

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second  
 Edited by E. E. Reynolds  
 Excerpt  
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## LIST OF CHARACTERS

*in the order of their appearance*

PIERS OF GAVESTON, *Earl of Cornwall*.  
 Three poor men.  
 KING EDWARD THE SECOND.  
 THE EARL OF LANCASTER.  
 LORD MORTIMER, *the Elder*.  
 LORD MORTIMER, *the Younger, his nephew*.  
 EDMUND, EARL OF KENT, *brother of the King*.  
 GUY, EARL OF WARWICK.  
 THE EARL OF PEMBROKE.  
 THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY.  
 THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.  
 QUEEN ISABELLA, *wife of the King*.  
 BEAUMONT, *a follower of the King*.  
 HUGH SPENSER, *the Younger, Earl of Wiltshire and Gloucester*.  
 BALDOCK, *a clerk, attendant on the King's Niece*.  
 NIECE *to the King, daughter of the Duke of Gloucester*.  
 A Messenger from Scotland.  
 A Guard.  
 JAMES, *servant to PEMBROKE*.  
 THE EARL OF ARUNDEL.

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HUGH SPENSER, *the Elder, father of the Younger*  
 SPENSER.

LEVUNE, *a Frenchman.*

A Herald.

PRINCE EDWARD, *son of the King, afterwards* EDWARD  
 THE THIRD.

SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT.

A Messenger from France.

RICE AP HOWEL.

An Abbot.

Monks.

A Mower.

THE EARL OF LEICESTER.

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

TRUSSEL.

BERKELEY.

A Messenger.

MATREVIS } *creatures of young* MORTIMER.  
 GURNEY }

LIGHTBORN.

The King's Champion.

Soldiers.

Lords.

Nobles, attendants, ladies, soldiers, PEMBROKE'S men,  
 WARWICK'S men, drums and fife, the MAYOR OF  
 BRISTOL.

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The troublefome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the  
Second, King of England: with the  
tragicall fall of proud Mortimer

## Act I

Scene I. *A Street in London*

*Enter* GAVESTON, reading a letter that was brought  
him from the KING.

*Gav.* "My father is deceas'd. Come, *Gaveston*,  
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend."  
Ah, words that make me surfeit with delight:  
What greater bliss can hap to *Gaveston*  
Than live and be the favourite of a king?  
Sweet prince I come, these, these thy amorous lines,  
Might have enforc'd me to have swum from France,  
And like *Leander* gasp'd upon the sand,  
So thou wouldst smile and take me in thy arms.  
The sight of London to my exiled eyes  
Is as *Elysium* to a new-come soul: 10  
Not that I love the city or the men,  
But that it harbours him I hold so dear,  
The king, upon whose bosom let me die,  
And with the world be still at enmity.  
What need the arctic people love star-light,  
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?  
Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers,  
My knee shall bow to none but to the king.  
As for the multitude that are but sparks, 20  
*Rak'd* up in embers of their poverty,  
*Tanti*: I'll fawn first on the wind,  
That glanceth at my lips, and flieth away:  
But how now, what are these?

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## EDWARD THE SECOND

*Enter three Poor Men.**Poor Men.* Such as desire your worship's service.*Gav.* What canst thou do?*First P. Man.* I can ride.*Gav.* But I have no horses. What are thou?*Sec. P. Man.* A traveller.30 *Gav.* Let me see, thou wouldst do well

To wait at my trencher, and tell me lies at dinner-time,

And as I like your discoursing, I'll have you.

And what art thou?

*Third P. Man.* A soldier, that hath serv'd against the  
Scot.*Gav.* Why, there are hospitals for such as you:

I have no war; and therefore sir be gone.

*Third P. Man.* Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,  
That wouldst reward them with an hospital.40 *Gav.* Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much,  
As if a goose should play the porpentine,

And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast:

But yet it is no pain to speak men fair;

I'll flatter these, and make them live in hope. [*Aside*]

You know that I came lately out of France,

And yet I have not view'd my lord the king:

If I speed well, I'll entertain you all.

*All.* We thank your worship.*Gav.* I have some business: leave me to myself.*All.* We will wait here about the court.[*Exeunt Poor Men.*]50 *Gav.* Do. These are not men for me;

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,

Musicians, that with touching of a string

May draw the pliant king which way I please:

Music and poetry is his delight,

Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,

Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;

And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,

Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;

My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,

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## ACT I. SCENE I

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Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay. 60  
 Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,  
 With hair that gilds the water as it glides,  
 Crowns of pearl about his naked arms,  
 And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,  
 Shall bathe him in a spring; and there, hard by,  
 One like Actaeon, peeping through the grove,  
 Shall by the angry goddess be transform'd,  
 And running in the likeness of an hart,  
 By yelping hounds pull'd down, shall seem to die:  
 Such things as these best please his majesty. 70  
 Here comes my lord the king, and the nobles,  
 From the parliament. I'll stand aside. [Retires.]

*Enter the KING, LANCASTER, the Elder MORTIMER, the  
 Younger MORTIMER, EDMUND, Earl of Kent, GUY,  
 Earl of Warwick, PEMBROKE and Attendants.*

*K. Edw.* Lancaster!

*Lan.* My lord?

*Gav.* That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor. [Aside.]

*K. Edw.* Will you not grant me this? In spite of them  
 I'll have my will, and these two Mortimers,  
 That cross me thus, shall know I am displeas'd. [Aside.]

*E. Mor.* If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.

*Gav.* That villain Mortimer, I'll be his death. [Aside. 80]

*Y. Mor.* Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself,  
 Were sworn to your father at his death,  
 That he should ne'er return into the realm:  
 And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,  
 This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,  
 Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,  
 And underneath thy banners march who will,  
 For Mortimer will hang his armour up.

*Gav. Mort dieu!* [Aside.]

*K. Edw.* Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words, 90  
 Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?  
 Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?  
 The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,

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## EDWARD THE SECOND

And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.

I will have Gaveston, and you shall know

What danger 'tis to stand against your king.

*Gav.* Well done, Ned.

[*Aside.*

*Lan.* My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,

That naturally would love and honour you?

100 But for that base and obscure Gaveston,

Four earldoms have I, besides Lancaster,

Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester,

These will I sell to give my soldiers pay,

Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm:

Therefore if he be come, expel him straight.

*Kent.* Barons and earls, your pride hath made me  
mute,

But now I'll speak, and to the proof I hope:

I do remember in my father's days,

Lord Percy of the North being highly mov'd,

110 Brav'd Mowbray in presence of the king,

For which, had not his highness lov'd him well,

He should have lost his head, but with his look

The undaunted spirit of Percy was pleas'd,

And Mowbray and he were reconcil'd:

Yet dare you brave the king unto his face.

Brother revenge it, and let these their heads,

Preach upon poles for trespass of their tongues.

*War.* O, our heads?

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

120 *War.* Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.

*Y. Mor.* I cannot, nor I will not, I must speak.

Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads,

And strike off his that makes you threaten us.

Come uncle, let us leave the brain-sick king,

And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

*E. Mor.* Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads.

*War.* All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.

*Lan.* And northward Gaveston hath many friends.

Adieu, my lord, and either change your mind,

130 Or look to see the throne where you should sit,

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## ACT I. SCENE I

7

To float in blood, and at thy wanton head,  
The glozing head of thy base minion thrown.

[*Exeunt all except* KING EDWARD, KENT, GAVESTON,  
*and* Attendants.]

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

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

[*Comes forward.*]

*K. Edw.* What Gaveston, welcome: kiss not my hand,  
Embrace me Gaveston as I do thee: 140  
Why shouldst thou kneel? know'st thou not who I am?  
Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston.  
Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules,  
Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.

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

*K. Edw.* I know it. Brother, welcome home my friend.  
Now let the treacherous Mortimers conspire,  
And that high-minded Earl of Lancaster:  
I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight, 150  
And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land,  
Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence:  
I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,  
Chief Secretary to the state and me,  
Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.

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

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

*K. Edw.* Cease, brother, for I cannot brook these words.  
Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts: 160  
Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.  
If for these dignities thou be envied,  
I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,  
Is Edward pleas'd with kingly regiment.  
Fear'st thou thy person? thou shalt have a guard:  
Want'st thou gold? go to my treasury:

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## EDWARD THE SECOND

Wouldst thou be lov'd and fear'd? receive my seal,  
 Save or condemn, and in our name command  
 What so thy mind affects or fancy likes.

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

*Enter the BISHOP OF COVENTRY.*

*K. Edw.* Whither goes my Lord of Coventry so fast?  
*Bish. of Cov.* To celebrate your father's exequies.

But is that wicked Gaveston return'd?

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

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

*Bish. of Cov.* I did no more than I was bound to do,  
 And Gaveston, unless thou be reclaim'd,  
 As then I did incense the parliament,  
 So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.

*Gav.* Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.

*K. Edw.* Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,  
 And in the channel christen him anew.

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

190 *Gav.* Let him complain unto the see of hell,  
 I'll be reveng'd on him for my exile.

*K. Edw.* No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods:  
 Be thou lord bishop, and receive his rents,  
 And make him serve thee as thy chaplain.  
 I give him thee; here, use him as thou wilt.

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

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

*Bish. of Cov.* For this offence be thou accurs'd of God.

*K. Edw.* Who's there? Convey this priest to the Tower.

200 *Bish. of Cov.* True, true.

*K. Edw.* But in the meantime, Gaveston, away,  
 And take possession of his house and goods.



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## ACT I. SCENE I

9

Come follow me, and thou shalt have my guard  
To see it done, and bring thee safe again.

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

Scene II. *Westminster*

*Enter both the MORTIMERS, WARWICK and LANCASTER.*

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

*Lan.* What? will they tyrannise upon the church?  
Ah, wicked king, accursed Gaveston,  
This ground, which is corrupted with their steps,  
Shall be their timeless sepulchre or mine.

*Y. Mor.* Well, let that peevish Frenchman guard him  
sure.

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

*E. Mor.* How now, why droops the Earl of Lancaster?

*Y. Mor.* Wherefore is Guy of Warwick discontent? 10

*Lan.* That villain Gaveston is made an earl.

*E. Mor.* An earl!

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

*E. Mor.* We may not, nor we will not suffer this.

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

*Lan.* 'My Lord of Cornwall' now at every word;  
And happy is the man, whom he vouchsafes  
For vailing of his bonnet, one good look.  
Thus arm in arm, the king and he doth march: 20  
Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits:  
And all the court begins to flatter him.

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

*E. Mor.* Doth no man take exceptions at the slave?

*Lan.* All stomach him, but none dare speak a word.

*Y. Mor.* Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster.  
Were all the earls and barons of my mind,  
We'd hale him from the bosom of the king,

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## EDWARD THE SECOND

30 And at the court gate hang the peasant up,  
 Who swoln with venom of ambitious pride,  
 Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

*Enter the* ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,  
 and an Attendant.

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

*Lan.* His countenance bewrays he is displeas'd.

*Archb. of Cant.* First were his sacred garments rent and  
 torn,

Then laid they violent hands upon him; next,

Himself imprison'd, and his goods asseiz'd:

This certify the Pope: away, take horse.

[*Exit* Attendant.

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

40 *Archb. of Cant.* What need I? God himself is up in arms  
 When violence is offer'd to the church.

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

*Archb. of Cant.* What else, my lords? for it concerns me  
 near;

The bishoprick of Coventry is his.

*Enter the* QUEEN.

*Y. Mor.* Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?

*Q. Isab.* Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,

To live in grief and baleful discontent;

For now my lord the king regards me not,

50 But dotes upon the love of Gaveston:

He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,

Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;

And, when I come, he frowns, as who should say,

"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."

*E. Mor.* Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?

*Y. Mor.* Madam, return unto the court again:

That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,

Or lose our lives: and yet, ere that day come,

The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,

60 And courage too, to be reveng'd at full.