

SHAKESPEARE RESTORED

A Play

by

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CHARACTER LIST

The Editors:

THEOBALD -- Lewis Theobald, lawyer, writer and Shakespearean critic, 37 years old

POPE -- Alexander Pope, poet, translator and editor of Shakespeare, 37 years old

The Greeks:

ELECTRA -- from Sophocles' Electra, late 20 s

CLYTEMNESTRA -- Electra's mother

CHRYSOTHMIS -- Electra's younger sister

CHORUS 1

CHORUS 2

The Shakespearean Characters:

RICHARD II -- from Richard II, King of England

GAUNT -- from Richard II, Richard's uncle

BOLINGBROKE -- from Richard II, Gaunt's son

YORK -- from Richard II, Richard's and Bolingbroke's uncle

MOWBRAY -- from Richard II

LORD MARSHALL -- from Richard II

NORTHUMBERLAND -- from Richard II, supporter of Bolinbroke

HOTSPUR -- from Richard II, Northumberland's son

SALISBURY -- from Richard II

HAL -- from 1 Henry IV, Bolingbroke's son

FALSTAFF -- from 1 Henry IV

POINS -- from 1 Henry IV

BARDOLPH -- from 1 Henry IV

MISTRESS -- from 1 Henry IV

SETTING

A Shakespearean version of Lewis Theobald's 18th Century London study. The Electra scenes and the Shakespearean scenes play throughout the study.

COSTUMES

Theobald, Pope and Shakespearean characters are dressed Shakespearean. The Greeks are period or Shakespearean.

TIME

Some time in the late 16th Century (or autumn 1725 or not).

ACT I

A Shakespearean version of an 18th Century study. There is a chair and table that serves as Theobald's desk. There is a bust of Athena. There may be a shelf or two for books. Other books, papers and manuscripts may be piled on the table, floor or on stools.

Lewis THEOBALD sits at his desk, reading a book.

THEOBALD

(To Self)

Confounding, absolutely confounding! How is one to make any sense out of this mess? How indeed? Yes, Mr Stede, you are correct -- Shakespeare Restored will need an appendix. Mr Pope you absolutely boggle the mind.

(Grabs book and searches)

Enter Alexander POPE. POPE carries a MANUSCRIPT. POPE is unseen by THEOBALD

THEOBALD (cont'd)

Your knowledge of Shakespeare's time is nil! You know not the least comings-and-goings of the backstage. Indisputable!

(Reads)

"A table of Greenfield's. A table was directed to be brought in. Greenfield was the name of the property-man in that time who furnished implements for actors."

(To Self)

Oh, Mr Pope, your notes are creative, maybe even ingenious -- but are they accurate? No, of course not! Mr Stede is this a corrupt passage? Do you agree with me that prompters' notes, on occasion found their way into Shakespeare's scripts through printers' errors? But have you ever in your entire career in the theatre, seen one prompt book with one note scribbled in the margin that gave the actual name of a property man? Of course not! And would this note be in the middle of this scene? Of course not! And would it be wrong to suggest that it would be about a page before the scene would begin? Of course not!

(Waits)

Well, Mr Stede?

(Looks up)

Oh, you're not here yet. He has me talking to myself now.

(Takes breath)

This is wrong, all wrong. What can you possibly be thinking Mr Pope? Editors dig into a corrupt text. They find and they discover.

THEOBALD (cont'd)
 They seek the writer himself and what he wrote -- whatever
 it may be, but you don't change it. YOUR CONJECTURE IS WRONG
 MR POPE!

POPE clears throat

THEOBALD (cont'd)
 (Without looking at Pope)
 Ah, Mr Stede, you're just in time --
 (Looks for book)
 I'm looking for an old Edition of Shakespeare. A rather
 large book. It might be on that other shelf over there. This
 is for your appendix, Mr Stede. I'm looking for Henry the
 Fifth. The scene, Mistress Quickly telling of the death of
 Falstaff.
 (Finds book. Searches book)
 There was a note, a note in the margin of the book. To edit
 a corrupt text, Mr Stede, you must place yourself within the
 text. To be the writer. Urrr!
 (Slams book closed)
 To be inside the head of William Shakespeare. Ah-ha,
 (Finds book. Searches)
 To be inside of the character. Falstaff is old and dying.
 Mistress Quickly says, "his nose was as sharp as a pen, and
 a table of greenfields?" Uhhhhh!
 (Slams book closed)
 The frustration of sifting through trying to decipher these
 poorly printed and corrupt passages. When you find it, it
 should be a hand-written note on the left-page --
 (Finds book. Searches)
 Henry, Henry, Henry, where are you Henry. I know you're in
 here somewhere. Where do you hide the hand-written note,
 where, where can you be. Left-page where are you, left-page,
 left-page, left -- EUREKA! This is it Mr Stede -- listen,
 (Reads)
 "For his nose was as sharp as a pen, and he talked,"
 (Speaks)
 ah, he talked. He talked of green fields. An old man talking
 of sunshine and lush green fields. What could be more
 natural than a "second childishness" as Monsieur Jaques once
 said?

POPE
 (Under his breath)
 Oh my.

THEOBALD
 Don't babble Mr Stede! That's it! I know it is! Talked, yes.
 Talked, not table. This makes the utmost sense. I'll have Mr
 Pope babbling to himself ...
 (Discovering)
 Babbling? Babbling ... a babbling old man.

THEOBALD (cont'd)

(Carefully)

Though it would be corrupt in spelling, if you change the "t" in table, to a "b," you'd get bable. Pronounce it, babble.

(Reads)

"For his nose was as sharp as a pen and he babbled of green fields."

(Speaks)

How simple. One letter changes everything.

POPE

Simple, I think not. Perhaps if one has that book, but otherwise I'm afraid --

THEOBALD

Why Mr Stede what's wrong with your -- you're not Mr Stede.

POPE

No, I'm not Mr Stede. My name is Alexander Pope.

THEOBALD

Why, why -- I, why, I, why, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I didn't see you come in, Mr Pope!

POPE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you. I was let in.

THEOBALD

Indeed.

POPE

I have something of yours.
(Shows MANUSCRIPT)

THEOBALD

Oh my.

POPE

A friend asked me to drop this manuscript off, if you are the Mr Theobald, about whom I've been told.

THEOBALD

I'm Lewis Theobald, at your service.

POPE

Well, let us hope so. I've been wanting to meet you -- to thank you for the kind words in your book of poetry.

THEOBALD

The Grove. Yes, thank you for all four of your subscriptions. I trust you enjoyed them?

POPE
By all means. I was most impressed with your ... collecting abilities. And you write, too, and you translate -- like me?

THEOBALD
Like you, Mr Pope -- well yes, I suppose, well I try, I, I, I'm not as, or even as, as you, but -- no, I mean -- you're a truly great poet. I am not, but, yes I, I do try.

POPE
So I've heard. You seem to know who I am?

THEOBALD
I was at Button's Coffee House when a friend saw you coming out of Will's Coffee House and he pointed you out.

POPE
And you remembered me -- I am honored.

THEOBALD
Yes, well, you have a memorable shape.

POPE
Like a question mark --

THEOBALD
Or Richard the Third.

POPE
Is that what your Buttonian friend said?!

THEOBALD
By no means. He said nothing unkind. Nothing but praise --

POPE
Balderdash! I know what those hack writers say about me!

THEOBALD
Not all of them.

POPE
(Over Theobald)
They poke and prod with their tirades.

THEOBALD
I'm terribly sorry. Some of the clientele at Button's -- not all, but some do not agree with those writers.

POPE
Well ... there was no harm done, I assure you. I'm really rather thick-skinned, if the absolute truth were to be known.

THEOBALD
But --

POPE
RUMORS AND GOSSIP, I ASSURE YOU!

THEOBALD
Once again, I'm terribly sorry.

POPE
And I'm sorry The Censor is no more.

THEOBALD
My periodical? I didn't know you knew of it.

POPE
It was a tri-weekly, as I recall.

THEOBALD
How good of you to mention it. And I must say I think your Iliad is, without doubt -- the most magnificent translation of Homer the English language has ever seen.

POPE
Why, thank you. That is most kind and coming from a man of your esteemed literary reputation --

THEOBALD
Me? Esteemed? I do not have a literary reputation.

POPE
Would you like one?

THEOBALD
I beg your pardon.

POPE
Would you like to have a literary reputation?

THEOBALD
What do I need to --

POPE
(Throws down MANUSCRIPT)
Don't write this book!

Enter ELECTRA, dressed as a servant.

ELECTRA
It is a night of bad omens. Horror strikes at my heart. Blood is everywhere. They howled -- howled with laughter. Treachery and deceit rule this kingdom now.

ELECTRA (cont'd)
 Unimaginable horror! My unhappy father, Agamemnon, is dead. Killed by his wife, my mother, Clytemnestra, and her secret paramour, Aegisthus. My mother, my mother, lured him inside the palace and covered him in a luxurious cloak proclaiming his victory over Troy -- her victory cloak. The cloak weighed him down so he couldn't defend himself. Then he came in, Aegisthus, and he took an axe and split -- no, no it doesn't matter. It won't change what happened. It won't change what will happen. The gods must be angry. My mother and her treacherous paramour are drunk with their blood-soaked success. They are proud, boasting throughout the palace of their victory over King Agamemnon. The gods will not stand for this, I'm sure of it.

(KNEELS before bust of Athena)

By all that is holy great Athena, daughter of Zeus, hear my words and protect my young brother, Orestes. He is on his way to King Strophius. Watch over him. Prevent the murderers Aegisthus sent after him, from finding him. Protect him, help him grow to manhood and help him grow strong enough to return to Mycenae to purge this land of the murderers who now rule.

Enter CHORUS 1, dressed royally

ELECTRA (cont'd)
 (Stands)
 Do you know where they are?

CHORUS 1
 I only saw one of them.

ELECTRA
 Do you know where he is?

CHORUS 1
 No, we led him to the northern gate. He was there, I could see him lurking in a shadow. After a while he saw we weren't moving anymore and he got closer, so I uncovered the young girl's head. When he realized his mistake, he gave up.

ELECTRA
 Are you sure he left?

CHORUS 1
 We waited and waited, but he didn't return, so I took the girl home and came here.

ELECTRA
 Did he recognize you?

CHORUS 1

I don't think he was sure, not in these clothes. He tried to get close as he was following us, but we kept moving, though not rushing, as you said. He was more concerned with the child than with me. The girl was quiet and sensed the danger, but, bless her, she didn't make a sound.

ELECTRA

Did he return to the palace?

CHORUS 1

I think he did. It was the direction he went.

Enter CHORUS 2, dressed royally

ELECTRA

Uh -- oh it's you. Were you followed?

CHORUS 2

Yes, there were two watching us that I saw.

ELECTRA

Did you make it to the east-southern gate?

CHORUS 2

Nearly. One gave up before the gate.

ELECTRA

And the other?

CHORUS 2

He followed close by, all the way to the gate.

CHORUS 1

Do you think they got away?

ELECTRA

That I'm not sure of. Perimedes is a loyal servant to my father and to Orestes. He will do what he can.

CHORUS 2

Were there only three of them then?

ELECTRA

Three men against one small boy. How can the gods stand for this?

CHORUS 1

Then he got away, if there weren't any more. I'm sure of it.

ELECTRA

We must return to the palace. We must not stir suspicion on a night such as this.

Exit ELECTRA, CHORUS 1 and CHORUS 2

THEOBALD
Don't write my book? You can't really mean that?

POPE
What if I do?

THEOBALD
But that's not possible.

POPE
It is, indeed, possible.

THEOBALD
Are ... are you that powerful?

POPE
Take a good look at me, Mr Theobald. What do you see?

THEOBALD
I see ... what I see.

POPE
Do you not see this twisted and bent body of mine?

THEOBALD
I, I wouldn't say it is --

POPE
Can this tiny frame you see before you, be deemed powerful?

THEOBALD
You are ... there are different ways of --

POPE
My body, Mr Theobald, does not offer physical strength.

THEOBALD
My intention was not to impune your --

POPE
My power does not come from my body -- but from my pen.

THEOBALD
Your pen?

POPE
Yes, my pen. My strength, my power comes from my words.

THEOBALD
Your words?

POPE
Yes, from my words, therein lies my power.

THEOBALD
What are you saying, Mr Pope?

POPE
My words are strong and they can be very powerful, when used in the proper way. My words, Mr Theobald, can introduce you to, and keep you in the most selective group of writers, poets and playwrights alive.

THEOBALD
Are you saying you would --

POPE
Write and praise your words.

THEOBALD
But --

POPE
And no one would know.

THEOBALD
No one?

POPE
No one.

THEOBALD
There are those who suspect you of --

POPE
I said, no one would know!

THEOBALD
What about my book? What about Shakespeare and his plays?

POPE
What about them? The public will still read them, will still see them, will still enjoy them.

THEOBALD
I don't know. I don't think so -- no, no I can't.

POPE
Yes, you can. It will be the most heroic thing you ever do.

THEOBALD
I'm terribly sorry, but Shakespeare's scripts are --

POPE
ALL I DID ... all I did was make Shakespeare more accessible.

THEOBALD
You made Shakespeare more confusing, Mr Pope.

POPE
I made him accessible for today's more sophisticated audiences.

THEOBALD
I agree, the English language has changed.

POPE
Changed! His phrasing, his grammar, his spelling!

THEOBALD
Yes, it can be difficult and awkward.

POPE
Incomprehensible is more like it.

THEOBALD
Not to William Shakespeare.

POPE
But he's not with us, so he can't tell us what he wrote.

THEOBALD
What if I can?

POPE
What if you can -- what?

THEOBALD
I am a lawyer, Mr Pope. I deal with older Elizabethan documents, such as wills and deeds.

POPE
No doubt you would.

THEOBALD
We in the law are taught Elizabethan Secretary Script to allow us to read those documents.

POPE
We are taking about William Shakespeare.

THEOBALD
So am I. His plays were printed in the older orthographic form.

THEOBALD (cont'd)
My understanding of Elizabethan Secretary Script allows me to better decipher these older and corrupt play texts.

POPE
That is a task no one shall accomplish.

THEOBALD
I can not agree with you, much can yet be discovered.

POPE
Shakespeare is dead. All anyone can do is dress him up.

THEOBALD
He is not a character in a play.
(Beat)
I have a friend who is prompter at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

POPE
The gentleman for whom you mistook me?

THEOBALD
Yes, Mr Stede.

POPE
What does he have to do with this?

THEOBALD
He has shared his firsthand knowledge of theatre with me.

POPE
The theatre has changed since Shakespeare's time.

THEOBALD
All the same, it is theatre, so certain things will happen.

POPE
The spellings are too corrupt, his grammar, his --

THEOBALD
Without doubt, corrupt and difficult to penetrate.

POPE
Mind-boggling, unfathomable, confounding is more like it!

Enter ELECTRA and CHORUS 1. Electra is dressed royally. Both are sewing

CHORUS 1
Is there no word yet?

ELECTRA
It is too soon. It is a long, long journey. The best we can hope for is no word of their capture.

CHORUS 1
I think, I hope --

ELECTRA
So do I. It is difficult to wait, but we had better get use
to it. This will take much time and it will be difficult,
more difficult if we are --

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA

CLYTEMNESTRA
Leave us!

CHORUS 1 gathers her sewing

CLYTEMNESTRA (cont'd)
NOW!

Exit CHORUS 1

CLYTEMNESTRA (cont'd)
Where is your brother?!

ELECTRA
I don't know. I've not seen him yet today.

CLYTEMNESTRA
He's not in the palace.

ELECTRA
Are you sure? You know how he likes to hide.

CLYTEMNESTRA
He is gone!

ELECTRA
He is probably scared. He will return, I'm sure of it.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Your king is displeased!

ELECTRA
My king is dead. You killed him last night. Don't you
remember?

CLYTEMNESTRA
Your king is upset!

ELECTRA
My father is dead. You, my mother, killed him. The emotional
state of your paramour doesn't interest me.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Don't fight me on this -- where is your brother?!

ELECTRA
No doubt someplace safer than this palace.

CLYTEMNESTRA
I know it was you. You were followed last night.

ELECTRA
I am in mourning. I never left the palace last night.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Aegisthus will not take this lightly.

ELECTRA
He will not take what lightly?

CLYTEMNESTRA
Your sneaking your brother out of the palace last night.

ELECTRA
So he couldn't kill him too?

CLYTEMNESTRA
He is your king! You will not speak of him like that!

ELECTRA
He killed my father. I will speak of him in any way I wish.

CLYTEMNESTRA
It's no matter. Your brother is of no concern. He is just a boy.

ELECTRA
Aegisthus too was once just a boy, but he grew to manhood and look at what treachery he is capable of now.

CLYTEMNESTRA
If you think this is a game?

ELECTRA
My father took you at your word, I'll not make the same mistake.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Where is your brother?

ELECTRA
I told you I've not seen him this day.

CLYTEMNESTRA
So, they were right, he escaped last night.

ELECTRA
Who was right?

CLYTEMNESTRA doesn't respond

ELECTRA (cont'd)
So you would kill your own son.

CLYTEMNESTRA doesn't respond

ELECTRA (cont'd)
Wherever my brother is, he is in a safer place than in his
mother's arms.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You don't have the right to speak to me that way.

ELECTRA
I will speak to you in any way I want.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Your king will come to see you. You will not like it.
(Goes to leave)

ELECTRA
He needn't bother.

CLYTEMNESTRA
(Stops)
Where is your brother?

ELECTRA
Somewhere safer than Mycenae.

CLYTEMNESTRA
I want to know.

ELECTRA
Of course you do. If I were you, I too would be concerned.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You are spiteful!

ELECTRA
You are wicked.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You are impudent!

ELECTRA
I take after my mother.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You are ungrateful beyond belief.
(Goes to leave)

ELECTRA
I have sent Orestes away!

CLYTEMNESTRA
(Stops)
I know that. Where?

ELECTRA
Some place safe, where he can grow to manhood.

CLYTEMNESTRA
He'll not grow to manhood.

ELECTRA
Once he has grown to manhood, he will return to Mycenae to
avenge the death of his father and reclaim his throne.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Where is he?

ELECTRA
The gods know where he is.

CLYTEMNESTRA
The gods don't care.

ELECTRA
The gods will protect him. The gods will see he grows to
manhood. The gods will see he returns to Mycenae.

CLYTEMNESTRA
He would not kill his own mother.

ELECTRA
He can and he will. I've no doubt the gods will see to it.
And I will see to it.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You can not see to it.

ELECTRA
I can see to it and I will.

CLYTEMNESTRA
What will you do?

ELECTRA
I will ... why of course I will mourn.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You will mourn?

ELECTRA
Yes, I will mourn.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Mourning is good. You will need to do that.

ELECTRA
I will mourn. Yes, I will mourn long and hard. I will cry my lamentations until the day my brother returns to Mycenae. I will mourn with every ounce of my soul. I will mourn for the death of my father. I will mourn for all of Mycenae. I will sing dirges so loud the gods will hear! I will mourn so all of Mycenae will not forget this injustice! I will mourn long and hard so the gods will not forget the troubles that now haunt my father's house!

CLYTEMNESTRA
I will destroy you, if you do this.

ELECTRA
You will only destroy yourself.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Yours will be a woeful destiny. The blathering of your clamorous tongue will be forgotten. Your suffering and anguish will be scorned and laughed at.

ELECTRA
Maybe so, maybe not.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Your father did not deserve his crown -- he was a woeful dunce of a man!

ELECTRA
I will not fail my father.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Time will adjust your lamentations.

ELECTRA
To your oppression? I think not. Time will be kindly to me.

CLYTEMNESTRA
This will not be so!

ELECTRA
(KNEELS before Athena)
Oh, holy goddess Athena, hear me. This palace is haunted and betrayed. There is evil all around. Watch over Orestes.

ELECTRA (cont'd)

Help him as he grows to manhood. Help him grow strong and sturdy and wise. Steel his nerves. Prevent my mother from murdering her son. With all of your power Athena, protect Orestes. Help him return to Mycenae and reclaim our father's kingdom from the usurping murderers who now sit upon the throne.

Exit CLYTEMNESTRA. Enter CHORUS 1 with a wrap. SHE puts the wrap on Electra and helps her to her feet. THEY exit

THEOBALD

Mind-boggling the spellings may be, and yes the grammar can be confounding, Mr Pope -- but, I can do this. Indeed, there is no one in all of London who can do this better than can I.

POPE

You can not. It is not possible!

THEOBALD

It is possible.

POPE

I have been through each and every one of his plays. For all of their beauty -- no one will penetrate their meaning.

THEOBALD

I will. I will tell you and everyone else what he wrote.

POPE

You won't, you can't. It can not be done!

THEOBALD

This is what an editor is to do.

POPE

That is not what --

THEOBALD

He is not Homer! This is not a foreign language!

POPE

It is to me! Don't you see the differences?

THEOBALD

The language has changed, indeed, but you --

POPE

I did what was needed to make him more accessible.

THEOBALD
You made Homer more accessible. You made Shakespeare --

POPE
I improved Shakespeare, as I did Homer!

THEOBALD
(Discovering)
You translated, didn't you?

POPE
What?

THEOBALD
You translated Shakespeare -- you were supposed to edit him.

POPE
I don't understand your meaning.

THEOBALD
You were supposed to discover what he wrote, not improve him.

POPE
I am a writer!

THEOBALD
And I am an editor!

POPE
But you are not an editor of Shakespeare --

THEOBALD
I can do this. Help me?

POPE
Help you with what?

THEOBALD
Help me save Shakespeare.

POPE
Shakespeare can fend for himself.

THEOBALD
Then why are you here?

POPE
I ... I wanted to apologize for missing your play -- your benefit night.

THEOBALD
That was several years ago.

POPE
I was away from home, as I recall.

THEOBALD
Indeed, I believe that is what your note said.

POPE
I trust all went well? Richard the Second wasn't it?

THEOBALD
It was, but ...

ENTER King RICHARD II, John of
GAUNT and ATTENDANT

POPE
You sound doubtful. Was there a problem?

RICHARD II
Old John of Gaunt, time honored Lancaster,
hast thou according to thy oath and band
spoken with thy bold son, Henry Hereford?

GAUNT
I have, my liege.

RICHARD II
(To Attendant)
Call both forth Thomas Mowbray and Henry
Bolingbroke to our presence. We shall hear
but deeply their boisterous late argument.

EXIT ATTENDANT

THEOBALD
Why is it, I don't trust what you are saying?

POPE
Mr Theobald, I have nothing in mind but your best interests.

THEOBALD
My interests?

POPE
Yes, your interests.

ENTER Thomas MOWBRAY. ENTER Henry
BOLINGBROKE

RICHARD II
Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object
against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

BOLINGBROKE

Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
if these words be not true may my body
and divine soul answer it in heaven.

MOWBRAY

I defy him. I spit at him, call him
a slanderous coward and a villain.

BOLINGBROKE

Thou hath receive-ed eight thousand of gold
coin for your highness' soldiers which thou hath
detain-ed for lewd employments. And thou,
Mowbray, a contriving, traitor-coward
didst plot and ploy the Duke of Gloucester's death.

MOWBRAY

Through this passage false, thou throat and heart liest.
These gold coin didst I disperse in parts three
for his highness' soldiers in Calais and
duly reserved an amount certain of
which my sovereign liege was in my debt. As
to the death of the Duke of Gloucester, I
admit I slew not him, but didst in mine
disgrace neglect a sworn duty in's case.

BOLINGBROKE

(Throws down gage)

Pale, trembling coward, there I throw my gage.

MOWBRAY

(Picks up gage)

By my sword and knighthood, I pick it up.
I'll answer thee in any fair degree
or chivalrous design of knightly trial.
Upon most boldly this, I throw my gage.

(Throws down gage)

BOLINGBROKE

(Picks up gage)

This arm shall do it, ere this life be spent.

RICHARD II

Good mine uncle, let this end where begun.
We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

GAUNT

(To Bolingbroke)

Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk's gage.

BOLINGBROKE does not

RICHARD II
 (To Mowbray)
 This rage must be withstood. Give me his gage.

MOWBRAY does not

THEOBALD
 Richard the Second was well received by all accounts.

RICHARD II
 Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me.
 Since we can not do to make you friends
 Be ready as your lives shall answer for it
 At Coventry on Saint Lambert's Day.
 There shall your swords and lances arbitrate.

EXIT RICHARD II, MOWBRAY, GAUNT and
 BOLINGBROKE severally

POPE
 It is the best of his history plays.

THEOBALD
 One of the better.

POPE
 A true tragedy. A most unnatural state. A throne usurped.

THEOBALD
 It led to years of disunity and civil war.

POPE
 Brother fought brother.

THEOBALD
 Cousin fought cousin.

POPE
 Father fought son. Most inappropriate.

THEOBALD
 Most unnatural.

POPE
 To give power to those who can not lead is most unnatural.

THEOBALD
 Are, are you talking about me?

POPE
 Whatever do you mean?