

The Players of St Peter  
at  
St Saviour Hampstead

Scenes from the  
**Wakefield**  
Mystery Cycle  
(Towneley Plays)

2016 December

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# The Annunciation

## God

Since I have made all thing of nought 1.1  
And Adam with my hands I wrought.  
Like to mine image at my devising,  
To give them joy in Paradise  
To dwell therein as I had planned -  
Until they did what I forbade.  
Then I put them out of that place.  
But yet, I mind, I promised them grace;

Now they have felt their sin full sore 1.11  
These five thousand years and more  
First on earth, and then in hell:  
But long therein shall they not dwell.  
Out of pain they shall be brought,  
I will not lose what I have wrought.  
I will make redemption! 1.17

Righteousness will we make: 1.29  
I will that my Son manhood take.  
My prophets words are true and loyal  
As they have said, it shall befall.

My Son shall in a maiden light, 1.35  
Agains' the fiend of hell to fight.  
Withouten spot as sun through glass  
And she a maiden as she was.  
Both God and man shall He be  
And she, mother and maiden free.

Rise up, Gabriel, and wend 1.53  
*[Gabriel approaches]*  
Unto a maiden that is kind  
To Nazareth in Galilee  
There she dwells in that city.  
To that virgin and to that spouse  
To a man of David's house.

Joseph, the man is named by. 1.59  
And the maiden named Mary.  
On my behalf thou shall her greet  
I have her chosen, that maiden sweet,  
She shall conceive my darling  
Through thy word and her hearing.

She shall of her body clean 1.73  
Bear God and man withouten pain.  
She shall be blessed withouten end  
Prepare thee, Gabriel, and wend!

*[Here Gabriel goes to Mary]*

### **Gabriel**

Hail Mary gracious 1.77  
Hail, maiden and Godes spouse  
Unto thee I bow.  
Of all virgins thou art queen  
That ever was - or shall be - seen,  
Withouten doubt.

Hail, Mary, and well thou be; 1.83  
My Lord of Heaven is with thee  
Withouten end.  
Hail, full of grace of God indeed.  
Goodly lady, have thou no dread  
That I commend.

This is the grace that thee betides: 1.92  
Thou shall conceive within thy sides  
A child of power.  
When he is comen, this thy son  
He shall take circumcison.  
Call him Jesus.

Mightful man shall he be indeed 1.98  
God's true son he shall be called,  
A throne to sit.  
He shall be king of David's line;  
His kingdom never shall decline  
Lady, well thou wit.

### **Mary**

What is thy name? 1.107

### **Gabriel**

Gabriel, Godes strength and his angel 1.108  
That comes to thee.

### **Mary**

Wondrous greeting thou me greets 1.110  
Of a child to bear thou me speaks -  
How should this be?

I came never by man's side 1.113  
But have avowed my maidenhood  
From fleshly fate.  
Therefore I know not how  
This may be broken; it is a vow  
That I have made.

Nevertheless, well I see 1.119  
To work this word as thou has said  
God full able is.  
But I know not how, of what manner;  
Therefore I pray thee, messenger,  
That thou me guide and tell.

### **Gabriel**

Lady, this is the mystery: 1.125  
The Holy Ghost shall light in thee  
God's word to fulfil -  
His virtue shall thee overshadow  
That thy maidenhood shall never fade  
But be ever new.

The child that thou shall bear, madam, 1.131  
Shall God's Son be called by name,  
And see, Mary,  
Elizabeth - thy cousin, who is barren called  
She has conceived a son in elde  
Of Zachary. *[Elizabeth appears in a vision]*

And this is - now have knowing - 1.137  
The sixth month of her conceiving  
That barren was called.  
No word, lady, that I thee bring  
Is impossible to heaven's King  
But all shall hold.

**Mary**

I love my God almighty 1.143  
I am his servant here at hand  
And at his call.  
I believe the promise thou me bring  
Be done to me in all thing  
As thou has told!

**Gabriel**

Mary, maiden kind 1.149  
My way to God I wend  
My leave of thee I take.

**Mary**

Go to my friend 1.152  
Who did thee send  
For mankind's sake.

*[Gabriel and then Mary withdraw to singing]*

*[Joseph enters]*

**Joseph**

Almighty God, what may this be! 1.155  
Of Mary my wife I marvel me; 1.156  
Alas, what has she wrought? 1.157  
Ah, her belly is great and she with child! 1.158  
By me was she never defiled, 1.159  
Therefore mine is it nought. 1.160

Full of sorrow is my life, 1.161  
That ever I wed so young a wife: 1.162  
That bargain was a bane. 1.163  
To me this deed was full of care, 1.164  
I might well wot a young girl fair 1.165  
Would have liking of man. 1.166  
  
I am old, soothly to say, 1.167  
Past I am all pleasant play, 1.168  
The games from me are gone. 1.169  
We are ill coupled, young and old: 1.170  
For I could not with her make bold 1.171  
Some other has she ta'en. 1.172  
  
She is with child, I know never how; 1.173  
Now, who would any woman trow 1.174  
For wicked ways so wild? 1.175  
I wot not in the world, what I should do; 1.176  
But now then will I wend her to, 1.177  
And learn whose is that child. 1.178  
  
Hail, Mary, and well ye be! 1.179  
But why, woman, what cheer with thee? 1.180

### **Mary**

The better, sir, for you. 1.181

### **Joseph**

So would, I, woman, that ye were; 1.182  
But certain, Mary, I rue full sore 1.183  
How stand things with thee now. 1.184  
And of a thing chide thee I shall: 1.185  
Whose is this child, thou go'st withal? 1.186

### **Mary**

Sir, yours, and God's in Heaven. 1.187

### Joseph

Mine, Mary? do way thy din;	1.188
That I should have a part therein	1.189
Thou needs it not to feign.	1.190
Why falsehoods spin'st thou me thereto?	1.191
I had never with thee to do:	1.192
How should it then be mine?	1.193
Whose is that child, so God thee speed?	1.194

### Mary

Sir, God's and yours, withouten dread.	1.195
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### Joseph

Be still those words of thine,	1.196
For it is nought with me to do.	1.197
And I repent me thou has done so	1.198
These ill deeds I ween.	1.199
And if thou thought thyself to kill,	1.200
It were full sore against my will,	1.201
But better might have been.	1.202

### Mary

At God's will, Joseph, must it be,	1.203
For certainly, but God and ye	1.204
I know no other man;	1.205
My flesh has never been defiled.	1.206

### Joseph

How should thou thus then be with child?	1.207
Excuse thee well thou can.	1.208
I blame thee not, so God me save,	1.209
Woman's weakness if that thou have;	1.210
But certes I say thee this:	1.211
Well wot thou, and so do I,	1.212
Thy body shames thee openly,	1.213
That thou hast done amiss.	1.214

### Mary

I tell you, God knows all my doing.	1.215
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## Joseph

Wey! Now, this is a wonder thing;	1.216
I can nought say thereto.	1.217
But my heart does ache full sore,	1.218
And aye the longer more and more,	1.219
For dole what shall I do?	1.220
God's and mine she says it is -	1.221
I will not father it, she speaks amiss.	1.222
It were shame if I should her let,	1.223
To hide her villainy by me.	1.224
With her I can no longer be;	1.225
I rue that ever we met.	1.226
I left her in good peace thought I;	1.275
Into the country I went on high,	1.276
To work with might and main.	1.277
To get our living I must need;	1.278
Of Mary I prayed our friends take heed,	1.279
Till that I came again.	1.280
Nine months was I from Mary mild;	1.281
When I came home she was with child,	1.282
Alas, I said, for shame!	1.283
I asked her women who that had done,	1.284
And they me said an angel came,	1.285
Since that I went from home.	1.286
An angel spake with that wight,	1.287
And no man else, by day nor night,	1.288
“Sir, thereof be ye bold.”	1.289
They excused her thus soothly,	1.290
To make her clean of her folly,	1.291
Mocked like a baby, me that was old.	1.292
Should an angel this deed have wrought?	1.293
Such excuses help nought,	1.294
Nor no cunning that they can.	1.295
A heavenly thing, forsooth, is he,	1.296
And she is earthly; this may not be,	1.297
It is some other man.	1.298



Yet soothly, if it so befall, 1.314  
God's son that she be withal, 1.315  
If such grace might betide, 1.316  
I wot well that I am not he, 1.317  
Which that is worthy to be 1.318  
That blessed body beside, 1.319  
Nor yet be in her company. 1.320

To wilderness I will forth hie 1.321  
Alone my fate deplore, 1.322  
And never longer with her deal, 1.323  
But softly shall I from her steal, 1.324  
That meet shall we no more. 1.325

*[An Angel appears]*

### **Angel**

Go way Joseph, and mend thy thought, 1.326  
I warn thee well, so wend thou not, 1.327  
To wilderness so wild. 1.328  
Turn home to thy spouse again, 1.329  
Look thou see in her no shame, 1.330  
She never was defiled. 1.331

Wot thou no wicked work here was, 1.332  
She has conceived by Holy Ghost, 1.333  
And she shall bear God's son. 1.334  
Therefore with her, in thy degree, 1.335  
Meek and obedient look thou be, 1.336  
And with her make your home. 1.337

### **Joseph**

Ah, Lord, I love thee all alone, 1.338  
That vouchsafest I be the one 1.339  
To tend that child so young. 1.340  
I, that thus have ingrately done, 1.341  
And foul falsehood cast upon 1.342  
Mary, that dear darling. 1.343

I rue full sore what I have said, 1.344  
And of her birthing her upbraid, 1.345  
When she not guilty is. 1.346  
Forthwith to her now will I wend, 1.347  
And pray her for to be my friend, 1.348  
And ask of her forgiveness. 1.349  
Ah, Mary, wife, what cheer? 1.350

### **Mary**

The better, sir, that ye are here; 1.351  
Thus long where have ye went? 1.352

### **Joseph**

Certes, walked about, all wobegone, 1.353  
And wrongfully did thee bemoan; 1.354  
I wist never what I meant; 1.355  
But I wot well, my love so free, 1.356  
I have trespassed to God and thee; 1.357  
Forgive me, I thee pray. 1.358

### **Mary**

Now all that ever ye said me to, 1.359  
God forgive you, and I do, 1.360  
With all the might I may. 1.361

### **Joseph**

Gramercy, Mary, thy goodwill 1.362  
Forgives so kindly all I said ill, 1.363  
When I did thee upbraid. 1.364  
But happy who has such a child, 1.365  
Ah, gentle wife, he needs not gold, 1.366  
But may hold him well paid. 1.367  
Ah, I am light as leaf on wind! 1.368  
He that may both loose and bind, 1.369  
And every ill amend, 1.370  
Give me grace, power, and might, 1.371  
My wife and her sweet young wight 1.372  
To keep, to my life's end. 1.373

# The Second Shepherds' Play

## Coll

Lord, how these winter storms are cold 2.1  
And I am ill-wrapped;  
I am near hand-dead, so long have I napped;  
My legs they fold, my fingers are chapped;  
All is not as I would, for I am all lapped  
In sorrow.

We simple shepherds that walk on the moor 2.10  
No wonder, as it standis, if we be poor!  
We are so lamed, for-taxed and be-yoked;  
We are hand-tamed with these gentry-folk! 2.18

These lords of the land, they rob us of our rest. 2.19  
They cause the plough to tarry-and say “for the best”.  
Thus are husbandmen oppressed, held under and starved -  
It were great wonder  
That ever we should thrive! 2.27

For if man gets a painted sleeve or a brooch nowadays  
Woe to shepherd that grieves him or against that man  
says!  
No man may reprove him, for lordship he claims  
Yet none can believe one word he may say - not a letter!  
He can make purveyance with boast and with bragance  
And all with connivance of men that are greater!

Comes a swaggering swain as a peacock proud - 2.37  
He must borrow my wain, my plough good!  
If I should forbid it, I were better hanged, so  
Thus live we, in pain, in anger and woe!

It does me good as I walk thus alone 2.46  
Of this world for to talk, in manner of moan.  
To my sheep will I stalk and harken anon.  
There abide on a stone more company full soon.

*(He removes himself some distance. Enter 2nd Shepherd)*

### **Gib**

Lord, this weather is spiteful and the winds full keen,  
And the frosts so hid'eus they water mine eeyn -  
No lie! 2.59

Now in dry, now in wet, now in snow, now in sleet.  
When my shoes freeze to my feet - it is not all easy!

We poor wedded men endure mickel woe 2.64  
Simple Capel, our hen, cackles to and fro  
But when she (be)gins to crow, our cock is fear-shackled!  
We men that are wed have not all our will  
God knows we are led full hard and full ill.

Now thus late in my life, here's a marvel to me: 2.82  
Some men will have two wives, and some men three, in  
store.

Some are sad who have any, but as far as I see  
Woe is him that has many, for he feels sore!  
This have I learnt on. 2.90

Now be well 'ware of wedding, and think in your thought  
"Had I known" is a thing that serves you but nought -  
I know my lesson!

I have one to my mate as sharp as a thistle! 2.100  
She is brown as a bristle, with a sour-looking cheer.  
Had she once wet her whistle, she can sing full clear!  
She is great as a whale with a gallon of gall -  
I would I had run till I had lost her!

*(1st Shepherd joins him)*

### **Coll**

Gib, saw ye aught of that fool Daw? 2.109

### **Gib**

Yea, on a lea-land  
Heard I him blow his pipe. He comes here at hand.

### **Coll**

He will tell us both a lie 'less we beware.  
*(They settle down to wait. Enter 3rd Shepherd from the field)*

### **Daw**

Who knows should take heed and let the world pass. 2.118  
It is ever in dread and brittle as glass - and slithers!  
It is worse than it was and all thing withers!  
These floods so they drown, it is a wonder! 2.127  
How God turn all to good, I say as I mean, and ponder.

We that walk in the night our cattle to keep 2.136  
We see strange sights when other men sleep.  
Yet me think my heart lightens: I see two men peep!  
*(He comes up to the other shepherds)*

Ah, sirs, God you save and masters mine! 2.145  
Drink fain would I have and somewhat to dine!

### **Coll**

Thou art a sluggish knave, Daw!

### **Gib**

He lists to dine, though he comes late!

### **Daw**

Such servants as I that sweat and toil 2.154  
Eat our bread full dry and that stakes me boil!  
We are oft wet and weary when our masters sleep take  
Then our dame and our sire can nip at our hire -  
And pay us full late!

For the fare that ye make, I shall work at my pace.  
Masters, little and lacking!

**Gib**

Peace, boy, I bid no more jangling! 2.174  
Where are our sheep?

**Daw**

Sir, this same day at morn  
I left them in the corn - in pasture good. 2.181

**Coll**

That is right, by the rood.  
Now give us a song! *(Daw begins to sing. Mak enters)*

**Mak**

Lord, who made the stars, what is thy will? 2.190  
Now would God I were in heaven so still  
For there weep no bairnes there!

**Coll**

Who is, that pipes so poor?

**Mak**

Lo, a man that walks on the moor -  
And has not all his will!

**Gib**

Mak, what has befallen? Tell us tidings. 2.199

**Daw**

Is Mak come? Then take heed to your things!  
*(Here he takes Mak's cloak from him. Mak changes his accent)*

**Mak**

What, ich be a yeoman, I tell you, of the king!  
The self-same sent from a great lording.  
Goeth hence! from my presence! I must have reverence!

**Coll**

Mak, why make ye words so quaint? 2.208

**Gib**

He means to show off ... a boast he makes

**Daw**

I think he can paint! The devil him take!  
*(They demonstrate aestheticism)*

**Mak**

Of what ye doeth, ich shall make complaint  
Ye shall all be beaten blue 2.211  
And confined close at my word in sooth!

**Coll**

How, Mak, is that “sooth”?  
Now take out that southren tooth.

**Gib**

Mak, know ye not us? By God, I could thwang ye! 2.217  
*(He shakes Mak who relapses into his ordinary accent)*

**Mak**

Me thought I had seen ye all three.  
Ye are a fair company!

**Gib**

Thus late as thou goes, what will men suppose?  
For thou art ill news of stealing of sheep!

**Mak**

I am true as steel 2.226  
But my belly fares not well. It is out of its state.

**Daw**

“Seldom lies the devil starved by the gate.”

**Mak**

Full sore I am and ill  
I eat not a needle this month and more!

**Coll**

How fares thy wife, Mak, how fares she? 2.235

### **Mak**

Gill? She lies waltering by the fire, lo!  
With a house-full of brood by her, too.  
Eats as fast as she can  
And each year that comes to man  
She brings forth a lakan -  
And some years two!  
I were eaten out of house and of harbour, 2.244  
And she's a foul dowse if ye come too nigh her  
None worse do I know!

*(Depressed with the sad state of the world, the shepherds  
become weary)*

### **Gib**

I wot so forwakid with watching is none in this shire!  
I would sleep!

### **Daw**

I am cold and naked and would have a fire!

### **Coll**

I am weary, forwakid with walking in mire — 2.253  
Wake thou! 2.257

### **Daw**

Nay, as good a man's son was I as any of you!  
But Mak, come hider. Between shall thou lie down! 2.262

### **Mak**

No dread!  
From my top to my toe "*Manus tuas commendo  
Poncio pilato!*" Christ cross me speed!  
*(The shepherds settle for sleep. Mak hatches his plan)*

Now it were time for a man that lacks what he would  
To stalk privily then into a fold 2.272  
And nimble to work, but be not too bold!  
For he might pay for the bargain, if tales were told.  
Now were time for to do't  
With little spending to't!



Now about you a circle as round as the moon 2.280  
That ye lie stone still till I have done what's to do'n!  
Now I shall say some good words on high.  
Over your heades my hands I lift  
Out go your een and close up your sight!  
But yet I must make better shift 2.287  
And it be right! (*Snoring is heard*)

Lord, what they sleep hard! That may ye all hear! 2.289  
Was I never a shepherd yet shall I nip near.  
(*Mak seizes a sheep*)

A fat sheep by the morrow 2.294  
A good fleece dare I lay  
I'll pay back when I may  
Now this will I borrow! (*Mak goes home*)

How, Gill, art thou in? Get us some light! 2.298

**Gill**

Who makes such a din this time of the night?  
I am set for to spin; to rise I cannot. 2.300

**Mak**

Good wife, open the hatch; sees thou not what I bring?

**Gill**

I will let thee draw the latch. Ah, come in, my sweeting!

**Mak**

Yee, thou have no care of my long standing!  
I am worthy my meat for I can get more 2.312

Than they that work the long day's chore!  
Thus this fell to my lot, Gill, of grace a token! 2.316

**Gill**

It were a foul blot to be hanged for the deed!

**Mak**

I have 'scaped, Gillot, oft as right a need.

**Gill**

But so oft goes the pot to the water indeed  
At last comes it home broken! 2.321

**Mak**

Well know I the token.  
Let that never be spoken!  
But come and help fast.  
I would he were slain, I list well to eat. 2.325

**Gill**

Come they afore he be slain, they'll hear the sheep bleat!

**Mak**

Then might I be ta'en; that were a cold sweat!  
Go, bar the gate door!

**Gill**

Come they at thy back?

**Mak**

I'll get the devil from that pack!

**Gill**

A good jest have I spied, for thou knows none: 2.334  
Here, shall we him hide till they be far gone!  
In my cradle abide and I lie beside in childbed - and  
groan!

**Mak**

And I shall say thou was made light  
Of a boy child this night!

**Gill**

Yet a woman's advice helps at the last!  
This is a good gyse; now again go thou fast! 2.343

**Mak**

If I come 'ere they rise, I'll get a cold blast!  
*(He returns and resumes his place in the midst of the  
shepherds)*

Yet sleeps all this company and I shall stalk privily  
As it had never been I that carried their sheep!  
I will go sleep! *(The shepherds rouse up)*

### **Coll**

Here, have a hold of my hand. 2.352  
My foot sleeps, by Jesus, I may not well stand.  
I thought that we laid us full near Engeland!

### **Gib**

Lord, what, I have slept well!  
As fresh as an eel  
As light I me feel as leaf on a tree!

### **Daw**

My heart leapt out of my skin, so it quakes! 2.361  
We were four - see ye ought of Mak - now wakes he?  
Me thought he was wrapped in a wolf skin! 2.370

### **Gib**

Yet went he nowhere!  
When we had long napped, me thought in a gin  
A fat sheep had he trapped, but he made no din.

### **Daw**

This dream is but phantom ...

### **Gib**

Rise Mak for shame, thou lies right long! 2.379

### **Mak**

Now Christ's holy name be us among  
I hope I be the same! Ah, my neck has lain wrong.  
I was flayed with a dream since yestereven.  
I thought Gill began to croak and travail full sad,  
Well nigh to first cockcrow had a young lad  
For to add to our flock. I be never glad  
To have many bairnes but little bread!



**Gill**

Behind! Come Coll and his crew  
They will nip us full narrow!

**Mak**

They'll make me cry "harroo"  
Their sheep if they find!

**Gill**

Sing lullay thou shall for I must groan. 2.441  
Come now, sing on thine own!

*(Mak starts "singing" a lullaby. Meanwhile, the shepherds  
gather at the crooked thorn)*

**Coll**

Hey! A fat wether ram have we lorne! 2.451

**Gib**

Coll, who should do us that scorn?

**Coll**

Some shrew! I have sought with my doggis  
All Horbury shoggis  
And of fifteen young hoggis  
Found I but one ewe.

**Daw**

I would say it were Mak or Gill  
Who did this sore ill, By St Thomas of Kent! 2.460

**Coll**

Peace man, be still, I saw when he went  
Thou scandals him ill, thou ought to repent.

**Gib**

I would say it were he that did this same deed!

**Coll**

Go we thither I rede, the truth to track. 2.469

*(They all run to Mak's house. Singing rises)*

**Daw**

Will ye hear how they hack:? 2.478

**Coll**

So clear out of tune heard I never none crack.  
Call on him! Mak!

**Gib**

Mak! Undo your door on loft!

**Mak**

O'er a sick woman's head I pray ye speak soft. 2.487

**Gill**

I may not well breathe or wheeze  
Each foot ye tread goes through my nose!

**Coll**

How fare ye, Mak, I say?

**Mak**

Are you all in town today?  
Ye have run in-the mire and are wet yet. 2.496  
I shall make you a fire, if ye will sit.  
A nurse will I hire, if ye think fit.  
A new bairn I have, my dream it is quit!  
Well more than enough, if ye knew.  
But we must drink as we brew!

Will ye dine 'ere ye go? Methink that ye sweat. 2.505

**Coll**

Nay, our sheep are stolen as they ate.  
Our loss it is great!

**Mak**

Had I been there, some should have bought it sore!

**Coll**

Some trow that ye were there!

**Gib**

Mak, some men trow that it be ye! 2.514

**Daw**

Either ye or your spouse, so say we!

**Mak**

Now come rip our house and then may ye see.

*(The shepherds enter the house)*

As I am true and loyal to God here I pray 2.523

That this be the first meal that I shall eat this day!

**Coll**

Mak, advise thee, I say.

“He learns early to steal who cannot say nay!”

*(They search the house, disturbing animals and babies as they do so)*

**Gill**

Out thieves, come to rob us. I swelt! 2.532

**Mak**

Hear ye not how she groans! Your hearts should melt!

**Gill**

Ah, my middle! If ever I you beguiled

I shall eat here the child in this cradle!

*(The shepherds search the house.)*

**Gib**

I trow our sheep be slain. What find ye two? 2.543

**Daw**

All work we in vain

I can find no flesh, but two empty platters!

**Gib**

No cattle smelled high as this boy! 2.550

**Gill**

Nay, God of my son give me joy!  
*(Gill cuddles him and they find nothing)*

**Coll**

We have markèd amiss, I hold us mista'en.  
Mak, friends will we be for we are all one. 2.568

**Mak**

Farewell all three! All glad were ye gone.  
*(The shepherds leave the house)*

**Daw**

Fair words may there be, but trust is there none.

**Coll**

Gave ye the child anything?

**Gib**

I trow, not one farthing. 2.574

**Daw**

Fast again will I fling! *(He returns to the house)*  
Mak, with your leave, let me give your bairn but sixpence.  
*(A dog barks)*

**Mak**

Nay, do way: he sleeps.

**Daw**

Methink that he peeps. 2.583

**Mak**

When he wakens, he weeps.  
I pray you go .hence!  
*(The other shepherds enter the house)*

**Daw**

Give me leave him to kiss and lift up the clout. 2.586  
What the devil is this? He has a long snout!



**Coll**

He is markèd amiss. We wait ill about. 2.588

**Gib**

“Ill-spun weft, I’wis, aye comes foul out!”  
Ay! He is like to our sheep.

**Daw**

How, Gib, may I peep? 2.592

**Gib**

This was a fine fraud; thou’ll be hanged as reward!  
Will ye see how they swaddle four feet in the middle.  
Saw I never in cradle a horned lad ere now!

**Mak**

I am he that begat and yond woman him bear! 2.604

**Coll**

Have ye made him your heir?

**Gill**

Ow! A pretty child is he, a dillydown yare!  
As ever sat on woman’s knee,  
Fit for a lord’s son is he!

**Daw**

I know him by the earmark: that is good token. 2.613

**Mak**

I tell you, sirs, hark: his nose was broken.

**Gill**

He was taken with an elf; I saw it myself!  
When the clock struck twelve was he mis-shapen!

**Gib**

Ye two are well-weft! 2.622

### **Daw**

Since they maintain their theft Let's do them to death!  
*(They chase around after Mak. Animals are disturbed)*

### **Mak**

If I trespass more, gird off my head - With you let me be left.

### **Coll**

Sirs, do now as I say, indeed:  
For this trespass let us toss him in a canvas!  
*(They toss Mak in a blanket, a medieval method of hastening delivery in childbirth. He returns home helped by Gill. Shepherds laugh, rescue sheep and move off to the fold)*

### **Coll**

What! I am sore, fit to burst! 2.631  
In faith, I may no more; to rest I mean!

### **Gib**

As a sheep of seven score he weighed, I wist.  
For to sleep anywhere methink that I list.

### **Daw**

Lie us down on this green!  
*(They lie down. The angel enters and sings a Gloria, the star appears above)*

### **Angel**

Rise herdsmen kind! For now is he born 2.640  
That shall take from the fiend what Adam had lorn.  
God is your friend now at this morn  
He asks you to Bethlehem go see  
For there he lies, the lord free  
In a crib full poorly between two beasts!  
*(The angel withdraws)*

### **Coll**

This was a marvel to knowen that ever I heard! 2.649  
Of God's Son of Heaven she spoke up there.

**Gib**

All the wood on a lightning methought she made appear!

**Daw**

She spoke of a bairn born in Bethl'hem.

**Col**

That betokens yond star. Let us seek him there.

**Gib**

I am full feared for too long we tarry. 2.668

**Coll**

Hie we thither, be we wet or weary!

**Daw**

Lord, well were we for once and for aye 2.687

Might we kneel on our knee  
Some word for to say to that child this day.

*(They set off for Bethlehem)*

...

*(The shepherds near the end of their journey)*

**Daw**

The angel said in a crib  
He would be laid  
A child both meek and mild and poorly arrayed.

**Coll**

When I see Him and feel 2.697

Then know I full well  
It is as true as steel  
What prophets have spoken:

To so poor as we are that 2.703

He would appear first,  
As declared by his messenger.

**Gib**

Go we now, let us fare.  
The place is us near! *(They enter the stable)*

### **Coll**

Hail, comely and clean! 2.712  
Hail, young child! Hail,  
Maker - as I mean - from a maiden so mild.  
The false bringer of ill now goes he beguiled!  
Lo, the babe merry is!  
Lo, He laughs, my sweeting  
A welcome meeting:  
Have a bob of cherries!

### **Gib**

Hail, sovereign Saviour, 2.721  
for thou has us sought!  
Hail, full of favour that made all of nought!  
Hail, I kneel and cower.  
A bird have I brought  
To my bairn.  
Hail, little tiny mop!  
Of our creed thou art top,  
Little day-star!  
*(Mary takes the baby from the crib)*

### **Daw**

Hail, darling dear! 2.730  
Full of godhead!  
I pray thee, be near when that I have need.  
Hail, sweet is thy face!  
My heart would bleed  
To see thee sit here in so poor weed  
With no pennies.  
Hail, put forth thy hand:  
I bring thee but a ball  
To have and play thee withall  
And go to the tennis!

### **Mary**

The Father of Heaven, 2.739  
God omnipotent  
Made all in days seven;  
His Son has he sent  
And now He is born.  
He keep you from woe;  
I shall pray Him so.  
Tell forth as you go -  
Have mind on this morn!

### **Coll**

Farewell, lady, so fair to behold! 2.748  
With thy child on thy knee.

### **Gib**

But He lies full cold!  
Lord, well is we, now we go, thou behold!

### **Daw**

In truth, already it seems to be told  
Full oft!

*(They leave the stable)*

### **Coll**

What grace we have found! 2.753

### **Gib**

Come forth, now are we won!

### **Daw**

To sing are we bound:  
Let us sound it aloft!

*(Exit singing and rejoicing)*

# The Flight into Egypt

## Angel

Awake, Joseph, and take intent!	3.1
Thou rise, and sleep no more!	3.2
If thou will save thyself unshent	3.3
Fail not fast to fare.	3.4
I am an angel to thee sent,	3.5
That thou shall harm prevent,	3.6
And catch thee out of care.	3.7
If thou dost not to leave assent,	3.8
For loss thou shall'st lament,	3.9
And rue it wonder sore.	3.10

## Joseph

Ah! Mighty God,	3.11
What can this voice have meant,	3.12
So sweet of tone?	3.13

## Angel

Lo, Joseph, it is I,	3.14
An angel sent to thee.	3.15

## Joseph

Wey! Lord, I pray thee why?	3.16
What is thy will with me?	3.17

## Angel

Hence hastily thee hie,	3.18
And take with thee Mary,	3.19
Also her child so free;	3.20
For Herod does to die	3.21
All boy children, certainly,	3.22
Within two years that be	3.23
Of age.	3.24

## Joseph

Alas, full woe is me!	3.25
Where may we find refuge?	3.26

### **Angel**

To Egypt shall thou fare	3.27
With all the might thou may;	3.28
And, Joseph, hold thee there,	3.29
Till I will thee gainsay.	3.30

### **Joseph**

This is a feeble fare,	3.31
A sick man and a sere	3.32
To hear of such a fray;	3.33
My bones are bruised and bare.	3.34
This to do, I would it were	3.35
Comen my last day	3.36
Of life.	3.37
I know not which is the way:	3.38
How shall we thrive?	3.39

### **Angel**

Thereof have thou no dread;	3.40
Wend forth, and ease thy mind.	3.41
The way he shall you lead,	3.42
The King of all Mankind.	3.43

### **Joseph**

May Heaven of us take heed,	3.44
For I had little need	3.45
Such bargains to begin.	3.46
No wonder my wits bleed:	3.47
I that can do no deed,	3.48
How should I this begin	3.49
So old?	3.50

I am full weak and thin,	3.51
My courage cold.	3.52
My force me fails to fare,	3.53
And sight that I should see.	3.54
Mary, my darling dear,	3.55
I am full woe for thee!	3.56

### **Mary**

Ah, dear Joseph, what cheer? 3.57  
Your sorrow on this gear 3.58  
It does much marvel me. 3.59

### **Joseph**

Misery is nigh and near 3.60  
If we dwell longer here; 3.61  
Therefore behoves us flee, 3.62  
And flit. 3.63

### **Mary**

Alas! how may this be? 3.64  
Whatever means it? 3.65

### **Joseph**

It means of sorrow enow. 3.66

### **Mary**

Ah, dear Joseph, how so? 3.67

### **Joseph**

As I lay in a swoond, 3.68  
Asleep full fast and sound, 3.69  
An angel near me drew, 3.70  
As blossom bright on bough, 3.71  
And told betwixt us two, 3.72  
That Herod wrought great woe, 3.73  
And all boy children slew 3.74  
Wherever he might go, 3.75  
That fiend! 3.76  
And he thy son would slay 3.77  
And shamefully shend. 3.78

### **Mary**

My son? alas, for care! 3.79  
Who may my dolours dull? 3.80  
Woe worth false Herod are! 3.81  
My son why should he kill? 3.82  
Alas! I faint with fear! 3.83



To slay this bairn I bore,	3.84
What wight in world had will?	3.85
His heart should be full sore	3.86
To such a one ensnare,	3.87
That never yet did ill,	3.88
Nor thought.	3.89

### **Joseph**

Now dear Mary, be still!	3.90
This helps us not;	3.91
It boots us not to greet,	3.92
Truly, I tell you plain.	3.93
It nought relieves our lot	3.94
But will more make our pain.	3.95

### **Mary**

How should my cries abate?	3.96
My son that is so sweet	3.97
Is sought for to be slain;	3.98
Full fierce may I greet,	3.99
My foes if I them meet;	3.100
Your counsel, Joseph, plain,	3.101
I need.	3.102

### **Joseph**

Swiftly swaddle us this swain,	3.103
And flee this deed.	3.104

### **Mary**

His death would I not see,	3.105
For all this world to win.	3.106
Alas! full woe were me,	3.107
In two if we were torn;	3.108
My child, so fair and free,	3.109
To slay him were pity,	3.110
And a full hideous sin.	3.111
Dear Joseph, what say ye?	3.112

### **Joseph**

To Egypt wend shall we; 3.113  
Therefore let be thy din 3.114  
And cry. 3.115

### **Mary**

The way how shall we win? 3.116

### **Joseph**

Full well wot I 3.117  
The best wise that we may 3.118  
Haste us away from here. 3.119  
There is nought else to say 3.120  
But fast pack up our gear. 3.121  
For fear of this affray, 3.122  
Let us wend hence away, 3.123  
Ere any find us here. 3.124

### **Mary**

Great God, as he well may, 3.125  
That made both night and day, 3.126  
From woe may he us ware, 3.127  
And shame; 3.128  
My child, how should I bear 3.129  
So far from home? 3.130  
Alas! I am full woe! 3.131  
Was never mother so mad! 3.132

### **Joseph**

God wot I may say so, 3.133  
My case is just as bad; 3.134  
For I may scarcely go 3.135  
To lead from land these two. 3.136  
No marvel if I be mad, 3.137  
Thus beset by many a foe. 3.138  
Death, when will you me o'er throw? 3.139

My life I like ill	3.140
And sore;	3.141
He that all doles may dull,	3.142
May he cure my care!	3.143
So weary a wight as I	3.144
In world, was never man.	3.145
Household, and husbandry	3.146
Would that I never began:	3.147
That bargain dear I buy.	3.148
Young men, beware, say I:	3.149
Wedded life makes me all wan.	3.150
Hand me thy bridle, Mary;	3.151
Tend thou to that page gently	3.152
With all the skill thou can	3.153
And may.	3.154
He that this world began	3.155
Wish us the way!	3.156

### **Mary**

Alas, full woe is me!	3.157
Is none so lost as I!	3.158
My heart would break in three,	3.159
My son to see him die.	3.160

### **Joseph**

Wey! Dear Mary, let be,	3.161
And nothing dread thou thee:	3.162
In haste hence let us hie.	3.163
To save thy child so free,	3.164
Fast forth now let us flee,	3.165
Dear love.	3.166
To meet with his enemy,	3.167
It were a great mischief,	3.168
And that would I not were,	3.169
Away if we might wend.	3.170
My heart would be full sore,	3.171
Should he in two you rend.	3.172

To Egypt let us fare;	3.173
This pack, till I come there,	3.174
I shall not halt to haul.	3.175
Therefore have thou no care:	3.176
If I may help thee more,	3.177
Thou'll find me not to fail,	3.178
I say.	3.179
God bless you, great and small,	3.180
And have now all good day!	3.181

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# Herod the Great

## Herald

*[Entering onto a crowded marketplace*

May most mighty Lucifer / meet you with mirth!  
Both of borough and town / from the fells and the firth,  
Both king with crown / and barons of birth. 4.3  
We hear rumours abound / that peace upon earth  
Is foretold; 4.5  
Give ear and attend 4.6  
What I say to this end, 4.7  
Lest woeful you wend 4.8  
And harms you enfold. 4.9

Herod, the good king / by the devil's reknown,  
All Jewry surmounting / sternly with crown, 4.11  
Of all life now living / in tower and town, 4.12  
Graciously greets you, / commands you bow down  
At his bidding; 4.14  
Love him with loyalty, 4.15  
Dread him, that is doughty! 4.16  
He charges you be ready 4.17  
To learn of his liking. 4.18

Whoever on earth / against him complain, 4.19  
And grievance give forth / be he knight, squire, or swain;  
Whatever his worth, / the price must he pay 4.21  
Twelve thousand fold, / yea, more I say 4.22  
May ye trust. 4.23  
He is wonderly woeful, 4.24  
Weeping full sorely; 4.25  
For a boy that is born here by 4.26  
Stands he aghast. 4.27

Folk call him a king / and that we deny;	4.28
That it should it so fall / great marvel have I.	
Therefore over all / shall I make a cry.	4.30
Neither bellow nor bawl / nor look not to lie	
This tide!	4.32
Carp of no king	4.33
But Herod, our lording,	4.34
Or hie home to your dwelling,	4.35
Your heads for to hide.	4.36
He is King of Kings / kindly I know,	4.37
Chief lord of lordings / chief leader of law,	
Throughout all the town / and unto the shore,	
Great dukes drop down / for his great awe,	4.40
And revere him.	4.41
Tuscany and Turkey,	4.42
All India and Italy,	4.43
Sicily and Syria,	4.44
Dread him and fear him.	4.45
From paradise to Padua / to Mount Flascon;	4.46
From Egypt to Mantua / as far as Camden;	4.47
From Sarceny to Sousa / to Greece all bow down;	
Both Normandy and Norway / kneel to his crown.	
His reknown	4.50
Can no tongue tell;	4.51
From heaven unto hell	4.52
None can praise him so well	4.53
But his good friend Sir Satan.	4.54
He is the worthiest of all / bairns ever born;	
Free men in his thrall / in terror are torn.	4.56
Begin he to brawl / many men feel his scorn;	4.57
Obey must we all / or else be forlorn	4.58
At once.	4.59
Drop down on your knee,	4.60
All that him see,	4.61
Displeased is he,	4.62
And may break your bones. <i>[Herod approaches</i>	

Here he comes now, I cry / that lord, I of spake;	
Fast afore will I hie / and make no mistake,	4.65
But welcome him worshipfully / and merriment make,	
As he is most worthy, / and kneel for his sake	
So low,	4.68
Down demurely to fall	4.69
As rank most royal.	4.70
Hail, the worthiest of all!	4.71
To thee must I bow!	4.72
Hail, loved lord! lo / thy letters have I laid;	
I have done all I could do / and peace have I prayed;	
Much more than I should do / I plainly assayed;	
But rumours do run so / that boldly they brayed	
Amongst themselves.	4.77
They carp of a king;	4.78
They cease not such chattering.	4.79

### Herod

But I shall tame their talking,	4.80
And let them go hang them.	4.81
Stint, wretches, your din / yea, every one!	4.82
Till I have gone in / make never a moan;	4.83
For if I begin / I will break every bone,	4.84
And pull from thy skin / the carcass anon;	4.85
Yea, perdi!	4.86
Cease all this wonder,	4.87
And make you no blunder,	4.88
For I rip you asunder,	4.89
Be ye so hardy.	4.90
Peace both young and old / at my bidding, I said,	
For I own all the world, / I can strike you all dead;	
Whoever is too bold, / I brain him through the head;	
Speak not, or I have told, / what I will in this stead.	
You know not	4.95
What grief I will give.	4.96

Stir not till ye have leave; 4.97  
For if ye do, I will you cleave 4.98  
Small as meat for the pot. 4.99

My mirth is turned to pain / my meekness into ire,  
This boy burns my brain / within I feel fire 4.101  
If I see this young swain / I shall give him his hire;  
Should my will I not gain / Call me a soft silly sire  
On my throne. 4.104  
Had I that lad in hand, 4.105  
As I am king in land, 4.106  
I should with this steel brand 4.107  
Break all his bones. 4.108

My name springs far and near; / the doughtiest, men me  
call  
That ever wielded with spear; / A lord and king royal.  
What joy is me to hear / A lad to seize my stall!  
If I this crown may bear / that boy shall pay for all.  
I anger; 4.113  
I know not what devil me ails, 4.114  
They torment me with tales, 4.115  
That by God's own nails, 4.116  
I'll be silent no longer. 4.117

What devil! Methink I burst / for anger and for spleen;  
I fear these kings be past / that here with me have been.  
They promised me full fast / ere now here to be seen,  
Or else I should have cast / another plot, I ween;  
I tell you. 4.122  
A boy they said they sought, 4.123  
with offerings that they brought; 4.124  
It troubles my heart right nought 4.125  
To break his neck in two. 4.126

But be they passed me by / by Judas in heaven,  
I shall soon by and by / set all on six and seven.  
Think you a king as I / will let them believe in  
Any to have mastery / but what my self is given  
By my right? 4.131  
The devil me hang and draw, 4.132



If I that lurden know, 4.133  
But I give him a blow; 4.134  
That life I shall him smite. 4.135

For pity's sake I would / know if they were gone;  
And ye therof were told / I pray you say anon;  
For if they be so bold, / by God that sits on throne,  
The pain cannot be told, / that they shall have each one,  
For ire. 4.140  
Such pains hard, never man tell, 4.141  
So wicked and so cruel, 4.142  
That Lucifer in hell 4.143  
Shall burn their bones in fire. 4.144

### **First Soldier**

Lord, think not ill if I / tell you how they are passed;  
I cannot lie, truly: / since they were with you last,  
Another road to fly / they sought, and that full fast.

### **Herod**

Why, and are they passed me by? / Wey! Out! for fury I  
burst!  
Wey! Fie! 4.149  
Fie on the Devil! Where may I bide? 4.150  
But fight for fury and at all traitors chide!  
Thieves, I say ye should have spied 4.152  
And told when they went by. 4.153

Fine knights to trust! / Nay, rougues ye are, and thieves;  
I could yield up my ghost, / so sore my heart grieves.

### **Second Soldier**

What need you be downcast? / There are no great  
mischiefs  
That should make you aghast. /

### **Third Soldier**

Why make ye such reproofs	4.157
Without pause?	4.158
Thus should ye not threat us,	4.159
Unseemly to beat us.	4.160
Ye should not mistreat us,	4.161
Without other cause.	4.162

### **Herod**

Fie, lumpish liars! / lurdans each one!	4.163
Traitors and criers! / knaves, and knights none!	
Had ye been worth your hire / thus had they not gone;	
If I catch those caitiffs / I break ev'ry bone.	
First, vengeance	4.167
Shall I see on their bones.	4.168
If they bide here at home	4.169
I shall ding them with stones.	4.170
Yea, never dare doubt me.	4.171
I know not where I may sit / for anger and despite;	
We have not done all yet / if it be as I indite.	
Fie! devil! now how is it? / As long as I have sight	
I think not for to flit, / but king I will be right	
For ever.	4.176
But stand I apart,	4.177
I tell you my heart:	4.178
I shall snare them fast,	4.179
Or else trust me never.	4.180

### **First Soldier**

Sir, they went suddenly, / ere any man wist.	4.181
Else had we had them, perdi / ye take my gist.	

### **Second Soldier**

So bold, nor so hardy / in all the list	4.183
Was none of that company / durst challenge my fist	
For fear.	4.185

### Third Soldier

They durst not abide,	4.186
But ran them to hide.	4.187
If I had them spied,	4.188
I had humbled their pride.	4.189
What could we more do / to save your honour?	4.190

### First Soldier

We were ready thereto, / and shall be each hour.

### Herod

Now since it is so / ye shall have favour;	4.192
Go where ye will, go / by town and by tower,	4.193
Go from me!	4.194
I have matters to mull	4.195
with my privy counsel;	4.196
Clerks, you must me tell	4.197
Some words that will cheer me.	4.198

One spake in mine ear: / A wonderful talking,	
And said a maiden should bear / a boy to be king;	
Sirs, I pray you inquire / in all your writing,	
In Virgil, in Homer / And all other thing	4.202
Both legend,	4.203
And poetical tales.	4.204
Epistles and missals;	4.205
Mass and matins, will never avail,	4.206
And ye need not attend;	4.207
I pray you tell quickly / now what ye find.	4.208

### First Counsellor

Truly, sir, prophecy / It is not blind;	4.209
We read thus in Isaiah / he shall be so kind,	
That a maiden, soothly / which never sinned,	4.211
Shall him bear:	4.212
“ <i>virgo concipiet,</i>	4.213
<i>Natumque pariet;</i>	4.214
<i>Emanuel</i> ” is set	4.215
His name, as told there:	4.216

*“God is with us,” / that is for to say.*

### **Second Counsellor**

Another says thus- / trust me ye may: 4.218  
*“Of Beth’lem a gracious / Lord shall spring,  
That of Jewry courageous / shall aye be King  
Lord mighty; 4.221  
And him shall honour 4.222  
Both King and emperor.” 4.223*

### **Herod**

Why, and should I to him cower? 4.224  
Nay, thou tell’st lies too lightly! 4.225

Fie! the devil thee speed / and me, make I moan!  
This has thou done indeed / to anger me alone:  
And thou, knave, thou thy fee / shall have, by cock’s  
bone!  
Thou know not half thy creed! / Out, thieves, from my  
throne!  
Fie, knaves! 4.230  
Fie, dotty-pols, with your books! 4.231  
Go cast them in the brooks! 4.232  
Your wiles and your tricks 4.233  
Make my wit rave! 4.234

Heard I never such a rant: / that a knave so slight  
Should come like a saint, / and rob me my right;  
Nay, he shall recant: / I shall ding him down straight.  
Beware! I say, let me pant; / now think I to fight  
For anger; 4.239  
My guts will out burst 4.240  
But I this lad crush; 4.241  
Without I have a vengeing 4.242  
I may live no longer. 4.243

Should a carl in a cave / but one year of age,  
Thus make me to rave? /

### **First Counsellor**

Sir, peace this outrage!	4.245
Away let you wave / all such language.	4.246
Your worship to save, / is he ought but a page Of a year?	4.248
We two could him truss	4.249
with our mere wits between us;	4.250
So, that if ye say thus,	4.251
He shall die on a spear.	4.252

### **Second Counsellor**

For fear that he reign, / do as we set forth: Throughout Bethlehem / and all over the earth, Make knights to run, / and put unto death	4.255
All male children / from time of their birth, Till years two;	4.257
This child may ye kill	4.258
Thus at your own will.	4.259

### **Herod**

Thou show'st here great skill	4.260
Such a plot to brew!	4.261
If I live in this land / a long life, as I hope, By this dare I warrant / to make thee Pope.	4.263
O, my heart is rising / for joy it does hop!	4.264
For this noble tiding / thou shall have a drop Of my good grace;	4.266
Marks, moneys, and pounds,	4.267
Great castles and grounds;	4.268
Through all seas and sands	4.269
I give thee the choice.	4.270
Now will I proceed / and take vengeance.	4.271
All the flower of knighthood / call to allegiance.	
<i>[Calling the Herald]</i>	
See to it, I thee bid: / it may thee advance.	

### **Herald**

Lord, I shall make speed / and bring them, perchance,  
To thy sight. [*Goes to the Soldiers*]  
Hark, knights, I you bring 4.276 4.275  
Here new tiding. 4.277  
Unto Herod the King 4.278  
Haste with all your might! 4.279

In all the haste that ye may / in armour full bright,  
In your best array / look that ye be dight. 4.281

### **First Soldier**

Why should we stray? /

### **Second Soldier**

This is not all right. 4.282

### **Third Soldier**

Sirs, without delay / I dread that we fight. 4.283

### **Herald**

I pray you, 4.284  
As fast as you may, 4.285  
Come to him this day. 4.286

### **First Soldier**

What, in our best array? 4.287

### **Herald**

Yea, sirs, I say you. 4.288

### **Second Soldier**

Somewhat is in hand / whate'er it may mean.

### **Third Soldier**

Tarry not for to stand / there, where we are bidden.

### **Herald**

King Herod all worshipful / well be ye seen! 4.291  
Your knights are come / in armour full sheen,  
To do your will. 4.293

### **First Soldier**

Hail, mightiest of all! 4.294  
We are come at your call 4.295  
For to do what we shall, 4.296  
your wish to fulfill. 4.297

### **Herod**

Welcome, lordings, Iwys, / both great and small!  
The cause now is this / that I send for you all:  
A lad, a knave, born is / that should be king royal;  
But I kill him and his / my spirit quite will fail.  
Therefore, Sirs, 4.302  
Vengeance shall ye take, 4.303  
All for that lad's sake. 4.304  
Of your fame man shall speak 4.305  
Wherever you go, Sirs. 4.306

To Beth'lem go your way / through the countryside scout,  
All male children to slay: / look you be stern and stout.  
If their years are but two / that you find round about,  
Leave none living this day / that lie in swaddlingclout,  
I say you; 4.311  
Spare no babe's blood: 4.312  
Let all run in flood, 4.313  
If women wax mad. 4.314  
I warn you, sirs, to speed you; 4.315  
Hence! Now go your way / and get you there. 4.316

### **Second Soldier**

This may mean great affray; / but I will go before.

### **Third Soldier**

Ah, think, sirs, I say / I will bite like a boar.

### **First Soldier**

When I start my play / I shall kill me a score;  
Herod all hail! 4.320  
We shall for your sake 4.321  
This massacre make. 4.322

### **Herod**

Now if you do well my work 4.323  
My reward shall not fail. 4.324

### **Second Soldier**

Play our parts now by rote / and handle them well.

### **Third Soldier**

I shall strike at their coats / and make them to yell.

*[First Woman enters*

### **First Soldier**

Hark, fellows, you dote / yonder comes trouble;  
I wager a groat / she likes me not well; 4.328  
Let us part. 4.329  
Dame, think it not ill, 4.330  
Thy child if I kill. 4.331

### **First Woman**

What, thief! against my will? 4.332  
Lord, save his dear heart! 4.333

### **First Soldier**

Abide now, abide / no farther thou goes. 4.334

### **First Woman**

Peace, thief! shall I chide / and make here a noise?

### **First Soldier**

I shall humble thy pride / when kill we these boys!

### **First Woman**

May evil betide / look well to thy nose, 4.337  
False thief! 4.338  
Let me have at thy hood. 4.339

### **First Soldier**

What, whore, art thou mad? 4.340

*[He kills the child*



### **First Woman**

Out, alas, my child's blood! 4.341  
I cry in my grief! 4.342

Alas for shame and sin! / Alas that I was born!  
Of weeping who may stint / to see her child forlorn?  
My comfort and my kin, / my son thus dead and torn!  
Vengeance for this sin / I cry, both even and morn.

### **Second Soldier**

Well done! *[Second Woman enters]* 4.347  
Come hither, thou old stry! 4.348  
That lad of thine shall die. 4.349

### **Second Woman**

Mercy, lord, I cry! 4.350  
It is my own dear son. 4.351

### **Second Soldier**

No mercy you merit: / your moans move me naught!

### **Second Woman**

Then thy skull shall I cleave! / Will'st thou be clawed?  
Leave, leave, now I bid! /

### **Second Soldier**

Peace, bid I, bawd! 4.354  
*[He kills the child]*

### **Second Woman**

Fie, fie, for pity! / Fie, full of fraud! 4.355  
No man! 4.356  
Have at thy tabard, 4.357  
Harlot and holard! 4.358  
Thou shall not be spared! 4.359  
I cry and I ban! 4.360

Out! murder! Man, I say / cruel traitor and thief!  
Out! alas! and welaway! / My dear child and life!  
My joy, my blood, my play / that never gave man grief!  
Alas, alas, this day! / I would, my heart should cleave  
In sunder!  
Vengeance I cry and call, 4.366 4.365  
On Herod and his knights all! 4.367  
Vengeance, Lord, upon them fall, 4.368  
And make the world wonder! 4.369

### **Third Soldier**

This is sure greatest game / that ever may be;  
*[Third woman enters]*  
Come hitherward dame! / ye need not to flee! 4.371

### **Third Woman**

Will ye do any harm / to my child, and me? 4.372

### **Third Soldier**

He shall die, I thee swear / his heart's blood shall thou see.  
*[He kills the child]*

### **Third Woman**

God forbid! 4.374  
Thief! thou shed'st my child's blood! 4.375  
Out, I cry! I go near mad! 4.376  
Alas! my heart is all on flood, 4.377  
To see my child thus bleed! 4.378

By God, thou shall rue / this deed that thou has done.

### **Third Soldier**

I bid thee not stray, / by sun and by moon. 4.380

### **Third Woman**

Have at thee say I! / this dagger for thy loins!  
Out on thee cry I / have at thy groin 4.382  
Another! 4.383  
This keep I in store. 4.384

### **Third Soldier**

Peace now, no more! 4.385

### **Third Woman**

I cry and I roar, 4.386

Out on thee, man's murderer! 4.387

Alas! my babe, my innocent; / flesh of my flesh! for  
sorrow

That God me dearly sent, / torment as sharp as arrow!

Thy body is torn and rent, / I cry both even and morrow,

Vengeance for thy blood, thus spent / out! I cry, and  
harrow!

### **First Soldier**

Go lightly! 4.392

Give over these groans! 4.393

Haste, trollopes, hence to your homes,- 4.394

Or by cock's bones 4.395

I shall not ask politely! 4.396

They are fled now; I wot / they will not abide.

### **Second Soldier**

Let us run hot-foot; / now would I we hied, 4.398

And tell of this lot, / how we have betide. 4.399

### **Third Soldier**

Thou can nothing do here / that have I descried;

Go forth and wend, 4.401

Tell thou Herod our tale! 4.402

For all our avail, 4.403

I tell you, sans fail, 4.404

He will us commend. 4.405

### **First Soldier**

I am best of you all / and ever have been; 4.406

The devil have my soul / if I be not first seen;

It fits me to call / on my lord, as I ween. 4.408

### **Second Soldier**

What needs thee to brawl? / Be not so keen  
In this anger; 4.410 4.409  
I shall say thou did best - 4.411  
Save myself, as I guessed. 4.412

### **First Soldier**

Wey! that is most honest. 4.413

### **Third Soldier**

Go, tarry no longer! *[They go back to Herod*

### **First Soldier**

Hail Herod, our King / full glad may ye be! 4.415  
Good tiding we bring: / harken now to me 4.416  
We have been riding / throughout all Jewry: 4.417  
Now know ye one thing- / that murdered, have we,  
Many thousands. 4.419

### **Second Soldier**

I held them full hot, 4.420  
I struck them and smote; 4.421  
Their dams now, I wot, 4.422  
Cannot bind them in bands. 4.423

### **Third Soldier**

Had ye seen how I fared / when I came among them!  
There was none that I spared, / but I laid on and dang  
them.  
I am worthy a reward, / where I was among them.  
I stood and I stared / no pity to hang them 4.427  
Had I. 4.428

### **Herod**

Now, by mighty Mahowne, 4.429  
That is good of reknown! 4.430  
If I wear this crown. 4.431  
You shall each have a lady, 4.432  
Fully fairly arrayed, / to wed at your will. 4.433

### **First Soldier**

So have ye long said, / but have not paid the bill!

### **Second Soldier**

And I was never flayed / for good nor for ill.

### **Third Soldier**

Ye might hold, you well paid / our wish to fulfill,  
Thus think me: 4.437  
with treasure untold, 4.438  
If it like that ye would, 4.439  
Both silver and gold, 4.440  
To give us great plenty. 4.441

### **Herod**

As I am king crowned / I think it good right!  
There goes none on ground / of such main and might  
A hundred thousand pound / is good wage for a knight,  
Of pennies good and round: / now may ye go light  
With store. 4.446  
And ye knights of ours 4.447  
Shall have castles and towers, 4.448  
Both to you and to yours, 4.449  
For now and evermore. 4.450

### **First Soldier**

Was never none born / by down nor by dale, 4.451  
Nor none ever before / that thus did prevail.

### **Second Soldier**

We have castles and corn, / much gold in our mails.

### **Third Soldier**

It will last evermore / I tell you no tales; 4.454  
Hail in the highest! 4.455  
Hail lord! Hail King! 4.456  
We are forth faring! *[They leave]* 4.457

## Herod

*[Addressing the crowd/audience*

Now may Lucifer bring you  
Where he is lord friendly; 4.459 4.458

Now in peace may I stand / I thank thee, each one!  
And give of my land / that belongs to my crown.  
So come close at hand / both of burgh and of town;  
Marks each one a thousand / when next I am come,  
Shall ye have. 4.464

I shall make no delay 4.465  
To give that I say! 4.466  
When next I come this way, 4.467  
And then may ye crave. 4.468

I set by no good, / now my heart is at ease, 4.469  
That I shed so much blood / I may rule as I please!  
For to see this flood / from the feet to the knees  
Methinks it is good / yea, I laugh till I wheeze;  
By God's moon! 4.473  
So light is my soul, 4.474  
That to honey turns my bile; 4.475  
I may do what I will, 4.476  
And bear up my crown. 4.477

I was cast into care, / so frightly afraid; 4.478  
But I no more despair: / for low is he laid 4.479  
That I most did I fear; / so have I him flayed.  
It would great wonder be / where so many strayed  
In harm's way, 4.482  
That one should escape, 4.483  
And unharmed take flight, 4.484  
When so many childer 4.485  
For their blows have no balm. 4.486

A hundred thousand, Iwis / and forty are slain,  
 And four more thousand; this / makes glad my heart plain;  
 Such murder in the land / shall never be again.  
 Had I had but one bat / at that sweet swain 4.490  
 So young, 4.491  
 The deed had been spoken 4.492  
 And not been forgotten, 4.493  
 were I dead and rotten, 4.494  
 Told by many a tongue. 4.495  
  
 Thus shall I teach knaves / example to take: 4.496  
 If any man rave, / other masters to make, 4.497  
 Be they boastful and brave, / think not I shall quake!  
 False sovereigns shall none save, / your necks shall I  
 strike  
 In sunder. 4.500  
 None King shall ye call 4.501  
 But Herod the royal; 4.502  
 And if any man shall, 4.503  
 He suffers for that blunder. 4.504  
  
 For if I hear it spoken / when I come again, 4.505  
 Your brains shall be broken / so have heed of pain;  
 What it may betoken / it shall be so plain; 4.507  
 I say without joking, / I have but disdain 4.508  
 For the squeamish. 4.509  
 Sirs, this is my counsel- 4.510  
 Be not too cruel, 4.511  
 But *adieu* - to the devil! 4.512  
 I know no more French! 4.513

# Epilogue

## Christ

Every creature take intent 5.386  
What message I shall you bring:  
This wicked world away is went,  
And I am come as crownèd King.  
My Father in Heaven has me down sent,  
To weigh your works and make ending.  
Comen is the day of Judgement;  
Of sorrow may every sinner sing.

The day is comen of wretchedness, 5.394  
All those to cull that are unclean.  
The day of battle and bitterness,  
Full long awaited has it been.  
The day of dread to more and less,  
Of joy, of trembling, and of pain.  
Every wight that wicked is  
May say, alas this day is seen!

Here may ye see my Wounds wide 5.403  
That I suffered for your misdeed.  
Through heart, head, foot, hand and hide;  
Not for my guilt but for your need.  
Behold, both back, body, and side:  
How dear I bought your brotherhood.  
These bitter pains I would abide,  
To buy you bliss thus would I bleed.

On cross they hanged me on a hill;  
Bruised and bloody thus was I beat,  
With crown of thorn thrust on full ill.  
A spear into my heart they set;  
My heart's blood spared they not to spill.



Behold, mankind, that same am I 5.422  
That for thee suffered such mischief.  
This was done me for thy folly:  
Man, lo, thy love was all my life.  
Thus was I dealt, thy hurt to heal;  
To redeem thee, man, was this done to me.  
In all my woe was all thy weal:  
My will it was for love of thee.

All this suffered I for thy sake: 5.432  
Say, man, what suffered, thou for me? 5.433

Come now forth, my children all, 5.500  
I forgive you your amiss;  
With me now go ye shall  
To Joy and endless bliss.

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