

EDWARD II

Christopher Marlowe

KING EDWARD: Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows,
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allay'd;
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
But when the imperial lion's flesh is gor'd,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
And, highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air:
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
Th' ambitious mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural queen, false isabel,
That thus hath pent and mew'd me in a prison
For such outrageous passions cloy my soul,
As with the wings of rancour and disdain
Full often am i soaring up to heaven,
To plain me to the gods against them both.
But when i call to mind i am a king,
Methinks i should revenge me of my wrongs,
That mortimer and isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; i bear the name of king;
I wear the crown; but am controll'd by them,
By mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;
Whilst I am lodg'd within this cave of care,
Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To company my heart with sad laments,
That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.
But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a king?