Who heard my vows and oathes--

CLOWN

Law, Law, he has been a great swearer too; tis he, sister.

PRINCE

For having overtook her;
As I have seen a forward blood-hound strip
The swifter of the cry, ready to seize
His wished hopes, upon the sudden view,
Struck with astonishment, at his arriv'd prey,
Instead of seizure stands at fearful bay;
Or like to Marius soldiers, who, o'retook,
The eye sight killing Gorgon at one look
Made everlasting stand: so fear'd my power,
Whose cloud aspir'd the sun, dissolv'd a shower.
Pigmalion, then I tasted thy sad fate,
Whose ivory picture and my fair were one:
Our dotage past imagination.
I saw and felt desire--

CLOWN

Pox a your fingering! did he feel, sister?

PRINCE

But enjoy'd not.
Oh fate, thou hadst thy days and nights to feed
On calm affection; one poor sight was all,
Converts my pleasure to perpetual thrall:
Imbracing thine, thou lostest breath and desire,
So I, relating mine, will here expire.
For here I vow to you mournful plants,
Who were the first made happy by her fame,
Never to part hence, till I know her name.

CLOWN

Give me thy hand, sister, the childe has found his father.
This is he, sure; as I am a man, had I been a woman, these
kinde words would have won me, I should have had a great
belly too, that's certain. Well, I'll speak to him.--Most
honest and fleshly minded gentleman, give me your hand, sir.

PRINCE

Ha, what art thou, that thus rude and boldly darest
Take notice of a wretch so much ally'd
To misery as I am?

CLOWN

Nay, sir, for our aliance, I shall be found to be a poor
brother in law of your worships: the gentlewoman you spake on
is my sister: you see what a clew she spreads; her name is
Joan Go-too't. I am her elder, but she has been at it before
me; 'tis a womans fault.--Pox a this bashfulness! come
forward, jug, prethee, speak to him.

PRINCE

Have you e're seen me, lady?

CLOWN

Seen ye? ha, ha! It seems she has felt you too: here's a yong
Go-too't a coming, sir; she is my sister; we all love to Go-
too't, as well as your worship. She's a maid yet, but you may
make her a wife, when you please, sir.

PRINCE

I am amaz'd with wonder: tell me, woman,
What sin have you committed worthy this?

JOAN

Do you not know me, sir?

PRINCE

Know thee! as I do thunder, hell, and mischief;
Witch, scullion, hag!

CLOWN

I see he will marry her; he speaks so like a husband.

PRINCE

Death! I will cut their tongues out for this blasphemy.
Strumpet, villain, where have you ever seen me?

CLOWN

Speak for your self, with a pox to ye.

PRINCE

Slaves, Ile make you curse your selves for this temptation.

JOAN

Oh, sir, if ever you did speak to me,
It was in smoother phrase, in fairer language.

PRINCE

Lightning consume me, if I ever saw thee.
My rage o'reflowes my blood, all patience flies me.
(Beats her)

CLOWN

Hold, I beseech you, sir, I have nothing to say to you.

JOAN

Help, help! murder, murder!

Enter TOCLIO and OSWOLD.

TOCLIO

Make haste, sir, this way the sound came, it was a wood.

OSWOL

See where she is, and the prince, the price of all our
wishes.

CLOWN

The prince, say ye? ha's made a poor subject of me, I am
sure.

TOCLIO

Sweet prince, noble Uter, speak, how fare you, sir?

OSWOL

Dear sir, recal your self; your fearful absence
Hath won too much already on the grief
Of our sad king, from whom our laboring search
Hath had this fair success in meeting you.

TOCLIO

His silence and his looks argue distraction.

CLOWN

Nay, he's mad, sure, he will not acknowledge my sister, nor
the childe neither.

OSWOL

Let us entreat your grace along with us;
Your sight will bring new life to the king your brother.

TOCLIO

Will you go, sir?

PRINCE

Yes, any whether; guide me, all's hell I see;
Man may change air, but not his misery.

Exit PRINCE, TOCLIO

JOAN

Lend me one word with you, sir.

CLOWN

Well said, sister, he has a feather, and fair hangers too,
this may be he.

OSWOL

What would you, fair one?

JOAN

Sure, I have seen you in these woods e're this.

OSWOL

Trust me, never; I never saw this place,
Till at this time my friend conducted me.

JOAN

The more's my sorrow then.

OSWOL

Would I could comfort you.
I am a bachelor, but it seems you have
A husband, you have been foully o'reshot else.

CLOWN

A womans fault, we are all subject to go to't, sir.

Enter TOCLIO.

TOCLIO

Oswold, away; the prince will not stir a foot without you.

OSWOL

I am coming. Farewel, woman.

TOCLIO

Prithee, make haste.

Exit OSWOLD.

JOAN

Good sir, but one word with you, e're you leave us.

TOCLIO

With me, fair soul?

CLOWN

Shee'l have a fling at him too; the childe must have a father.

JOAN

Have you ne'er seen me, sir?

TOCLIO

Seen thee? 'Sfoot, I have seen many fair faces in my time: prithe, look up, and do not weep so. Sure, pretty wanton, I have seen this face before.

JOAN

It is enough, though you ne're see me more.
(*Sinks down*)

TOCLIO

'Sfoot, she's faln: this place is enchanted, sure; look to the woman, fellow.
(*Exit*)

CLOWN

Oh, she's dead, she's dead! As you are a man, stay and help, sir.--Joan, Joan, sister Joan, why, Joan Go-too't, I say; will you cast away your self, and your childe, and me too? what do you mean, sister?

JOAN

Oh, give me pardon, sir; 'twas too much joy Opprest my loving thoughts; I know you were Too noble to deny me--ha! Where is he?

CLOWN

Who, the gentleman? he's gone, sister.

JOAN

Oh! I am undone, then! Run, tell him I did But faint for joy; dear brother, haste; why dost thou stay? Oh, never cease, till he give answer to thee.

CLOWN

He: which he? what do you call him, tro?

JOAN

Unnatural brother,
Shew me the path he took; why dost thou dally?
Speak, oh, which way went he?

CLOWN

This way, that way, through the bushes there.

JOAN

Were it through fire,
The journey's easie, winged with sweet desire.
(Exit)

CLOWN

Hey day, there's some hope of this yet. Ile follow her for
kindreds sake; if she miss of her purpose now, she'l
challenge all she findes, I see; for if ever we meet with a
two-leg'd creature in the whole kingdom, the childe shall
have a father, that's certain.
(Exit)

SCENE II

*Loud musick. Enter two with the sword and mace,
CADOR, EDWIN, two Bishops, AURELIUS, Ostorius,
leading ARTESIA crown'd, CONSTACIA, MODESTIA, Octa,
Proximus a Magician, DONOBERT, GLOSTER, OSWOLD,
TOCLIO; all pass over the stage. Manet DONOBERT,
GLOSTER, EDWIN, CADOR.*

DONOBERT

Come, Gloster, I do not like this hasty marriage.

GLOSTER

She was quickly wooed and won: not six days since
Arrived an enemy to sue for peace,
And now crown'd Queen of Brittain; this is strange.

DONOBERT

Her brother too made as quick speed in coming,
Leaving his Saxons and his starved troops,
To take the advantage, whilst 'twas offer'd.
'Fore heaven I fear the king's too credulous;
Our Army is discharg'd too.

GLOSTER

Yes, and our general commanded home.
Son Edwin, have you seen him since?

EDWIN

He's come to court, but will not view the presence,
Nor speak unto the king; he's so discontent
At this so strange alliance with the Saxon,
As nothing can perswade his patience.

CADOR

You know his humor will indure no check,
No, if the king oppose it:
All crosses feeds both his spleen and his impatience;
Those affections are in him like powder,
Apt to inflame with every little spark,
And blow up all his reason.

GLOSTER

Edol of Chester is a noble soldier.

DONOBERT

So is he, by the Rood, ever most faithful
To the king and kingdom, how e're his passions guide him.

Enter EDOL with CAPTAINS.

CADOR

See where he comes, my lord.

OMNES

Welcome to court, brave earl.

EDOL

Do not deceive me by your flatteries:
Is not the Saxon here? the league confirm'd?
The marriage ratifi'd? the court divided
With pagan infidels, the least part Christians,
At least in their commands? Oh, the gods!
It is a thought that takes away my sleep,
And dulls my senses so I scarcely know you:
Prepare my horses, Ile away to Chester.

CAPTAIN

What shall we do with our companies, my lord?

EDOL

Keep them at home to increase cuckolds,
And get some cases for your captainships;
Smooth up your brows, the wars has spoil'd your faces,
And few will now regard you.

DONOBERT

Preserve your patience, sir.

EDOL

Preserve your honors, lords, your countries safety,
Your lives and lands from strangers. What black devil
Could so bewitch the king, so to discharge
A royal army in the height of conquest,
Nay, even already made victorious,
To give such credit to an enemy,
A starved foe, a stragling fugitive,

(MORE)

EDOL (cont'd)

Beaten beneath our feet, so low dejected,
So servile, and so base, as hope of life
Had won them all to leave the land for ever?

DONOBERT

It was the kings will.

EDOL

It was your want of wisdom,
that should have laid before his tender youth
The dangers of a state, where forain powers
Bandy for sovereignty with lawful kings;
Who being settled once, to assure themselves,
Will never fail to seek the blood and life
Of all competitors.

DONOBERT

Your words sound well, my lord, and point at safety,
Both for the realm and us; but why did you,
Within whose power it lay, as general,
With full commission to dispose the war,
Lend ear to parly with the weakned foe?

EDOL

Oh the good gods!

CADOR

And on that parly came this embassie.

EDOL

You will hear me?

EDWIN

Your letters did declare it to the king,
Both of the peace, and all conditions
Brought by this Saxon lady, whose fond love
Has thus bewitched him.

EDOL

I will curse you all as black as hell,
Unless you hear me; your gross mistake would make
Wisdom her self run madding through the streets,
And quarrel with her shadow. Death!
Why kill'd ye not that woman?

DONOBERT AND GLOSTER

Oh, my lord!

EDOL

The great devil take me quick, had I been by,
And all the women of the world were barren,
She should have died, e're he had married her
On these conditions.

CADOR

It is not reason that directs you thus.

EDOL

Then have I none, for all I have directs me.
Never was man so palpably abus'd,
So basely marted, bought and sold to scorn.
My honor, fame, and hopeful victories,
The loss of time, expences, blood, and fortunes,
All vanisht into nothing.

EDWIN

This rage is vain, my lord:
What the king does nor they nor you can help.

EDOL

My sword must fail me then.

CADOR

'Gainst whom will you expose it?

EDOL

What's that to you? 'gainst all the devils in hell,
To guard my country.

EDWIN

These are airy words.

EDOL

Sir, you tread too hard upon my patience.

EDWIN

I speak the duty of a subjects faith,
And say agen, had you been here in presence,
What the king did, you had not dar'd to cross it.

EDOL

I will trample on his life and soul that says it.

CADOR

My lord!

EDWIN

Come, come.

EDOL

Now, before heaven--

CADOR

Dear sir!

EDOL

Not dare? thou liest beneath thy lungs.

GLOSTER

No more, son Edwin.

EDWIN

I have done, sir; I take my leave.

EDOL

But thou shalt not, you shall take no leave of me, sir.

DONOBERT

For wisdoms sake, my lord--

EDOL

Sir, I'll leave him, and you, and all of you,
The court and king, and let my sword and friends
Shuffle for Edols safety: stay you here,
And hug the Saxons, till they cut your throats,
Or bring the land to servile slavery.
Such yokes of baseness Chester must not suffer.
Go, and repent betimes these foul misdeeds,
For in this league all our whole kingdom bleeds,
Which Ile prevent, or perish.

Exit EDOL, Captains.

GLOSTER

See how his rage transports him!

CADOR

These passions set apart, a braver soldier
Breathes not i'th' world this day.

DONOBERT

I wish his own worth do not court his ruine.
The king must rule, and we must learn to obey,
True vertue still directs the noble way.

SCENE III

*Loud musick. Enter AURELIUS, ARTESIA, Ostorius,
Octa, Proximus, TOCLIO, OSWOLD, HERMIT.*

AURELIUS

Why is the court so dull? me thinks, each room
And angle of our palace should appear
Stuck full of objects fit for mirth and triumphs,
To show our high content. Oswald, fill wine!
Must we begin the revels? Be it so, then!
Reach me the cup: Ile now begin a health
To our lov'd queen, the bright Artesia,
The royal Saxon king, our warlike brother.
Go and command all the whole court to pledge it.

(MORE)

AURELIUS (cont'd)

Fill to the hermit there! Most reverent Anselme,
Wee'l do thee honor first, to pledge my queen.

HERMIT

I drink no healths, great king, and if I did,
I would be loath to part with health to those
That have no power to give it back agen.

AURELIUS

Mistake not, it is the argument of love
And duty to our queen and us.

ARTESIA

But he owes none, it seems.

HERMIT

I do to vertue, madam: temperate minds
Covets that health to drink, which nature gives
In every spring to man; he that doth hold
His body but a tenement at will,
Bestows no cost, but to repair what's ill:
Yet if your healths or heat of wine, fair princes,
Could this old frame or these cras'd limbes restore,
Or keep out death or sickness, then fill more,
I'll make fresh way for appetite; if no,
On such a prodigal who would wealth bestow?

OSTORIUS

He speaks not like a guest to grace a wedding.

Enter TOCLIO.

ARTESIA

No, sir, but like an envious imposter.

OCTA

A Christian slave, a cinick.

OSTORIUS

What vertue could decline your kingly spirit
To such respect of him whose magick spells
Met with your vanquisht troops, and turn'd your arms
To that necessity of fight, which, thro despair
Of any hope to stand but by his charms,
Had been defeated in a bloody conquest?

OCTA

'Twas magick, hellbred magick did it, sir,
And that's a course, my lord, which we esteem
In all our Saxon wars unto the last
And lowest ebbe of servile treachery.

AURELIUS

Sure, you are deceiv'd, it was the hand of heaven
That in his vertue gave us victory.
Is there a power in man that can strike fear
Thorough a general camp, or create spirits
In recreant bosoms above present sense?

OSTORIUS

To blind the sense there may, with apparition
Of well arm'd troops within themselves are air,
Form'd into humane shapes, and such that day
Were by that sorcerer rais'd to cross our fortunes.

AURELIUS

There is a law tells us that words want force
To make deeds void; examples must be shown
By instances alike, e're I believe it.

OSTORIUS

'Tis easily perform'd, believe me, sir:
Propose your own desires, and give but way
To what our magick here shall straight perform,
And then let his or our deserts be censur'd.

AURELIUS

We could not wish a greater happiness
Then what this satisfaction brings with it.
Let him proceed, fair brother.

OSTORIUS

He shall, sir.
Come, learned Proximus, this task be thine:
Let thy great charms confound the opinion
This Christian by his spells hath falsly won.

PROXIMUS

Great king, propound your wishes, then:
What persons, of what state, what numbers, or how arm'd,
Please your own thoughts; they shall appear before you.

AURELIUS

Strange art! What thinkst thou, reverent hermit?

HERMIT

Let him go on, sir.

AURELIUS

Wilt thou behold his cunning?

HERMIT

Right gladly, sir; it will be my joy to tell,
That I was here to laugh at him and hell.

AURELIUS

I like thy confidence.

ARTESIA

His sawcy impudence! Proceed to th'trial.

PROXIMUS

Speak your desires, my lord, and be it place't
In any angle underneath the moon,
The center of the earth, the sea, the air,
The region of the fire, nay, hell it self,
And I'll present it.

AURELIUS

Wee'll have no sight so fearful, onely this:
If all thy art can reach it, show me here
The two great champions of the Trojan War,
Achilles and brave Hector, our great ancestor,
Both in their warlike habits, armor, shields,
And weapons then in use for fight.

PROXIMUS

'Tis done, my lord, command a halt and silence,
As each man will respect his life or danger.
Armel, Plesgeth!

Enter Spirits.

SPIRITS

Quid vis?

PROXIMUS

Attend me.

AURELIUS

The apparition comes; on our displeasure,
Let all keep place and silence.

Within drums beat marches.

*Enter Proximus, bringing in Hector, attir'd and
arm'd after the Trojan manner, with target, sword,
and battel-ax, a trumpet before him, and a spirit
in flame colours with a torch; at the other door
Achilles with his spear and falchon, a trumpet, and
a spirit in black before him; trumpets sound alarm,
and they manage their weapons to begin the fight:
and after some charges, the hermit steps between
them, at which seeming amaz'd the spirits tremble.
Thunder within.*

PROXIMUS

What means this stay, bright Armel, Plesgeth?
Why fear you and fall back?
Renew the alarms, and enforce the combat,
Or hell or darkness circles you for ever.

ARMEL

We dare not.

PROXIMUS

Ha!

PLESGETH

Our charms are all dissolv'd: Armel, away!
'Tis worse then hell to us, whilst here we stay.

Exit all.

HERMIT

What! at a non-plus, sir? command them back, for shame.

PROXIMUS

What power o're-aws my spells? Return, you hell-hounds!
Armel, Plesgeth, double damnation seize you!
By all the infernal powers, the prince of devils
Is in this hermits habit: what else could force
My spirits quake or tremble thus?

HERMIT

Weak argument to hide your want of skill:
Does the devil fear the devil, or war with hell?
They have not been acquainted long, it seems.
Know, mis-believing pagan, even that power,
That overthrew your forces, still lets you see,
He onely can controul both hell and thee.

PROXIMUS

Disgrace and mischief! Ile enforce new charms,
New spells, and spirits rais'd from the low abyss
Of hells unbottom'd depths.

AURELIUS

We have enough, sir;
Give o're your charms, wee'l finde some other time
To praise your art. I dare not but acknowledge
That heavenly power my heart stands witness to:
Be not dismaid, my lords, at this disaster,
Nor thou, my fairest queen: we'l change the scene
To some more pleasing sports. Lead to your chamber.
How'ere in this thy pleasures finde a cross,
Our joy's too fixed here to suffer loss.

TOCLIO

Which I shall adde to, sir, with news I bring:
The prince, your brother, lives.

AURELIUS

Ha!

TOCLIO

And comes to grace this high and heaven-knit marriage.

AURELIUS

Why dost thou flatter me, to make me think
Such happiness attends me?

Enter PRINCE UTER and OSWOLD.

TOCLIO

His presence speaks my truth, sir.

DONOBERT

Force me, 'tis he: look, Gloster.

GLOSTER

A blessing beyond hope, sir.

AURELIUS

Ha! 'tis he: welcome, my second comfort.
Artesia, dearest love, it is my brother,
My princely brother, all my kingdoms hope:
Oh, give him welcome, as thou lov'st my health.

ARTESIA

You have so free a welcome, sir, from me,
As this your presence has such power, I swear,
O're me, a stranger, that I must forget
My countrey, name, and friends, and count this place
My joy and birth-right.

PRINCE

'Tis she! 'tis she, I swear! oh, ye good gods, 'tis she!
That face within those woods where first I saw her,
Captived my senses, and thus many moneths
Bar'd me from all society of men.
How came she to this place,
Brother Aurelius? Speak that angels name,
Her heaven-blest name, oh, speak it quickly, sir.

AURELIUS

It is Artesia, the royal Saxon princess.

PRINCE

A woman, and no deity, no feigned shape,
To mock the reason of admiring sense,

(MORE)

PRINCE (cont'd)

On whom a hope as low as mine may live,
Love, and enjoy, dear brother, may it not?

AURELIUS

She is all the good or vertue thou canst name,
My wife, my queen.

PRINCE

Ha! your wife!

ARTESIA

Which you shall finde, sir, if that time and fortune
May make my love but worthy of your tryal.

PRINCE

Oh!

AURELIUS

What troubles you, dear brother?
Why with so strange and fixt an eye dost thou
Behold my joys?

ARTESIA

You are not well, sir.

PRINCE

Yes, yes.--Oh, you immortal powers,
Why has poor man so many entrances
For sorrow to creep in at, when our sense
Is much too weak to hold his happiness?
Oh, say, I was born deaf: and let your silence
Confirm in me the knowing my defect;
At least be charitable to conceal my sin,
For hearing is no less in me, dear brother.

AURELIUS

No more!
I see thou art a rival in the joys
Of my high bliss. Come, my Artesia;
The day's most prais'd when 'tis ecclipst by night,
Great good must have as great ill opposite.

PRINCE

Stay, hear but a word; yet now I think on't,
This is your wedding-night, and were it mine,
I should be angry with least loss of time.

ARTESIA

Envy speaks no such words, has no such looks.

PRINCE

Sweet rest unto you both.

AURELIUS

Lights to our nuptial chamber.

ARTESIA

Could you speak so,
I would not fear how much my grief did grow.

AURELIUS

Lights to our chamber; on, on, set on!

Exeunt. Manet PRINCE.

PRINCE

'Could you speak so,
I would not fear how much my griefs did grow.'
Those were her very words; sure, I am waking:
She wrung me by the hand, and spake them to me
With a most passionate affection.
Perhaps she loves, and now repents her choice,
In marriage with my brother. Oh, fond man,
How darest thou trust thy traitors thoughts, thus to
Betray thy self? 'twas but a waking dream
Wherein thou madest thy wishes speak, not her,
In which thy foolish hopes strives to prolong
A wretched being. So sickly children play
With health lov'd toys, which for a time delay,
But do not cure the fit. Be, then, a man,
Meet that destruction which thou canst not flie.
From not to live, make it thy best to die,
And call her now, whom thou didst hope to wed,
Thy brothers wife: thou art too nere a kin,
And such an act above all name's a sin
Not to be blotted out; heaven pardon me!
She's banisht from my bosom now for ever.
To lowest ebbes men justly hope a flood;
When vice grows barren, all desires are good.

Enter Waiting Gentlewoman with a jewel.

GENTLEWOMAN

The noble prince, I take it, sir?

PRINCE

You speak me what I should be, lady.

GENTLEWOMAN

Know, by that name, sir, Queen Artesia greets you.

PRINCE

Alas, good vertue, how is she mistaken!

GENTLEWOMAN

Commending her affection in this jewel, sir.

PRINCE

She binds my service to her: ha! a jewel; 'tis
A fair one, trust me, and methinks, it much
Resembles something I have seen with her.

GENTLEWOMAN

It is an artificial crab, sir.

PRINCE

A creature that goes backward.

GENTLEWOMAN

True, from the way it looks.

PRINCE

There is no moral in it alludes to her self?

GENTLEWOMAN

'Tis your construction gives you that, sir;
She's a woman.

PRINCE

And, like this, may use her legs and eyes
Two several ways.

GENTLEWOMAN

Just like the sea-crab,
Which on the mussel prays, whilst he bills at a stone.

PRINCE

Pretty in troth. Prithee, tell me, art thou honest?

GENTLEWOMAN

I hope I seem no other, sir.

PRINCE

And those that seem so are sometimes bad enough.

GENTLEWOMAN

If they will accuse themselves for want of witness,
Let them, I am not so foolish.

PRINCE

I see th'art wise.
Come, speak me truly: what is the greatest sin?

GENTLEWOMAN

That which man never acted; what has been done
Is as the least, common to all as one.

PRINCE

Dost think thy lady is of thy opinion?

GENTLEWOMAN

She's a bad scholar else; I have brought her up,
And she dares owe me still.

PRINCE

I, 'tis a fault in greatness, they dare owe
Many, e're they pay one. But darest thou
Expose thy scholar to my examining?

GENTLEWOMAN

Yes, in good troth, sir, and pray put her to't too;
'Tis a hard lesson, if she answer it not.

PRINCE

Thou know'st the hardest?

GENTLEWOMAN

As far as a woman may, sir.

PRINCE

I commend thy plainness.
When wilt thou bring me to thy lady?

GENTLEWOMAN

Next opportunity I attend you, sir.

PRINCE

Thanks, take this, and commend me to her.

GENTLEWOMAN

Think of your sea-crab, sir, I pray.
(Exit)

PRINCE

Oh, by any means, lady.--
What should all this tend to?
If it be love or lust that thus incites her,
The sin is horrid and incestuous;
If to betray my life, what hopes she by it?
Yes, it may be a practice 'twixt themselves,
To expel the Brittain and ensure the state
Through our destructions; all this may be
Valid, with a deeper reach in villany
Then all my thoughts can guess at;--however,
I will confer with her, and if I finde
Lust hath given life to envy in her minde,
I may prevent the danger: so men wise
By the same step by which they fell, may rise.
Vices are vertues, if so thought and seen,

(MORE)

PRINCE (cont'd)

And trees with foulest roots branch soonest green.
(Exit)

END OF ACT TWO

ACT III

SCENE I

Enter Clown and his sister.

CLOWN

Come, sister, thou that art all fool, all mad-woman.

JOAN

Prithee, have patience, we are now at court.

CLOWN

At court! ha, ha, that proves thy madness: was there ever any woman in thy taking travel'd to court for a husband? 'Slid, 'tis enough for them to get children, and the city to keep 'em, and the countrey to finde nurses: every thing must be done in his due place, sister.

JOAN

Be but content a while; for, sure, I know
This journey will be happy. Oh, dear brother,
This night my sweet friend came to comfort me;
I saw him and embrac't him in mine arms.

CLOWN

Why did you not hold him, and call me to help you?

JOAN

Alas, I thought I had been with him still,
But when I wak't--

CLOWN

Ah! pox of all loger-heads, then you were but in a dream all this while, and we may still go look him. Well, since we are come to court, cast your cats eyes about you, and either finde him out you dreamt on, or some other, for Ile trouble my self no further.

(Enter DONOBERT, CADOR, EDWIN & TOCLIO)

See, see, here comes more courtiers; look about you; come,
(MORE)

CLOWN (cont'd)

pray, view 'em all well; the old man has none of the marks
about him, the other have both swords and feathers: what
thinkest thou of that tall yong gentleman?

JOAN

He much resembles him; but, sure, my friend,
Brother, was not so high of stature.

CLOWN

Oh, beast, wast thou got a childe with a short thing too?

DONOBERT

Come, come, Ile hear no more on't: go, lord Edwin,
Tell her, this day her sister shall be married
To Cador, Earl of Cornwall; so shall she
To thee, brave Edwin, if she'l have my blessing.

EDWIN

She is addicted to a single life,
She will not hear of marriage.

DONOBERT

Tush, fear it not: go you from me to her,
Use your best skill, my lord, and if you fail,
I have a trick shall do it: haste, haste about it.

EDWIN

Sir, I am gone;
My hope is in your help more then my own.

DONOBERT

And worthy Toclio, to your care I must
Commend this business
For lights and musick, and what else is needful.

TOCLIO

I shall, my lord.

CLOWN

We would intreat a word, sir. Come forward, sister.

Exeunt DONOBERT, TOCLIO, CADOR.

EDWIN

What lackst thou, fellow?

CLOWN

I lack a father for a childe, sir.

EDWIN

How! a God-father?

CLOWN

No, sir, we mean the own father: it may be you, sir, for any thing we know; I think the childe is like you.

EDWIN

Like me! prithee, where is it?

CLOWN

Nay, 'tis not born yet, sir, 'tis forth coming, you see; the childe must have a father: what do you think of my sister?

EDWIN

Why, I think if she ne're had husband, she's a whore, and thou a fool. Farewell.

(Exit)

CLOWN

I thank you, sir. Well, pull up thy heart, sister; if there be any law i'th' court, this fellow shall father it, 'cause he uses me so scurvily. There's a great wedding towards, they say; we'll amongst them for a husband for thee.

(Enter Sir Nicodemus with a letter)

If we miss there, Ile have another bout with him that abus'd me. See! look, there comes another hat and feather, this should be a close letcher, he's reading of a love-letter.

SIR NICODEMUS

Earl Cador's marriage, and a masque to grace it.

So, so.

This night shall make me famous for presentments.--

How now, what are you?

CLOWN

A couple of great Brittains you may see by our bellies, sir.

SIR NICODEMUS

And what of this, sir?

CLOWN

Why, thus the matter stands, sir: there's one of your courtiers hunting nags has made a gap through another mans inclosure. Now, sir, here's the question, who should be at charge of a fur-bush to stop it?

SIR NICODEMUS

Ha, ha, this is out of my element: the law must end it.

CLOWN

Your worship says well; for, surely, I think some lawyer had a hand in the business, we have such a troublesom issue.

SIR NICODEMUS

But what's thy business with me now?

CLOWN

Nay, sir, the business is done already, you may see by my sisters belly.

SIR NICODEMUS

Oh, now I finde thee: this gentlewoman, it seems, has been humbled.

CLOWN

As low as the ground would give her leave, sir, and your worship knows this: though there be many fathers without children, yet to have a childe without a father were most unnatural.

SIR NICODEMUS

That's true, ifaith, I never heard of a childe yet that e're begot his father.

CLOWN

Why, true, you say wisely, sir.

SIR NICODEMUS

And therefore I conclude, that he that got the childe is without all question the father of it.

CLOWN

I, now you come to the matter, sir; and our suit is to your worship for the discovery of this father.

SIR NICODEMUS

Why, lives he in the court here?

JOAN

Yes, sir, and I desire but marriage.

SIR NICODEMUS

And does the knave refuse it? Come, come, be merry, wench; he shall marry thee, and keep the childe too, if my knighthood can do any thing. I am bound by mine orders to help distressed ladies, and can there be a greater injury to a woman with childe, then to lack a father for't? I am asham'd of your simpleness: Come, come, give me a courtiers fee for my pains, and Ile be thy advocate my self, and justice shall be found; nay, Ile sue the law for it; but give me my fee first.

CLOWN

If all the money I have i'th' world will do it, you shall have it, sir.

SIR NICODEMUS

An angel does it.

CLOWN

Nay, there's two, for your better eye sight, sir.

SIR NICODEMUS

Why, well said! Give me thy hand, wench, Ile teach thee a trick for all this, shall get a father for thy childe presently, and this it is, mark now: You meet a man, as you meet me now, thou claimest marriage of me, and layest the childe to my charge; I deny it: push, that's nothing, hold thy claim fast, thy words carries it, and no law can withstand it.

CLOWN

Ist possible?

SIR NICODEMUS

Past all opposition; her own word carries it: let her challenge any man, the childe shall call him father; there's a trick for your money now.

CLOWN

Troth, sir, we thank you, we'll make use of your trick, and go no further to seek the childe a father, for we challenge you, sir: sister, lay it to him, he shall marry thee, I shall have a worshipful old man to my brother.

SIR NICODEMUS

Ha, ha, I like thy pleasantness.

JOAN

Nay, indeed, sir, I do challenge you.

CLOWN

You think we jest, sir?

SIR NICODEMUS

I, by my troth, do I. I like thy wit, yfaith: thou shalt live at court with me; didst never here of Nicodemus Nothing? I am the man.

CLOWN

Nothing? 'slid, we are out agen: thou wast never got with childe with nothing, sure.

JOAN

I know not what to say.

SIR NICODEMUS

Never grieve, wench, show me the man, and process shall fly out.

CLOWN

'Tis enough for us to finde the children, we look that you should finde the father, and therefore either do us justice, or we'll stand to our first challenge.

SIR NICODEMUS

Would you have justice without an adversary? Unless you can show me the man, I can do you no good in it.

CLOWN

Why, then I hope you'll do us no harm, sir; you'll restore my money.

SIR NICODEMUS

What, my fee? marry, law forbid it!
Finde out the party, and you shall have justice,
Your fault clos'd up, and all shall be amended,
The childe, his father, and the law defended.

(Exit)

CLOWN

Well, he has deserv'd his fee, indeed, for he has brought our suit to a quick end, I promise you, and yet the childe has never a father; nor we have no more mony to seek after him. A shame of all lecherous placcats! now you look like a cat had newly kitten'd; what will you do now, tro? Follow me no further, lest I beat your brains out.

JOAN

Impose upon me any punishment, rather then leave me now.

CLOWN

Well, I think I am bewicht with thee; I cannot finde in my heart to forsake her. There was never sister would have abus'd a poor brother as thou hast done; I am even pin'd away with fretting, there's nothing but flesh and bones about me. Well, and I had my money agen, it were some comfort. Hark, sister,

(thunder)

does it not thunder?

JOAN

Oh yes, most fearfully: what shall we do, brother?

CLOWN

Marry, e'ene get some shelter, e're the storm catch us: away, let's away, I prithee.

Enter the Devil in mans habit, richly attir'd, his feet and his head horrid.

JOAN

Ha, 'tis he! Stay, brother, dear brother, stay.

CLOWN

What's the matter now?

JOAN

My love, my friend is come; yonder he goes.

CLOWN

Where, where? show me where; I'll stop him, if the devil be not in him.

JOAN

Look there, look yonder!
Oh, dear friend, pity my distress,
For heaven and goodness, do but speak to me.

DEVIL

She calls me, and yet drives me headlong from her.
Poor mortal, thou and I are much uneven,
Thou must not speak of goodness nor of heaven,
If I confer with thee; but be of comfort:
Whilst men do breath, and Brittain's name be known,
The fatal fruit thou bear'st within thy womb
Shall here be famous till the day of doom.

CLOWN

'Slid, who's that talks so? I can see no body.

JOAN

Then art thou blind or mad. See where he goes,
And beckons me to come; oh, lead me forth,
I'll follow thee in spite of fear or death.

(Exit)

CLOWN

Oh brave! she'll run to the devil for a husband; she's stark
mad, sure, and talks to a shadow, for I could see no
substance: well, I'll after her; the childe was got by
chance, and the father must be found at all adventure.

(Exit)

SCENE II

Enter HERMIT, MODESTIA, and EDWIN.

MODESTIA

Oh, reverent sir, by you my heart hath reacht
At the large hopes of holy piety,
And for this I craved your company,
Here in your sight religiously to vow
My chaste thoughts up to heaven, and make you now
The witness of my faith.

HERMIT

Angels assist thy hopes.

EDWIN

What means my love? thou art my promis'd wife.

MODESTIA

To part with willingly what friends and life
Can make no good assurance of.

EDWIN

Oh, finde remorse, fair soul, to love and merit,
And yet recant thy vow.

MODESTIA

Never:
This world and I are parted now for ever.

HERMIT

To finde the way to bliss, oh, happy woman,
Th'ast learn'd the hardest lesson well, I see.
Now show thy fortitude and constancy:
Let these thy friends thy sad departure weep,
Thou shalt but loose the wealth thou could'st not keep.
My contemplation calls me, I must leave ye.

EDWIN

O, reverent sir, perswade not her to leave me.

HERMIT

My lord, I do not, nor to cease to love ye;
I onely pray her faith may fixed stand;
Marriage was blest, I know, with heavens own hand.
(Exit)

EDWIN

You hear him, lady, 'tis not a virgins state,
But sanctity of life, must make you happy.

MODESTIA

Good sir, you say you love me; gentle Edwin,
Even by that love I do beseech you, leave me.

EDWIN

Think of your fathers tears, your weeping friends,
Whom cruel grief makes pale and bloodless for you.

MODESTIA

Would I were dead to all.

EDWIN

Why do you weep?

MODESTIA

Oh, who would live to see
How men with care and cost seek misery?

EDWIN

Why do you seek it then? What joy, what pleasure
Can give you comfort in a single life?

MODESTIA

The contemplation of a happy death,
Which is to me so pleasing that I think
No torture could divert me: What's this world,
Wherein you'd have me walk, but a sad passage
To a dread judgement-seat, from whence even now
We are but bail'd, upon our good abearing,
Till that great sessions come, when Death, the cryer,
Will surely summon us and all to appear,
To plead us guilty or our bail to clear?
What musick's this?

Soft musick.

*Enter two Bishops, DONOBERT, GLOSTER, CADOR,
CONSTACIA, OSWOLD, TOCLIO.*

EDWIN

Oh, now resolve, and think upon my love!
This sounds the marriage of your beauteous sister,
Vertuous Constantia, with the noble Cador.
Look, and behold this pleasure.

MODESTIA

Cover me with night,
It is a vanity not worth the sight.

DONOBERT

See, see, she's yonder.
Pass on, son Cador, daughter Constantia,
I beseech you all, unless she first move speech,
Salute her not.--Edwin, what good success?

EDWIN

Nothing as yet, unless this object take her.

DONOBERT

See, see, her eye is fixt upon her sister;
Seem careless all, and take no notice of her:--
On afore there; come, my Constantia.

MODESTIA

Not speak to me, nor dain to cast an eye,
To look on my despised poverty?

(MORE)

MODESTIA (cont'd)

I must be more charitable;--pray, stay, lady,
Are not you she whom I did once call sister?

CONSTANTIA

I did acknowledge such a name to one,
Whilst she was worthy of it, in whose folly,
Since you neglect your fame and friends together,
In you I drown'd a sisters name for ever.

MODESTIA

Your looks did speak no less.

GLOSTER

It now begins to work, this sight has moved her.

DONOBERT

I knew this trick would take, or nothing.

MODESTIA

Though you disdain in me a sisters name,
Yet charity, me thinks, should be so strong
To instruct e're you reject. I am a wretch.
Even follies instance, who perhaps have er'd,
Not having known the goodness bears so high
And fair a show in you; which being exprest,
I may recant this low despised life,
And please those friends whom I mov'd to grief.

CADOR

She is coming, yfaith; be merry, Edwin.

CONSTANTIA

Since you desire instruction, you shall have it.
What ist should make you thus desire to live
Vow'd to a single life?

MODESTIA

Because I know I cannot flie from death.
Oh, my good sister, I beseech you, hear me:
This world is but a masque, catching weak eyes
With what is not our selves but our disguise,
A vizard that falls off, the dance being done,
And leaves Deaths glass for all to look upon;
Our best happiness here lasts but a night,
Whose burning tapers makes false ware seem right.
Who knows not this, and will not now provide
Some better shift before his shame be spy'd,
And knowing this vain world at last will leave him,
Shake off these robes that help but to deceive him?

CONSTANTIA

Her words are powerful, I am amaz'd to hear her!

DONOBERT

Her soul's enchanted with infected spells.
Leave her, best girl; for now in thee
Ile seek the fruits of age, posterity.--
Out o' my sight! sure, I was half asleep
Or drunk, when I begot thee.

CONSTANTIA

Good sir, forbear. What say you to that, sister?
The joy of children, a blest mothers name!
Oh, who without much grief can loose such fame?

MODESTIA

Who can enjoy it without sorrow rather?
And that most certain where the joy's unsure,
Seeing the fruit that we beget endure
So many miseries, that oft we pray
The heavens to shut up their afflicted day;
At best we do but bring forth heirs to die,
And fill the coffins of our enemy.

CONSTANTIA

Oh, my soul!

DONOBERT

Hear her no more, Constantia,
She's sure bewicht with error; leave her, girl.

CONSTANTIA

Then must I leave all goodness, sir: away,
Stand off, I say.

DONOBERT

How's this?

CONSTANTIA

I have no father, friend, no husband now;
All are but borrowed robes, in which we masque
To waste and spend the time, when all our life
Is but one good betwixt two ague-days,
Which from the first e're we have time to praise,
A second fever takes us: Oh, my best sister,
My souls eternal friend, forgive the rashness
Of my distemper'd tongue; for how could she,
Knew not her self, know thy felicity,
From which worlds cannot now remove me?

DONOBERT

Art thou mad too, fond woman? what's thy meaning?

CONSTANTIA

To seek eternal happiness in heaven,
Which all this world affords not.

CADOR

Think of thy vow, thou art my promis'd wife.

CONSTANTIA

Pray, trouble me no further.

OMNES

Strange alteration!

CADOR

Why do you stand at gaze, you sacred priests?
You holy men, be equal to the gods,
And consummate my marriage with this woman.

BISHOP

Her self gives barr, my lord, to your desires
And our performance; 'tis against the law
And orders of the Church to force a marriage.

CADOR

How am I wrong'd! Was this your trick, my lord?

DONOBERT

I am abus'd past sufferance;
Grief and amazement strive which sense of mine
Shall loose her being first. Yet let me call thee daughter.

CADOR

Me, wife.

CONSTANTIA

Your words are air, you speak of want to wealth,
And wish her sickness, newly rais'd to health.

DONOBERT

Bewitched girls, tempt not an old mans fury,
That hath no strength to uphold his feeble age,
But what your sights give life to: oh, beware,
And do not make me curse you.

Kneel.

MODESTIA

Dear father,
Here at your feet we kneel, grant us but this,
That, in your sight and hearing, the good hermit
May plead our cause; which, if it shall not give
Such satisfaction as your age desires,
We will submit to you.

CONSTANTIA

You gave us life;
Save not our bodies, but our souls, from death.

DONOBERT

This gives some comfort yet: Rise with my blessings.--
Have patience, noble Cador, worthy Edwin;
Send for the hermit that we may confer.
For, sure, religion tyes you not to leave
Your careful father thus; if so it be,
Take you content, and give all grief to me.

Exeunt.

SCENE III

Thunder and lightning; enter Devil.

DEVIL

Mix light and darkness; earth and heaven dissolve,
Be of one piece agen, and turn to Chaos;
Break all your works, you powers, and spoil the world,
Or, if you will maintain earth still, give way
And life to this abortive birth now coming,
Whose fame shall add unto your oracles.
Lucina Hecate, dreadful Queen of Night,
Bright Proserpine, be pleas'd for Ceres love,
From Stigian darkness summon up the Fates,
And in a moment bring them quickly hither,
Lest death do vent her birth and her together.

(Thunder)

Assist, you spirits of infernal deeps,
Squint ey'd Erictho, midnight incubus,
Rise, rise to aid this birth prodigious.

(Enter Lucina and the three Fates)

Thanks, Hecate; hail, sister to the gods!
There lies your way, haste with the Fates, and help,
Give quick dispatch unto her laboring throws,
To bring this mixture of infernal seed
To humane being;

(Exit Fates)

And to beguil her pains, till back you come,
Anticks shall dance and musick fill the room.--

(Dance)

Thanks, Queen of Shades.

LUCINA

Farewel, great servant to th'infernal king.
In honor of this childe, the Fates shall bring
All their assisting powers of knowledge, arts,
Learning, wisdom, all the hidden parts
Of all-admiring prophecy, to fore-see
The event of times to come: his art shall stand
A wall of brass to guard the Brittain land.
Even from this minute, all his arts appears
Manlike in judgement, person, state, and years.

(MORE)

LUCINA (cont'd)

Upon his brest the Fates have fixt his name,
And since his birth place was this forrest here,
They now have nam'd him Merlin Silvester.

DEVIL

And Merlins name in Brittany shall live,
Whilst men inhabit here or Fates can give
Power to amazing wonder; envy shall weep,
And mischief sit and shake her ebbone wings,
Whilst all the world of Merlins magick sings.

(Exit)

SCENE IV

Enter Clown.

CLOWN

Well, I wonder how my poor sister does, after all this
thundering; I think she's dead, for I can hear no tidings of
her. Those woods yields small comfort for her; I could meet
nothing but a swinherds wife, keeping hogs by the forestside,
but neither she nor none of her sowes would stir a foot to
help us; indeed, I think she durst not trust her self amongst
the trees with me, for I must needs confess I offer'd some
kindness to her. Well, I would fain know what's become of my
sister: if she have brought me a yong cousin, his face may be
a picture to finde his father by. So oh! sister Joan, Joan Go-
too't, where art thou?

JOAN

(Within)

Here, here, brother, stay but a while, I come to thee.

CLOWN

O brave! she's alive still, I know her voice; she speaks, and
speaks cherfully, methinks. How now, what moon-calf has she
got with her?

Enter Joan and MERLIN with a book.

JOAN

Come, my dear Merlin, why dost thou fix thine eye
So deeply on that book?

MERLIN

To sound the depth
Of arts, of learning, wisdom, knowledge.

JOAN

Oh, my dear, dear son,
Those studies fits thee when thou art a man.

MERLIN

Why, mother, I can be but half a man at best,
And that is your mortality; the rest
In me is spirit; 'tis not meat, nor time,
That gives this growth and bigness; no, my years
Shall be more strange then yet my birth appears.
Look, mother, there's my uncle.

JOAN

How doest thou know him, son? thou never saw'st him.

MERLIN

Yet I know him, and know the pains he has taken for ye, to
finde out my father.--Give me your hand, good uncle.

CLOWN

Ha, ha, I'de laugh at that, yfaith. Do you know me, sir?

MERLIN

Yes, by the same token that even now you kist the swinherds-
wife i'th' woods, and would have done more, if she would have
let you, uncle.

CLOWN

A witch, a witch, a witch, sister: rid him out of your
company, he is either a witch or a conjurer; he could never
have known this else.

JOAN

Pray, love him, brother, he is my son.

CLOWN

Ha, ha, this is worse then all the rest, yfaith; by his beard
he is more like your husband. Let me see, is your great belly
gone?

JOAN

Yes, and this the happy fruit.

CLOWN

What, this hartichoke? A childe born with a beard on his
face?

MERLIN

Yes, and strong legs to go, and teeth to eat.

CLOWN

You can nurse up your self, then? There's some charges sav'd
for soap and caudle. 'Slid, I have heard of some that has
been born with teeth, but never none with such a talking
tongue before.

JOAN

Come, come, you must use him kindly, brother;
Did you but know his worth, you would make much of him.

CLOWN

Make much of a moncky? This is worse then Tom Thumb, that let
a fart in his mothers belly; a childe to speak, eat, and go
the first hour of his birth; nay, such a baby as had need of
a barber before he was born too; why, sister, this is
monstrous, and shames all our kindred.

JOAN

That thus 'gainst nature and our common births
He comes thus furnisht to salute the world,
Is power of Fates, and gift of his great father.

CLOWN

Why, of what profession is your father, sir?

MERLIN

He keeps a hot-house i'th' Low Countries; will you see him,
sir?

CLOWN

See him? why, sister, has the childe found his father?

MERLIN

Yes, and Ile fetch him, uncle.
(Exit)

CLOWN

Do not uncle me, till I know your kindred: for my conscience,
some baboon begot thee.--Surely, thou art horribly deceived,
sister, this urchin cannot be of thy breeding; I shall be
asham'd to call him cousin, though his father be a gentleman.

Enter MERLIN and Devil.

MERLIN

Now, my kinde uncle, see: the childe has found his father,
this is he.

CLOWN

The devil it is; ha, ha, is this your sweet-heart, sister?
have we run through the countrey, haunted the city, and
examin'd the court to finde out a gallant with a hat and
feather, and a silken sword, and golden hangers, and do you
now bring me to a ragamuffin with a face like a frying-pan?

JOAN

Fie, brother, you mistake, behold him better.

CLOWN

How's this? do you juggle with me, or are mine eyes matches?
Hat and feather, sword, and hangers, and all! this is a
gallant indeed, sister; this has all the marks of him we look
for.

DEVIL

And you have found him now, sir:
Give me your hand, I now must call you brother.

CLOWN

Not till you have married my sister, for all this while she's
but your whore, sir.

DEVIL

Thou art too plain, Ile satisfie that wrong
To her, and thee, and all, with liberal hand:
Come, why art thou fearful?

CLOWN

Nay, I am not afraid, and you were the devil, sir.

DEVIL

Thou needst not; keep with thy sister still,
And Ile supply your wants, you shall lack nothing
That gold and wealth can purchase.

CLOWN

Thank you, brother: we have gone many a weary step to finde
you; you may be a husband for a lady, for you are far fetcht
and dear bought, I assure you. Pray, how should I call your
son, my cousin here?

DEVIL

His name is Merlin.

CLOWN

Merlin? Your hand, cousin Merlin; for your fathers sake I
accept you to my kindred: if you grow in all things as your
beard does, you will be talkt on. By your mothers side,
cousin, you come of the Go-too'ts, Suffolk bred, but our
standing house is at Hocklye i'th' Hole, and Layton-buzzard.
For your father, no doubt you may from him claim titles of
worship, but I cannot describe it; I think his ancestors came
first from Hell-bree in Wales, cousin.

DEVIL

No matter whence we do derive our name:
All Brittany shall ring of Merlin's fame,
And wonder at his acts. Go hence to Wales,
There live a while; there Vortiger the king
Builds castles and strong holds, which cannot stand,
Unless supported by yong Merlins hand.

(MORE)

DEVIL (cont'd)

There shall thy fame begin: wars are a breeding;
The Saxons practise treason, yet unseen,
Which shortly shall break out.--Fair love, farewell;
Dear son and brother, here must I leave you all,
Yet still I will be near at Merlins call.

(Exit)

MERLIN

Will you go, uncle?

CLOWN

Yes, Ile follow you, cousin.-- Well, I do most horribly begin
to suspect my kindred; this brother in law of mine is the
devil, sure, and though he hide his horns with his hat and
feather, I spi'd his cloven foot for all his cunning.

(Exit)

SCENE V

Enter Ostorius, Octa, and Proximus.

OSTORIUS

Come, come, time calls our close complots to action.
Go, Proximus, with winged speed flie hence,
Hye thee to Wales: salute great Vortiger
With these our letters; bid the king to arms,
tell him we have new friends, more forces landed
In Norfolk and Northumberland; bid him
Make haste to meet us; if he keep his word,
Wee'l part the realm between us.

OCTA

Bend all thine art to quit that late disgrace
The Christian hermit gave thee; make thy revenge
Both sure and home.

PROXIMUS

That thought, sir, spurs me on,
Till I have wrought their swift destruction.

(Exit)

OSTORIUS

Go, then, and prosper. Octa, be vigilant:
Speak, are the forts possest? the guards made sure?
Revolve, I pray, on how large consequence
The bare event and sequel of our hopes
Joyntly consists, that have embark't our lives
Upon the hazzard of the least miscarriage.

OCTA

All's sure: the queen your sister hath contrived
The cunning plot so sure, as at an instant
The brothers shall be both surpriz'd and taken.

OSTORIUS

And both shall die; yet one a while must live,
Till we by him have gather'd strength and power
To meet bold Edol, their stern general,
That now, contrary to the kings command,
Hath re-united all his cashier'd troops,
And this way beats his drums to threaten us.

OCTA

Then our plot's discover'd.

OSTORIUS

Come, th'art a fool, his army and his life
Is given unto us: where is the queen my sister?

OCTA

In conference with the prince.

OSTORIUS

Bring the guards nearer, all is fair and good;
Their conference, I hope, shall end in blood.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI

Enter PRINCE and ARTESIA.

ARTESIA

Come, come, you do but flatter;
What you term love is but a dream of blood,
Wakes with enjoying, and with open eyes
Forgot, contemn'd, and lost.

PRINCE

I must be wary, her words are dangerous.--
True, we'l speak of love no more, then.

ARTESIA

Nay, if you will, you may;
'Tis but in jest, and yet so children play
With fiery flames, and covet what is bright,
But, feeling his effects, abhor the light.
Pleasure is like a building, the more high,
The narrower still it grows; cedars do dye
Soonest at top.

PRINCE

How does your instance suit?

ARTESIA

From art and nature to make sure the root,
And lay a fast foundation, e're I try
The incertain changes of a wavering skie.
Make your example thus.--You have a kiss,--
Was it not pleasing?

PRINCE

Above all name to express it.

ARTESIA

Yet now the pleasure's gone,
And you have lost your joys possession.

PRINCE

Yet when you please, this flood may ebb again.

ARTESIA

But where it never ebbs, there runs the main.

PRINCE

Who can attain such hopes?

ARTESIA

Ile show the way to it, give you
A taste once more of what you may enjoy.

Kiss.

PRINCE

Impudent whore!--
I were more false than atheism can be,
Should I not call this high felicity.

ARTESIA

If I should trust your faith, alas, I fear,
You soon would change belief.

PRINCE

I would covet martyrdom to make't confirm'd.

ARTESIA

Give me your hand on that you'l keep your word?

PRINCE

I will.

ARTESIA

Enough: Help, husband, king Aurelius, help!
Rescue betraid Artesia!

PRINCE

Nay, then 'tis I that am betraid, I see;
Yet with thy blood Ile end thy treachery.

ARTESIA

How now! what troubles you? Is this you, sir,
That but even now would suffer martyrdom
To win your hopes, and is there now such terror
In names of men to fright you? nay, then I see
What mettle you are made on.

PRINCE

Ha! was it but tryal? then I ask your pardon:
What a dull slave was I to be so fearful!--
Ile trust her now no more, yet try the utmost.--
I am resolved, no brother, no man breathing,
Were he my bloods begetter, should withhold
Me from your love; I'd leap into his bosom,
And from his brest pull forth that happiness
Heaven had reserved in you for my enjoying.

ARTESIA

I, now you speak a lover like a prince!--
Treason, treason!

PRINCE

Agen?

ARTESIA

Help, Saxon princes: treason!

Enter Ostorius, Octa, etc.

OSTORIUS

Rescue the queen: strike down the villain.

*Enter EDOL, AURELIUS, DONOBERT, CADOR, EDWIN,
TOCLIO, OSWOLD, at the other door.*

EDOL

Call in the guards: the prince in danger!
Fall back, dear sir, my brest shall buckler you.

AURELIUS

Beat down their weapons!

EDOL

Slave, wert thou made of brass, my sword shall bite thee.

AURELIUS

Withdraw, on pain of death: where is the traitor?

ARTESIA

Oh, save your life, my lord; let it suffice,
My beauty forc't mine own captivity.

AURELIUS

Who did attempt to wrong thee?

PRINCE

Hear me, sir.

AURELIUS

Oh, my sad soul! was't thou?

ARTESIA

Oh, do not stand to speak; one minutes stay
Prevents a second speech for ever.

AURELIUS

Make our guards strong:
My dear Artesia, let us know thy wrongs
And our own dangers.

ARTESIA

The prince your brother, with these Brittain lords,
Have all agreed to take me hence by force
And marry me to him.

PRINCE

The devil shall wed thee first:
Thy baseness and thy lust confound and rot thee!

ARTESIA

He courted me even now, and in mine ear
Sham'd not to plead his most dishonest love,
And their attempts to seize your sacred person,
Either to shut you up within some prison,
Or, which is worse, I fear, to murder you.

OMNES BRITAINS

'Tis all as false as hell.

EDOL

And as foul as she is.

ARTESIA

You know me, sir?

EDOL

Yes, deadly sin, we know you,
And shall discover all your villany.

AURELIUS

Chester, forbear!

OSTORIUS

Their treasons, sir, are plain:
Why are their souldiers lodg'd so near the court?

OCTA

Nay, why came he in arms so suddenly?

EDOL

You fleering anticks, do not wake my fury.

OCTA

Fury!

EDOL

Ratsbane, do not urge me.

ARTESIA

Good sir, keep farther from them.

PRINCE

Oh, my sick heart!
She is a witch by nature, devil by art.

AURELIUS

Bite thine own slanderous tongue; 'tis thou art false.
I have observ'd your passions long ere this.

OSTORIUS

Stand on your guard, my lord, we are your friends,
And all our force is yours.

EDOL

To spoil and rob the kingdom.

AURELIUS

Sir, be silent.

EDOL

Silent! how long? till Doomsday? shall I stand by,
And hear mine honor blasted with foul treason,
The state half lost, and your life endanger'd,
Yet be silent?

ARTESIA

Yes, my blunt lord, unless you speak your treasons.
Sir, let your guards, as traitors, seize them all,
And then let tortures and devulsive racks
Force a confession from them.

EDOL

Wilde-fire and brimstone eat thee! Hear me, sir.

AURELIUS

Sir, Ile not hear you.

EDOL

But you shall. Not hear me!
Were the worlds monarch, Cesar, living, he
Should hear me.
I tell you, sir, these serpents have betraid
Your life and kingdom: does not every day
Bring tidings of more swarms of lowsie slaves,
The offal fugitives of barren Germany,
That land upon our coasts, and by our neglect
Settle in Norfolk and Northumberland?

OSTORIUS

They come as aids and safeguards to the king.

OCTA

Has he not need, when Vortiger's in arms,
And you raise powers, 'tis thought, to joyn with him?

EDOL

Peace, you pernicious rat.

DONOBERT

Prithee, forbear.

EDOL

Away! suffer a gilded rascal,
A low-bred despicable creeper, an insulting toad,
To spit his poison'd venome in my face!

OCTA

Sir, sir!

EDOL

Do not reply, you cur; for, by the gods,
Tho' the kings presence guard thee, I shall break all
patience,
And, like a lion rous'd to spoil, shall run
Foul-mouth'd upon thee, and devour thee quick.--
Speak, sir: will you forsake these scorpions,
Or stay till they have stung you to the heart?

AURELIUS

Y'are traitors all. This is our wife, our queen:
Brother Ostorius, troop your Saxons up,
We'l hence to Winchester, raise more powers,
To man with strength the Castle Camilot.--
Go hence, false men, joyn you with Vortiger,
The murderer of our brother Constantine:
We'l hunt both him and you with dreadful vengeance.

(MORE)

AURELIUS (cont'd)

Since Brittain fails, we'll trust to forrain friends,
And guard our person from your traitorous ends.

*Exeunt AURELIUS, Ostorius, Octa, ARTESIA, TOCLIO,
Oswald.*

EDWIN

He's sure bewicht.

GLOSTER

What counsel now for safety?

DONOBERT

Onely this, sir: with all the speed we can,
Preserve the person of the king and kingdom.

CADOR

Which to effect, 'tis best march hence to Wales,
And set on Vortiger before he joyn
His forces with the Saxons.

EDWIN

On, then, with speed for Wales and Vortiger!
That tempest once o'reblown, we come, Ostorius,
To meet thy traiterous Saxons, thee and them,
That with advantage thus have won the king,
To back your factions and to work our ruines.
This, by the gods and my good sword, I'll set
In bloody lines upon thy burgonet.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT IV

SCENE I

Enter Clown, MERLIN, and a little antick Spirit.

MERLIN

How now, uncle? why do you search your pockets so? Do you miss any thing?

CLOWN

Ha! Cousin Merlin, I hope your beard does not overgrow your honesty; I pray, remember, you are made up of sisters thread; I am your mothers brother, whosoever was your father.

MERLIN

Why, wherein can you task my duty, uncle?

CLOWN

Your self or your page it must be, I have kept no other company, since your mother bound your head to my protectorship; I do feel a fault of one side; either it was that sparrowhawk, or a cast of Merlins, for I finde a covy of cardecu's sprung out of my pocket.

MERLIN

Why, do you want any money, uncle? Sirrah, had you any from him?

CLOWN

Deny it not, for my pockets are witness against you.

SPIRIT

Yes, I had, to teach you better wit to look to it.

CLOWN

Pray, use your fingers better, and my wit may serve as it is, sir.

MERLIN

Well, restore it.

SPIRIT

There it is.

CLOWN

I, there's some honesty in this; 'twas a token from your invisible father, cousin, which I would not have to go invisibly from me agen.

MERLIN

Well, you are sure you have it now, uncle?

CLOWN

Yes, and mean to keep it now from your pages filching fingers too.

SPIRIT

If you have it so sure, pray show it me agen.

CLOWN

Yes, my little juggler, I dare show it. Ha, cleanly conveyance agen! ye have no invisible fingers, have ye? 'Tis gone, certainly.

SPIRIT

Why, sir, I toucht you not.

MERLIN

Why, look you, uncle, I have it now: how ill do you look to it! here, keep it safer.

CLOWN

Ha, ha, this is fine, yfaith. I must keep some other company, if you have these slights of hand.

MERLIN

Come, come, uncle, 'tis all my art, which shall not offend you, sir, onely I give you a taste of it to show you sport.

CLOWN

Oh, but 'tis ill jesting with a mans pocket, tho'. But I am glad to see you cunning, cousin, for now will I warrant thee a living till thou diest. You have heard the news in Wales here?

MERLIN

Uncle, let me prevent your care and counsel,
'Twill give you better knowledge of my cunning.
You would prefer me now, in hope of gain,
To Vortiger, King of the Welch Brittain,
To whom are all the artists summon'd now,
(MORE)

MERLIN (cont'd)

That seeks the secrets of futurity:
The bards, the druids, wizards, conjurers,
Not an auraspex with his whisling spells,
No capnomanster with his musty fumes,
No witch or juggler, but is thither sent,
To calculate the strange and fear'd event
Of his prodigious castle, now in building,
Where all the labors of the painful day
Are ruin'd still i'th' night, and to this place
You would have me go.

CLOWN

Well, if thy mother were not my sister, I would say she was a
witch that begot thee; but this is thy father, not thy mother
wit. Thou hast taken my tale into thy mouth, and spake my
thoughts before me; therefore away, shuffle thy self amongst
the conjurers, and be a made man before thou comest to age.

MERLIN

Nay, but stay, uncle, you overslip my dangers:
The prophecies and all the cunning wizards
Have certifi'd the king that this his castle
Can never stand, till the foundation's laid
With mortar temper'd with the fatal blood
Of such a childe whose father was no mortal.

CLOWN

What's this to thee? If the devil were thy father, was not
thy mother born at Carmarden? Diggon for that, then; and then
it must be a childe's blood, and who will take thee for a
childe with such a beard of thy face? Is there not diggon for
that too, cousin?

MERLIN

I must not go: lend me your ear a while,
I'll give you reasons to the contrary.

Enter two Gentlemen.

1 GENTLEMAN

Sure, this is an endless piece of work the king has sent us
about!

2 GENTLEMAN

Kings may do it, man; the like has been done to finde out the
unicorn.

1 GENTLEMAN

Which will be sooner found, I think, then this fiend begotten
childe we seek for.

2 GENTLEMAN

Pox of those conjurers that would speak of such a one, and
yet all their cunning could not tell us where to finde him.

1 GENTLEMAN

In Wales they say assuredly he lives; come, let's enquire further.

MERLIN

Uncle, your perswasions must not prevail with me: I know mine enemies better then you do.

CLOWN

I say, th'art a bastard then, if thou disobey thine uncle: was not Joan Go-too't, thy mother, my sister? If the devil were thy father, what kin art thou to any man alive but bailys and brokers? and they are but brothers in law to thee neither.

1 GENTLEMAN

How's this? I think we shall speed here.

2 GENTLEMAN

I, and unlook't for too: go ne're and listen to them.

CLOWN

Hast thou a beard to hide it? wil't thou show thy self a childe? wil't thou have more hair then wit? Wil't thou deny thy mother, because no body knows thy father? Or shall thine uncle be an ass?

1 GENTLEMAN

Bless ye, friend: pray, what call you this small gentlemans name?

CLOWN

Small, sir? a small man may be a great gentleman; his father may be of an ancient house, for ought we know, sir.

2 GENTLEMAN

Why? do you not know his father?

CLOWN

No, nor you neither, I think, unless the devil be in ye.

1 GENTLEMAN

What is his name, sir?

CLOWN

His name is my cousin, sir, his education is my sisters son, but his maners are his own.

MERLIN

Why ask ye, gentlemen? my name is Merlin.

CLOWN

Yes, and a goshawk was his father, for ought we know; for I am sure his mother was a wind-sucker.

2 GENTLEMAN

He has a mother, then?

CLOWN

As sure as I have a sister, sir.

1 GENTLEMAN

But his father you leave doubtful.

CLOWN

Well, sir, as wise men as you doubt whether he had a father or no?

1 GENTLEMAN

Sure, this is he we seek for.

2 GENTLEMAN

I think no less: and, sir, we let you know
The king hath sent for you.

CLOWN

The more childe he; and he had bin rul'd by me,
He should have gone before he was sent for.

1 GENTLEMAN

May we not see his mother?

CLOWN

Yes, and feel her too, if you anger her; a devilish thing, I
can tell ye, she has been. Ile go fetch her to ye.
(Exit)

2 GENTLEMAN

Sir, it were fit you did resolve for speed,
You must unto the king.

MERLIN

My service, sir,
Shall need no strict command, it shall obey
Most peaceably; but needless 'tis to fetch
What is brought home: my journey may be staid,
The king is coming hither
With the same quest you bore before him; hark,
This drum will tell ye.
Within drums beat a low march.

1 GENTLEMAN

This is some cunning indeed, sir.

Florish. Enter VORTIGER, reading a letter, Proximus, with drum and Soldiers, etc.

VORTIGER

Still in our eye your message, Proximus,
We keep to spur our speed:
Ostorius and Octa we shall salute
With succor against Prince Uter and Aurelius,
Whom now we hear incamps at Winchester.
There's nothing interrupts our way so much
As doth the erection of this fatal castle,
That spite of all our art and daily labor,
The night still ruines.

PROXIMUS

As erst I did affirm, still I maintain,
The fiend begotten childe must be found out,
Whose blood gives strength to the foundation;
It cannot stand else.

Enter Clown and Joan, MERLIN.

VORTIGER

Ha! Is't so?
Then, Proximus, by this intelligence
He should be found: speak, is this he you tell of?

CLOWN

Yes, sir, and I his uncle, and she his mother.

VORTIGER

And who is his father?

CLOWN

Why, she, his mother, can best tell you that, and yet I think
the childe be wise enough, for he has found his father.

VORTIGER

Woman, is this thy son?

JOAN

It is, my lord.

VORTIGER

What was his father? Or where lives he?

MERLIN

Mother, speak freely and unastonisht;
That which you dar'd to act, dread not to name.

JOAN

In which I shall betray my sin and shame.
But since it must be so, then know, great king,
(MORE)

JOAN (cont'd)

All that my self yet knows of him is this:
In pride of blood and beauty I did live,
My glass the altar was, my face the idol;
Such was my peevish love unto my self,
That I did hate all other; such disdain
Was in my scornful eye that I suppos'd
No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me.
Thus with the peacock I beheld my train,
But never saw the blackness of my feet;
Oft have I chid the winds for breathing on me,
And curst the sun, fearing to blast my beauty.
In midst of this most leaprous disease,
A seeming fair yong man appear'd unto me,
In all things suiting my aspiring pride,
And with him brought along a conquering power,
To which my frailty yielded; from whose embraces
This issue came; what more he is, I know not.

VORTIGER

Some incubus or spirit of the night
Begot him then, for, sure, no mortal did it.

MERLIN

No matter who, my lord; leave further quest,
Since 'tis as hurtful as unnecessary
More to enquire: go to the cause, my lord,
Why you have sought me thus?

VORTIGER

I doubt not but thou knowst; yet, to be plain,
I sought thee for thy blood.

MERLIN

By whose direction?

PROXIMUS

By mine;
My art infalable instructed me,
Upon thy blood must the foundation rise
Of the kings building; it cannot stand else.

MERLIN

Hast thou such leisure to enquire my fate,
And let thine own hang careless over thee?
Knowst thou what pendelous mischief roofs thy head,
How fatal, and how sudden?

PROXIMUS

Pish!
Bearded abortive, thou foretel my danger!
My lord, He trifles to delay his own.

MERLIN

No, I yield my self: and here before the king
Make good thine augury, as I shall mine.
If thy fate fall not, thou hast spoke all truth,
And let my blood satisfie the kings desires:
If thou thy self wilt write thine epitaph,
Dispatch it quickly, there's not a minutes time
'Twixt thee and thy death.

PROXIMUS

Ha, ha, ha!

A stone falls and kills Proximus.

MERLIN

I, so thou mayest die laughing.

VORTIGER

Ha! This is above admiration: look, is he dead?

CLOWN

Yes, sir, here's brains to make mortar on, if you'll use them.
Cousin Merlin, there's no more of this stone fruit ready to
fall, is there? I pray, give your uncle a little fair
warning.

MERLIN

Remove that shape of death. And now, my lord,
For clear satisfaction of your doubts,
Merlin will show the fatal cause that keeps
Your castle down and hinders your proceedings.
Stand there, and by an apparition see
The labor and end of all your destiny.
Mother and uncle, you must be absent.

CLOWN

Is your father coming, cousin?

MERLIN

Nay, you must be gone.

JOAN

Come, you'll offend him, brother.

CLOWN

I would fain see my brother i'law; if you were married, I
might lawfully call him so.

*MERLIN strikes his wand. Thunder and lightning; two
dragons appear, a white and a red; they fight a
while, and pause.*

VORTIGER

What means this stay?

MERLIN

Be not amaz'd, my lord, for on the victory,
Of loss or gain, as these two champions ends,
Your fate, your life, and kingdom all depends;
Therefore observe it well.

VORTIGER

I shall: heaven be auspicious to us.

*Thunder: the two dragons fight agen, and the white
dragon drives off the red.*

VORTIGER

The conquest is on the white dragons part.
Now, Merlin, faithfully expound the meaning.

MERLIN

Your grace must then not be offended with me.

VORTIGER

It is the weakest part I found in thee,
To doubt of me so slightly. Shall I blame
My prophet that foretells me of my dangers?
Thy cunning I approve most excellent.

MERLIN

Then know, my lord, there is a dampish cave,
The nightly habitation of these dragons,
Vaulted beneath where you would build your castle,
Whose enmity and nightly combats there
Maintain a constant ruine of your labors.
To make it more plain, the dragons, then,
Your self betoken and the Saxon king;
The vanquisht red is, sir, your dreadful emblem.

VORTIGER

Oh, my fate!

MERLIN

Nay, you must hear with patience, royal sir.
You slew the lawful king Constantius:
'Twas a red deed, your crown his blood did cement.
The English Saxon, first brought in by you
For aid against Constantius brethren,
Is the white horror who now, knit together,
Have driven and shut you up in these wilde mountains;
And though they now seek to unite with friendship,
It is to wound your bosom, not embrace it,
And with an utter extirpation
To rout the Brittaines out, and plant the English.

(MORE)

MERLIN (cont'd)

Seek for your safety, sir, and spend no time
To build the airy castles; for Prince Uter,
Armed with vengeance for his brothers blood,
Is hard upon you. If you mistrust me,
And to my words crave witness, sir, then know,
Here comes a messenger to tell you so.

Exit MERLIN.

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER

My lord! Prince Uter!

VORTIGER

And who else, sir?

MESSENGER

Edol, the great general.

VORTIGER

The great devil! they are coming to meet us?

MESSENGER

With a full power, my lord.

VORTIGER

With a full vengeance,
They mean to meet us; so! we are ready
To their confront. At full march, double footing,
We'll loose no ground, nor shall their numbers fright us:
If it be fate, it cannot be withstood;
We got our crown so, be it lost in blood.

Exeunt.

SCENE II

*Enter PRINCE UTER, EDOL, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, with
drum and Soldiers.*

PRINCE

Stay, and advice; hold, drum!

EDOL

Beat, slave! why do you pause?
Why make a stand? where are our enemies?
Or do you mean we fight amongst our selves?

PRINCE

Nay, noble Edol,
Let us here take counsel, it cannot hurt,
It is the surest garison to safety.

EDOL

Fie on such slow delays! so fearful men,
That are to pass over a flowing river,
Stand on the bank to parly of the danger,
Till the tide rise, and then be swallowed.
Is not the king in field?

CADOR

Proud Vortiger, the trator, is in field.

EDWIN

The murderer and usurper.

EDOL

Let him be the devil, so I may fight with him.
For heavens love, sir, march on! Oh, my patience!
Will you delay, untill the Saxons come
To aid his party?

A tucket.

PRINCE

There's no such fear: prithee, be calm a while.
Hark! it seems by this, he comes or sends to us.

EDOL

If it be for parly, I will drown the summons,
If all our drums and hoarseness choke me not.

Enter Captain.

PRINCE

Nay, prithee, hear.--From whence art thou?

CAPTAIN

From the King Vortiger.

EDOL

Traitor, there's none such: alarum, drum; strike, slave,
Or, by mine honor, I will break thy head,
And beat thy drums heads both about thine ears.

PRINCE

Hold, noble Edol,
Let's hear what articles he can inforce.

EDOL

What articles or what conditions
Can you expect to value half your wrong,
Unless he kill himself by thousand tortures,
And send his carcass to appease your vengeance
For the foul murder of Constantius,
And that's not a tenth part neither.

PRINCE

'Tis true,
My brothers blood is crying to me now;
I do applaud thy counsel: hence, be gone!--
(Exit Captain)
We'll hear no parly now but by our swords.

EDOL

And those shall speak home in death killing words:
Alarum to the fight; sound, sound the alarum.

Exeunt.

SCENE III

Alarum. Enter EDOL, driving all VORTIGERS force before him, then Exit. Enter PRINCE UTER pursuing VORTIGER.

VORTIGER

Dost follow me?

PRINCE

Yes, to thy death I will.

VORTIGER

Stay, be advis'd;
I would not be the onely fall of princes,
I slew thy brother.

PRINCE

Thou didst, black traitor,
And in that vengeance I pursue thee.

VORTIGER

Take mercy for thy self, and flie my sword,
Save thine own life as satisfaction,
Which here I give thee for thy brothers death.

PRINCE

Give what's thine own: a traitors heart and head,
That's all thou art right lord of. The kingdom
Which thou usurp'st, thou most unhappy tyrant,
Is leaving thee; the Saxons which thou broughtst
To back thy usurpations, are grown great,
And where they seat themselves, do hourly seek
To blot the records of old Brute and Brittain's
From memory of men, calling themselves
Hingest-men, and Hingest-land, that no more
The Brittain name be known: all this by thee,
Thou base destroyer of thy native countrey.

Enter EDOL.

EDOL
What, stand you talking?

Fight.

PRINCE
Hold, Edol.

EDOL
Hold out, my sword,
And listen not to king or princes word;
There's work enough abroad, this task is mine.

Alarum.

PRINCE
Prosper thy valour, as thy vertues shine.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV

Enter CADOR and EDWIN.

CADOR
Bright victory her self fights on our part,
And, buckled in a golden beaver, rides
Triumphantly before us.

EDWIN
Justice is with her,
Who ever takes the true and rightful cause.
Let us not lag behinde them.

Enter PRINCE.

CADOR
Here comes the prince. How goes our fortunes, sir?

PRINCE
Hopeful and fair, brave Cador.
Proud Vortiger, beat down by Edols sword,
Was rescu'd by the following multitudes,
And now for safety's fled unto a castle
Here standing on the hill: but I have sent
A cry of hounds as violent as hunger,
To break his stony walls; or, if they fail,
We'll send in wilde fire to dislodge him thence,
Or burn them all with flaming violence.

Exeunt.

SCENE V

Blazing star appears.

Flourish trump. Enter PRINCE UTER, EDOL, CADOR, EDWIN, TOCLIO, with drum and Soldiers.

PRINCE

Look, Edol:
Still this fiery exhalation shoots
His frightful horrors on th'amazed world;
See, in the beam that's 'bout his flaming ring,
A dragons head appears, from our whose mouth
Two flaming flakes of fire stretch east and west.

EDOL

And see, from forth the body of the star
Seven smaller blazing streams directly point
On this affrighted kingdom.

CADOR

'Tis a dreadful meteor.

EDWIN

And doth portend strange fears.

PRINCE

This is no crown of peace; this angry fire
Hath something more to burn than Vortiger;
If it alone were pointed at his fall,
It would pull in his blasing piramids
And be appeas'd, for Vortiger is dead.

EDOL

These never come without their large effects.

PRINCE

The will of heaven be done! our sorrow's this,
We want a mistick Pithon to expound
This fiery oracle.

CADOR

Oh no, my lord,
You have the best that ever Brittain bred;
And durst I prophecy of your prophet, sir,
None like him shall succeed him.

PRINCE

You mean Merlin?

CADOR

True, sir, wonderous Merlin;
He met us in the way, and did foretell
The fortunes of this day successful to us.

EDWIN

He's sure about the camp; send for him, sir.

CADOR

He told the bloody Vortiger his fate,
And truly too, and if I could give faith
To any wizards skill, it should be Merlin.

Enter MERLIN and Clown.

CADOR

And see, my lord, as if to satisfie
Your highness pleasure, Merlin is come.

PRINCE

See,
The comet's in his eye, disturb him not.

EDOL

With what a piercing judgement he beholds it!

MERLIN

Whither will heaven and fate translate this kingdom?
What revolutions, rise and fall of nations
Is figur'd yonder in that star, that sings
The change of Brittians state and death of kings?
Ha! He's dead already; how swiftly mischief creeps!
Thy fatal end, sweet prince, even Merlin weeps.

PRINCE

He does foresee some evil, his action shows it,
For, e're he does expound, he weeps the story.

EDOL

There's another weeps too. Sirrah, dost thou understand what
thou lamentst for?

CLOWN

No, sir, I am his uncle, and weep because my cousin weeps;
flesh and blood cannot forbear.

PRINCE

Gentle Merlin, speak thy prophetick knowledge
In explanation of this fiery horror,
From which we gather from thy mounful tears
Much sorrow and disaster in it.

MERLIN

'Tis true,
Fair prince, but you must hear the rest with patience.

PRINCE

I vow I will, tho' it portend my ruine.

MERLIN

There's no such fear.
This brought the fiery fall of Vortiger,
And yet not him alone: this day is faln
A king more good, the glory of our land,
The milde and gentle, sweet Aurelius.

PRINCE

Our brother!

EDWIN

Forefend it heaven!

MERLIN

He at his palace royal, sir,
At Winchester, this day is dead and poison'd.

CADOR

By whom? Or what means, Merlin?

MERLIN

By the traiterous Saxons.

EDOL

I ever fear'd as much: that devil Ostorius
And the damn'd witch Artesia, sure, has done it.

PRINCE

Poison'd! oh, look further, gentle Merlin,
Behold the star agen, and do but finde
Revenge for me, though it cost thousand lives,
And mine the foremost.

MERLIN

Comfort your self, the heavens have given it fully:
All the portentious ill to you is told.
Now hear a happy story, sir, from me
To you and to your fair posterity.

CLOWN

Me thinks, I see something like a peel'd onion; it makes me
weep agen.

MERLIN

Be silent, uncle, you'll be forc't else.

CLOWN

Can you not finde in the star, cousin, whether I can hold my tongue or no?

EDOL

Yes, I must cut it out.

CLOWN

Phu, you speak without book, sir, my cousin Merlin knows.

MERLIN

True, I must tie it up. Now speak your pleasure, uncle.

CLOWN

Hum, hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN

So, so.--

Now observe, my lord, and there behold,
Above yon flame-hair'd beam that upward shoots,
Appears a dragons head, out of whose mouth
Two streaming lights point their flame-feather'd darts
Contrary ways, yet both shall have their aims:
Again behold, from the ignifirent body
Seven splendant and illustrious rays are spred,
All speaking heralds to this Brittain isle,
And thus they are expounded: The dragons head
Is the herogliphick that figures out
Your princely self, that here must reign a king;
Those by-form'd fires that from the dragons mouth
Shoot east and west, emblem two royal babes,
Which shall proceed from you, a son and daughter.
Her pointed constellation, northwest bending,
Crowns her a queen in Ireland, of whom first springs
That kingdoms title to the Brittain kings.

CLOWN

Hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN

But of your son thus fate and Merlin tells:
All after times shall fill their chronicles
With fame of his renown, whose warlike sword
Shall pass through fertile France and Germany;
Nor shall his conquering foot be forc't to stand,
Till Romes imperial wreath hath crown'd his fame
With monarch of the west, from whose seven hills,
With conquest and contributory kings,
He back returns to inlarge the Brittain bounds,
His heraldry adorn'd with thirteen crowns.

CLOWN

Hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN

He to the world shall add another Worthy,
And, as a loadstone, for his prowess draw
A train of marshal lovers to his court:
It shall be then the best of knight-hoods honor,
At Winchester to fill his castle hall,
And at his royal table sit and feast
In warlike orders, all their arms round hurl'd,
As if they meant to circumscribe the world.

He touches the Clowns mouth with his wand.

CLOWN

Hum, hum, hum: oh, that I could speak a little!

MERLIN

I know your mind, uncle; agen be silent.
(Strikes agen)

PRINCE

Thou speakst of wonders, Merlin; prithee, go on,
Declare at full this constellation.

MERLIN

Those seven beams pointing downward, sir, betoken
The troubles of this land, which then shall meet
With other fate: war and dissension strives
To make division, till seven kings agree
To draw this kingdom to a hepterchy.

PRINCE

Thine art hath made such proof that we believe
Thy words authentical: be ever neer us,
My prophet and the guide of all my actions.

MERLIN

My service shall be faithful to your person,
And all my studies for my countries safety.

CLOWN

Hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN

Come, you are releast, sir.

CLOWN

Cousin, pray, help me to my tongue agen; you do not mean I
shall be dumb still, I hope?

MERLIN

Why, hast thou not thy tongue?

CLOWN

Ha! yes, I feel it now, I was so long dumb, I could not well tell whether I spake or no.

PRINCE

Is't thy advice we presently pursue
The bloody Saxons, that have slain my brother?

MERLIN

With your best speed, my lord;
Prosperity will keep you company.

CADOR

Take, then, your title with you, royal prince,
'Twill adde unto our strength: long live King Uter!

EDOL

Put the addition to't that heaven hath given you:
The dragon is your emblem, bear it bravely,
And so live long and ever happy, styl'd
Uter-Pendragon, lawful king of Brittain.

PRINCE

Thanks, Edol, we imbrace the name and title,
And in our sheild and standard shall the figure
Of a red dragon still be born before us,
To fright the bloody Saxons. Oh, my Aurelius,
Sweet rest thy soul; let thy disturbed spirit
Expect revenge; think what it would, it hath:
The dragon's coming in his fiery wrath.

Exeunt.

ACT V

SCENE I

Thunder, then musick.

Enter Joan fearfully, the Devil following her.

JOAN

Hence, thou black horror! is thy lustful fire
Kindled agen? Not thy loud throated thunder
Nor thy adulterate infernal musick
Shall e're bewitch me more: oh, too too much
Is past already.

DEVIL

Why dost thou fly me?
I come a lover to thee, to imbrace
And gently twine thy body in mine arms.

JOAN

Out, thou hell-hound!

DEVIL

What hound so e're I be,
Fawning and sporting as I would with thee,
Why should I not be stroakt and plaid withal?
Will't thou not thank the lion might devour thee,
If he shall let thee pass?

JOAN

Yes, thou art he;
Free me, and Ile thank thee.

DEVIL

Why, whither wouldst?
I am at home with thee, thou art mine own,
Have we not charge of family together?
Where is your son?

JOAN

Oh, darkness cover me!

DEVIL

There is a pride which thou hast won by me,
The mother of a fame, shall never die.
Kings shall have need of written chronicles
To keep their names alive, but Merlin none;
Ages to ages shall like sabalists
Report the wonders of his name and glory,
While there are tongues and times to tell his story.

JOAN

Oh, rot my memory before my flesh,
Let him be called some hell or earth-bred monster,
That ne're had hapless woman for a mother!
Sweet death, deliver me! Hence from my sight:
Why shouldst thou now appear? I had no pride
Nor lustful thought about me, to conjure
And call thee to my ruine, when as at first
Thy cursed person became visible.

DEVIL

I am the same I was.

JOAN

But I am chang'd.

DEVIL

Agen Ile change thee to the same thou wert,
To quench my lust.--Come forth, by thunder led,
My coajutors in the spoils of mortals.

(Thunder. Enter Spirit)

Claspe in your ebon arms that prize of mine,
Mount her as high as palled Hecate;
And on this rock Ile stand to cast up fumes
And darkness o're the blew fac'd firmament:
From Brittain and from Merlin Ile remove her.
They ne're shall meet agen.

JOAN

Help me some saving hand,
If not too late, I cry: let mercy come!

Enter MERLIN.

MERLIN

Stay, you black slaves of night, let loose your hold,
Set her down safe, or by th'infernal Stix,
Ile binde you up with exorcisms so strong,
That all the black pentagon of hell
Shall ne're release you. Save your selves and vanish!

Exit Spirit.

DEVIL

Ha! What's he?

MERLIN

The childe has found his father. Do you not know me?

DEVIL

Merlin!

JOAN

Oh, help me, gentle son.

MERLIN

Fear not, they shall not hurt you.

DEVIL

Relievest thou her to disobey thy father?

MERLIN

Obedience is no lesson in your school;
Nature and kind to her commands my duty;
The part that you begot was against kinde,
So all I ow to you is to be unkind.

DEVIL

Ile blast thee, slave, to death, and on this rock
Stick thee an eternal monument.

MERLIN

Ha, ha, thy powers too weak; what art thou, Devil,
But an inferior lustful incubus,
Taking advantage of the wanton flesh,
Wherewith thou dost beguile the ignorant?
Put off the form of thy humanity,
And cral upon thy speckled belly, serpent,
Or Ile unclasp the jaws of Achoron,
And fix thee ever in the local fire.

DEVIL

Traitor to hell! curse that I e're begot thee!

MERLIN

Thou didst beget thy scourge: storm not, nor stir;
The power of Merlins art is all confirm'd
In the Fates decretals. Ile ransack hell,
And make thy masters bow unto my spells.
Thou first shall taste it.--

(Thunder and lightning in the rock)

Tenibrarum princeps, devitiarum & infirorum deus, hunc
incubum in ignis eterni abisum accipite, aut in hoc carcere
tenebroso in sempeternum astringere mando.

(MORE)

MERLIN (cont'd)

(The rock incloses him)

So! there beget earthquakes or some noisom damp,
For never shalt thou touch a woman more.--
How chear you, mother?

JOAN

Oh, now my son is my deliverer,
Yet I must name him with my deepest sorrow.

Alarum afar off.

MERLIN

Take comfort now: past times are ne're recal'd;
I did foresee your mischief, and prevent it.
Hark, how the sounds of war now call me hence
To aid Pendragon that in battail stands
Against the Saxons, from whose aid
Merlin must not be absent. Leave this soyl,
And Ile conduct you to a place retir'd,
Which I by art have rais'd, call'd Merlins Bower.
There shall you dwell with solitary sighs,
With grones and passions your companions,
To weep away this flesh you have offended with,
And leave all bare unto your aierial soul:
And when you die, I will erect a monument
Upon the verdant plains of Salisbury,
No king shall have so high a sepulchre,
With pendulous stones that I wil hang by art,
Where neither lime nor mortar shalbe us'd,
A dark enigma to the memory,
For none shall have the power to number them,--
A place that I will hollow for your rest,
Where no night-hag shall walk, nor ware-wolf tread,
Where Merlins mother shall be sepulcher'd.

Exeunt.

SCENE II

Enter DONOBERT, GLOSTER, and HERMIT.

DONOBERT

Sincerely, Gloster, I have told you all:
My daughters are both vow'd to single life,
And this day gone unto the nunnery,
Though I begot them to another end,
And fairly promis'd them in marriage,
One to Earl Cador, t'other to your son,
My worthy friend, the Earl of Gloster.
Those lost, I am lost: they are lost, all's lost.
Answer me this, then: Ist a sin to marry?

HERMIT

Oh no, my lord.

DONOBERT

Go to, then, Ile go no further with you;
I perswade you to no ill; perswade you, then,
That I perswade you well.

GLOSTER

'Twill be a good office in you, sir.

Enter CADOR and EDWIN.

DONOBERT

Which since they thus neglect,
My memory shall lose them now for ever.--
See, see, the noble lords, their promis'd husbands!
Had fate so pleas'd, you might have call'd me father.

EDWIN

Those hopes are past, my lord; for even this minute
We saw them both enter the monastery,
Secluded from the world and men for ever.

CADOR

'Tis both our griefs we cannot, sir:
But from the king take you the times joy from us:
The Saxon king Ostorius slain and Octa fled,
That woman-fury, Queen Artesia,
Is fast in hold, and forc't to re-deliver
London and Winchester (which she had fortifi'd)
To princely Uter, lately styl'd Pendragon,
Who now triumphantly is marching hither
To be invested with the Brittain crown.

DONOBERT

The joy of this shall banish from my breast
All thought that I was father to two children,
Two stubborn daughters, that have left me thus.
Let my old arms embrace, and call you sons,
For, by the honor of my fathers house,
I'le part my estate most equally betwixt you.

EDWIN AND CADOR

Sir, y'are most noble!

*Florish. Trompet. Enter EDOL with drum and colours,
OSWOLD bearing the standard, TOCLIO the sheild,
with the red dragon pictur'd in'em, two Bishops
with the crown, PRINCE UTER, MERLIN, ARTESIA bound,
Guard, and Clown.*

PRINCE

Set up our sheild and standard, noble soldiers.
We have firm hope that, tho' our dragon sleep,
Merlin will us and our fair kingdom keep.

CLOWN

As his uncle lives, I warrant you.

GLOSTER

Happy restorer of the Brittain's fame,
Uprising sun, let us salute thy glory:
Ride in a day perpetual about us,
And no night be in thy thrones zodiack.
Why do we stay to binde those princely browes
With this imperial honor?

PRINCE

Stay, noble Gloster:
That monster first must be expel'd our eye,
Or we shall take no joy in it.

DONOBERT

If that be hindrance, give her quick judgement,
And send her hence to death; she has long deserv'd it.

EDOL

Let my sentence stand for all: take her hence,
And stake her carcass in the burning sun,
Till it be parcht and dry, and then fley off
Her wicked skin, and stuff the pelt with straw
To be shown up and down at fairs and markets:
Two pence a piece to see so foul a monster
Will be a fair monopoly, and worth the begging.

ARTESIA

Ha, ha, ha!

EDOL

Dost laugh, Erictho?

ARTESIA

Yes, at thy poor invention.
Is there no better torture-monger?

DONOBERT

Burn her to dust.

ARTESIA

That's a phoenix death, and glorious.

EDOL

I, that's to good for her.

PRINCE

Alive she shall be buried, circled in a wall.
Thou murdress of a king, there starve to death.

ARTESIA

Then Ile starve death when he comes for his prey,
And i'th' mean time Ile live upon your curses.

EDOL

I, 'tis diet good enough; away with her.

ARTESIA

With joy, my best of wishes is before;
Thy brother's poison'd, but I wanted more.
(Exit)

PRINCE

Why does our prophet Merlin stand apart,
Sadly observing these our ceremonies,
And not applaud our joys with thy hid knowledge?
Let thy divining art now satisfie
Some part of my desires; for well I know,
'Tis in thy power to show the full event,
That shall both end our reign and chronicle.
Speak, learned Merlin, and resolve my fears,
Whether by war we shal expel the Saxons,
Or govern what we hold with beauteous peace
In Wales and Brittain?

MERLIN

Long happiness attend Pendragons reign!
What heaven decrees, fate hath no power to alter:
The Saxons, sir, will keep the ground they have,
And by supplying numbers still increase,
Till Brittain be no more. So please your grace,
I will in visible apparitions
Present you prophecies which shall concern
Succeeding princes which my art shall raise,
Till men shall call these times the latter days.

PRINCE

Do it, my Merlin,
And crown me with much joy and wonder.

MERLIN strikes. Hoebots. Enter a king in armour, his sheild quarter'd with thirteen crowns. At the other door enter divers princes who present their crowns to him at his feet, and do him homage; then enters Death and strikes him; he, growing sick, crowns Constantine. Exeunt.

MERLIN

This king, my lord, presents your royal son,
Who in his prime of years shall be so fortunate,
That thirteen several princes shall present
Their several crowns unto him, and all kings else
Shall so admire his fame and victories,
That they shall all be glad,
Either through fear or love, to do him homage;
But death (who neither favors the weak nor valliant)
In the midst of all his glories soon shall seize him,
Scarcely permitting him to appoint one
In all his purchased kingdoms to succeed him.

PRINCE

Thanks to our prophet
For this so wish'd for satisfaction;
And hereby now we learn that always fate
Must be observ'd, what ever that decree:
All future times shall still record this story,
Of Merlin's learned worth and Arthur's glory.

Exeunt Omnes.

CURTAIN