

H5 A page, a knight, a viscount and an Erle

Notes. This poem is an adaptation of an earlier version written shortly after Frances Howard's marriage to Robert Carr in December 1613 ("A page a knight a Vicount, and an Earle [1613 version]"). After the 1615 revelations of the couple's involvement in the murder of Overbury, the last line of the poem was adapted to reflect the new charges against the Countess. The Bodleian MS Rawl. D 1048 version of the 1613 poem is printed and discussed by Lindley (178), while Bellany (Politics 98, 149) comments briefly on the relationship between the 1613 and 1615 versions. In at least two sources this poem is joined (as the second stanza) to "Heere lyes hee that once was poore" (Bodleian MS Malone 23; CCRO MS CR 63/2/19); however, in most cases it is treated as a discrete poem.

A page, a knight, a viscount and an Erle¹
All foure weare wedded to one lustfull girle
A match well made, for shee was likewise foure
A wife a witch, a murderer, and a whore.

Source. BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 70v

Other known sources. *Cort verhael van het grouwelick* (Dutch translation) B3v; "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript" 62; Bodleian MS Ashmole 38, p. 116; Bodleian MS Don. c.54, fol. 23r; Bodleian MS Malone 19, p. 38; Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 7; Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1048, fol. 64r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 160, fol. 163r; Bodleian MS Tanner 465, fol. 96v; BL Add. MS 44963, fol. 40r; BL MS Sloane 1489, fol. 9v; CCRO MS 63/2/19, fol. 11r; Folger MS V.a.162, fol. 62v; Folger MS V.a.262, p. 262

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¹ *A page...an Erle:* Robert Carr came to the Court of James I in England as a page to George Home, Earl of Dunbar, was knighted in 1607, made Viscount Rochester in 1611, and Earl of Somerset in 1613.
