

Pii3 Felton, awake, & cheare thyselfe from sorrow

Notes. Like a number of contemporary writers, this poet imaginatively reconstructs Felton's motives for murdering Buckingham. Felton himself wrote a number of statements justifying and explaining his actions; the most widely circulated were two arguments that he had transcribed and sewn into his hatband before killing the Duke. Copies of the two statements follow this poem in the manuscript. Holstun (179) briefly explores the poem's "bold workmanship" and its "casuistically strained combination of condemnation and forgiveness".

"1628 Felton's dreame Aug. 22th being the night before the murder"

Felton, awake, & cheare thyselfe from sorrow,
Thy hand must strike the Duke, & that to morrow;
The heavens have spoke it, & soe 'tis decreed,
Their praiers are heard, thou only mak'st him bleed.

Feare not thy strength, thou only art sett on

5

By him, whose Justice doth attend thy doome.

Lambe gott the start,¹ & yett how e're it fell,

He² spurres for kingdomes, though it be to hell.

Thou must o'rethrow his plott, and tydings bring,

He mist his marke, to aime at Irelands Kinge.³

10

The deed is done, the countries good is Felton,⁴

Both heard, & seene, & trusted, now is smelt on.

Go forward in the action, doe not stand,

'Twere better two suffer, than all the land.

Next favourite is Holland, in whose place,

15

Rich meritts honour farre above his grace.

If Rich were next, this truely dare I say,

Riches would crowne the land that day.⁵

Pray heavens graunt pardon, & thy selfe assure,

The countries service striveth to procure

20

The day ne'er ending with praiers joyn'd with thine,

T'obtaine forgivenessse for the bloody crime.

Source. Bodleian MS Tanner 465, fol. 102r

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¹ *Lambe gott the start*: Buckingham's alleged associate, John Lambe, convicted witch and rapist, and notorious astrologer-physician, was murdered by a London mob in June 1628.

² *He*: i.e. Buckingham.

³ *to aime at Irelands Kinge*: Walter Yonge's newsdiary entries in the days following Buckingham's assassination recorded reports that the Duke had been planning to sail with an army to become Viceroy of Ireland (BL Add. MS 35331, fol. 24v).

⁴ *Felton*: the poet puns here on "Felton" and "felt on".

⁵ *Next favourite is Holland...that day*: these somewhat knotty lines depend on a pun on the family name of Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, thought by some observers to be Buckingham's natural successor as court favourite. The lines can be read to imply that a different "Rich"—by which the poet probably meant Holland's elder brother Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, a leading Puritan and oppositional peer—was better suited for this kind of power.
