

Pi32 Away, away, great George, o come not here

Notes. This dialogue between the shades of Buckingham and his alleged client, John Lambe, the infamous astrologer-physician and convicted witch who had been murdered two months before the Duke, manages to encompass a larger than usual indictment of Buckingham's alleged crimes as favourite. Although there is no reason not to assume that the poem dates from the time of Buckingham's assassination, the only known version is in an eighteenth-century manuscript, containing a handful of pieces on Buckingham and Felton.

Lambe. Away, away, great George, o come not here:

For then in torments thou must bear a share.

Duke. Oh now its too late: Thy Councill's all in vaine:

The Castle so long beseidg'd at last is tane.

Thow shouldst have told me this, before that I,

By Murther,¹ Pride, Lust, & fowle Treacherye

Had spotted my white Soule: but then didst thou

Uphold me in my sins;² for which I now

Am damn'de, & have the Lande of Canaan³ lost,

And in the Depth of deepest Miseries tost.

Then whether should I goe, but where thow art?

That of my Paines as Pleasures⁴ thow must take Part.

L. Goe hence I say: if Plutoe⁵ once drawe neare,

Thy Titles,⁶ nor thy Honours shall not beare

Thee from his ravening Pawes.

D. Alas! the're gone,

And e're this Time dispearst: not one alone

Shall ever have agayne soe many Honours

Heapt on his Head; which to me were false Banners.

Yet Titles, Honours, Places, Charles his Love,

My Life to spare could not stout⁷ Felton move:

His powerful Hand hath sett my Spirit free,

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And sent my Soule to endles Miserye.
 O Famous Felton! thy Valour yet I love;
 But of thy heedles Deed do not approve: 25
 Because thou leftst me neither Time nor Space,
 To call to God for Mercie, Pardon, Grace:⁸
 Nor yet to Charles, my honoured Lord & King,
 To beg his Pardon, & confes each Thing,
 That I gainst him, his Kingdome, & his state, 30
 That either heretofore, or now of late,
 I have attempted, or intended to act,
 As well as that I have done: yet your Fact
 I know's approv'd of all; for that all did
 Hate me; & though at sometimes close they hidd 35
 The Rancour of their Malice, yet now at last
 They let their Sluices ope, which runnes at waste.
 I know each Letter of my Name shalbe
 A Theame for their Invencions,⁹ to let flee
 Abroad to all the World, even my black Deeds, 40
 Which from their black Penns shall receive black Weeds.
 My deeds on Seas, in Countrey, Court & Cittie,
 Shalbe unto their Song the finall Dittie.
 On Seas, from first to last they'le discant on
 The Honour in Argiers Voyage wonne: 45
 When as stout Mansfeild, by my stronger Hand
 Was made retorne again into this Land;
 Which did more Hurt unto the English Nacion,
 Then since the Fabricke of the World's Creacion.
 For then the Turks made Havocke of our men, 50
 And Shippes, & none would spare; which proved then
 A Disadvantage to our Kingdom:¹⁰ Next
 That to Cales, when as proud Cicill vext,

When Essex for his Life was forc'd to fly;
 Or else as Cales great Gates most basely die.¹¹ 55
 By me, they say, the Pallatinate was lost,
 And when fresh Supply should be gone, I crost
 It; & kept backe the Ayde;¹² at last I sent
 Brave Oxford over, unto whose Life I lent
 Some few Dayes, & then did take it from him, 60
 With Southampton's;¹³ soe I confes my Cryme.
 A Navie was prepar'de, & richly mann'de,
 Where Neptune's¹⁴ angrie Waves being past, we land
 At Martin's Iland; where landing, march, intrench,
 Assault, retreate our men were fain: Revenge 65
 Then came too late: the best Commanders gone,
 And many brave Soldier was lying tread uppon
 Together with Shipping of our men; even all
 Doth make me call'de, a treacherous Generall.
 Yet I came Home, when betters farr wer slaine, 70
 And for their Valour more Honour they may claime.¹⁵
 Yet Charles was glad to see me in England's Shore:
 Yet People's Countenance shew'de what in Heart they bore.
 And now the last Ayde which to poor Rochell went,
 Was thought in Earnest; but in Jeast 'twas sent.¹⁶ 75
 All this the seas cann witnes of my Crime.
 But leaving these, then come to our owne Clyme,
 And in the Countrey shewe my Deeds sett forthe,
 How that I rackt their Rents¹⁷ to twice their Worth;
 Tooke from them what I pleas'de, & to others gave it; 80
 And all must be as I myselfe must have it.
 In which I farr surpassed all before,
 And for one bad Deed here, there was a Score.
 For what with Poyson, Treason & base Treacherie,

My Deedes, like Night, would darke the very skie. 85
 Whoe was it there, except great Charles alone,
 That did not to me bend even to the Ground?
 Such was the over-topping Topp of my
 Ambicion: but at last being come thus high,
 I had a Fall: but not in Charles his Love; 90
 For that is firmly placed, & will not move;
 Untill his Eyes shall opened be, & finde
 All my fowle Deedes that I have left behinde
 Doe clearly manifest as well to him, as other,
 That with the Charmes & Magicke of my Mother,¹⁸ 95
 I have bewicht his Senses, soe that he
 Could not my Treason nor Offences see,
 That I committed in Country, Court & State:
 Nor in Religion how I sett Debate.¹⁹
 And how of Justice I have sold the Place 100
 Unto the Badd, whoe soe altered the Case,
 As pleased me, or best serv'de for my Ends:
 Nor how I have enrich'de my base-born Friends.
 In Cittie eke²⁰ their Cryes breakes ope the Gates,
 And for their Fortunes doe declare their Hates, 105
 To me, for that I fetcht, & never meant to pay:
 Which now hath brought their States unto Decay.
 And since, dear Lambe, by the I had this Arte,
 To cozen King and Kingdome, Its fitt I smarte.
 And since we have liv'de in Pleasure both together, 110
 God's just in all, which will not now let us sever.
 England farewell! thy Curse I ame sure I have;
 And in Abundance they will fill my Grave.
 What care I for them! here then ends my Labour,
 That as liv'de, soe I dyed in Charles his Favour. 115

- ¹ *Murther*: the allusion is to Buckingham's alleged poisonings, specified in detail later in the poem.
- ² *then didst thou...my sins*: Lambe was alleged to have provided magical assistance to facilitate Buckingham's murders and sexual conquests.
- ³ *Lande of Canaan*: the promised land; in this case, heaven.
- ⁴ *Pleasures*: this may be meant to refer generally to the pleasures Buckingham enjoyed as favourite; however, there may also be a specific allusion to the sexual pleasures that Buckingham was alleged to secure using Lambe's love potions.
- ⁵ *Plutoe*: ruler of the classical underworld.
- ⁶ *Thy Titles*: Buckingham held several aristocratic titles in addition to his dukedom.
- ⁷ *stout*: brave, manly.
- ⁸ *Because thou leftst me...Grace*: Buckingham's complaint, that Felton's knife left him no time to repent his sins, was echoed by a number of contemporary observers.
- ⁹ *each Letter...for their Invencions*: apparent allusion to the composition of acrostic libels (see, e.g., "Great potent Duke, whom fortune rais'd soe high").
- ¹⁰ *Argiers Voyage...to our Kingdom*: reference to the unsuccessful 1620-21 naval expedition led by Sir Robert Mansell (here, somewhat misleadingly, referred to as "Mansfeild") against the Muslim pirates ("Turks") based in Algiers.
- ¹¹ *Next / That to Cales...basely die*: reference to the failed 1625 naval expedition to Cadiz led by Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon. The specific incident alluded to concerned one of the English commanders, Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex, who was forced to halt an assault on Spanish ships because of the failure of the main fleet to lend him timely support.
- ¹² *By me, they say...the Ayde*: allusion to the failure of the English to prevent the loss of the Palatinate—the ancestral lands of James I's son-in-law Frederick V, Elector Palatine—to Catholic forces in 1620-21, and to the English Crown's subsequent inability to achieve their restoration. The reference to a failure to grant "fresh Supply" may point to the tragically underfunded English expeditionary force under the command of Ernst von Mansfelt, sent to liberate the Palatinate in 1624-25, but decimated by hunger and disease before it could reach German territory.

¹³ *Brave Oxford...Southampton's*: Henry de Vere, Earl of Oxford, assumed command of a regiment of Palatine troops in the United Provinces in May 1624, but died in June 1625 at The Hague. Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, died at Bergen-op-Zoom in November 1624, after leading a group of English volunteers to fight for the Dutch against the Spanish. George Eglisam's 1626 pamphlet, *The Forerunner of Revenge*, alleged that Buckingham had poisoned Southampton, while several libels levelled the charge that he had poisoned Oxford.

¹⁴ *Neptune's*: Neptune was the god of the sea.

¹⁵ *A Navie was prepar'de... may claime*: reference to Buckingham's 1627 expedition to the Ile de Ré, and to the heavy casualties suffered by the English during the siege of, failed assault upon and disastrous retreat from the island citadel of St. Martin (see Section O).

¹⁶ *Ayde which to poor Rochell...sent*: reference to the abortive late April 1628 mission to relieve the Huguenots of La Rochelle. The expedition was commanded by Buckingham's brother-in-law, William Feilding, Earl of Denbigh.

¹⁷ *rackt their Rents*: raised rents excessively.

¹⁸ *Charmes & Magicke of my Mother*: the Duke's mother, Mary Compton, Countess of Buckingham, was a known Catholic and was frequently alleged to be a witch.

¹⁹ *in Religion how I sett Debate*: perhaps a specific allusion to the 1628 parliamentary Remonstrance's charge that Buckingham was responsible for the rise of anti-Calvinist Arminianism in the Church of England.

²⁰ *In Cittie eke*: in the City of London also.
