

KENILWORTH

A GREAT TRAGEDY

By

RICHARD HILLS

Based on Sir Walter Scott's novel of the same name

EXTRACT

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CHARACTERS

GILES GOSLING	Innkeeper at the Black Bear Inn
MICHAEL LAMBOURE	A traveller
EDMUND TRESSILIAN	A young Cornish gallant
JANET FOSTER	Servant to Amy Leicester
ANTHONY FOSTER	Old man in charge of Cumnor Place
AMY ROBSART	Countess of Leicester
RICHARD VARNEY	Servant to Earl of Leicester
DUDLEY LEICESTER	Earl of Leicester, favourite of Queen Elizabeth
WAYLAND SMITH	Blacksmith, herbalist and juggler
NICHOLAS BLOUNT	Master of horse to Earl of Sussex
WALTER RALEIGH	A young gallant
QUEEN ELIZABETH 1st	Queen of England
TWO LADIES-IN-WAITING	One is the Duchess of Rutland
TWO GUARDS	The Queen's Royal Guards
EARL OF SUSSEX	Disapproves of Earl of Leicester
ALASCO MASTERS	Old astrologer and the Queen's physician
LAWRENCE STAPLE	Keeper of the prison at Kenilworth Castle

Some small parts can be doubled up.

LIST OF SCENES

- ACT 1**
- Scene 1** Bar of Black Bear Inn, Cumnor, afternoon in 1560
 - Scene 2** On way to Cumnor Place, the next morning
 - Scene 3** Parlour at Cumnor Place, that morning
 - Scene 4** Parlour at Cumnor Place, the next morning
 - Scene 5** Edmund Tresslian's bedroom, Black Bear Inn, at midnight
 - Scene 6** Blacksmith's forge in country, on way to London, week later
- ACT 2**
- Scene 1** Outside Palace of Greenwich, London, two days later
 - Scene 2** Outside Palace of Greenwich, London, next morning
 - Scene 3** Another part of Palace of Greenwich, London, one hour later
 - Scene 4** Bar, the Black Bear Inn, Cumnor, two days later
 - Scene 5** Small room in Cumnor Place, one hour later
 - Scene 6** Room in Earl of Leicester's quarters, London, next day
 - Scene 7** Small room in Cumnor Place, next morning
- ACT 3**
- Scene 1** Turret room Mervyn's Tower, Kenilworth Castle, two days later
 - Scene 2** Great Hall at Kenilworth Castle, next morning
 - Scene 3** Part of gardens, Kenilworth Castle, next morning
 - Scene 4** Part of gardens, Kenilworth Castle, half an hour later
 - Scene 5** Room in Mervyn's Tower, Kenilworth Castle, half hour later
 - Scene 6** Room in Earl of Leicester's quarters, hour later
 - Scene 7** Parlour at Cumnor Place, three days later

ACT 1 Scene 1

Bar of the Black Boar Inn, Cumnor, Oxfordshire. 1560

(Scenes consist of simple curtain drapes and different spot lighting areas. The scene opens in the Black Bear Inn in the village of Cumnor, Oxfordshire, in the eighteenth year of Queen Elizabeth. The year is 1560.)

There is a bar CS, a table and two chairs DL and a table and two chairs DR. A man is sitting at the table DL. He is EDMOND TRESSILIAN, age about twenty five, above middle size, dressed with plainness yet bearing air of ease that almost amounts to dignity.

GILES GOSLING, the innkeeper, a man of goodly person, somewhat round belly and ready wit, ushers a guest into the bar UL. The stranger, MICHAEL LAMBOURNE, dressed in a riding cloak, which when open, displays a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, belted with a buff girdle, which contains a broadsword and a pair of pistols.)

GOSLING: Come this way, sir. You ride well provided.

LAMBOURNE: Yes, mine host. I have found the use of them in dangerous times.

GOSLING: Please take a seat. *(He shows him to a table DR.)*

LAMBOURNE: Thank you. *(He sits, putting his hat on the table.)*

GOSLING: You are from the Low Countries?

LAMBOURNE: I have been high and low, far and near. Fetch me a cup of your sack.

GOSLING: I will indeed, sir. *(He goes to the bar to fetch a tankard of sack.)*

(MICHAEL LAMBOURNE glances at the man seated on his own. GOSLING returns with the tankard of sack.)

GOSLING: Here you are, sir.

(MICHAEL LAMBOURNE pays him from a purse at his belt.)

LAMBOURNE: Fill yourself another to please me.

GOSLING: Thank you, sir. I trust your honour will like the wine?

LAMBOURNE: *(Taking a sip.)* It is neat and comfortable. To know liquor, you should drink where the vine grows.

GOSLING: If I were to travel I might be discontented with that which I can get at home. I should go on a fool's errand.

LAMBOURNE: I warrant, your entire town's folk do not drink so basely.

(GOSLING goes to the bar and pours himself a tankard of sack. MICHAEL LAMBOURNE sits drinking his. Then GOSLING returns.)

LAMBOURNE: *(Looking at GOSLING.)* You must have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries. Have you friends or kinsmen in foreign parts you would gladly have tidings of?

GOSLING: One kinsman who left us in the last year of Queen Mary. He is better lost than found.

LAMBOURNE: What is his name?

GOSLING: Michael Lambourne, son of my sister. There is little pleaser in recollecting name or the connection.

LAMBOURNE: Michael Lambourne! No relation to Michael Lambourne, gallant cavalier who behaved bravely at the siege of Venlo that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army?

GOSLING: Is that so?

LAMBOURNE: You will have credit by your nephew, if he be the Michael Lambourne I knew and loved as much as myself. Can you tell no mark I could judge whether they are the same?

GOSLING: None unless our Mike had gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver cup.

LAMBOURNE: *(Getting up.)* You lie like a knave, uncle! *(He slips aside his ruff and turns down the sleeve of his doublet.)* My shoulder is as unscarred as your own.

GOSLING: *(Shaking LAMBOURNE'S hand.)* Is it you? I judged so since you entered. I know no other would have taken such interest in you.

LAMBOURNE: Truce with your jests. This may be the slaying of the Cumnor fatted calfe. I carry with me what will make me welcome. *(He takes out a purse of gold.)*

GOSLING: Kinsman Michael! Put away your purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging. How long have you been away?

LAMBOURNE: Quite some time.

GOSLING: Eighteen years. I trust you are somewhat amended? I hope that purse was well come by as well filled?

LAMBOURNE: For gold I have been where it grew, in the new world Eldorado, where children play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country wenches thread rubies for necklaces.

GOSLING: You have brought back one traveller's gift you least need travel for.

LAMBOURNE: What was that?

GOSLING: There was no crediting a word from your mouth.

LAMBOURNE: "Voto a dios"! *(He gets up and grabs his hat from the table.)* All is fair among friends! I carry a sword and dagger, and can use them upon occasion. I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honour ever since I served the Spaniard. I would not have you provoke me.

GOSLING: What would you do?

LAMBOURNE: *(Looking at him.)* Slit your throat. *(TRESSILIAN looks at him.)*

GOSLING: Come! I will have no swagger here. You are the innkeeper's guest, and spare the honour of his family. I protest at your silly broils. *(He points to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)* Yonder is my silent guest who has been my inmate for two days, never spoken a word, save to ask for food and reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. A jewel of a guest, he sits by himself. *(To EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)* You, sir, deserve a drink on the house. *(He crosses to the bar and draws a tankard of sack which he brings to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)*

(MICHAEL LAMBOURNE re-sits at table DR. GOSLING returns with tankard.)

GOSLING: If troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, lay them in a glorious red sea of claret, noble guest?

TRESSILIAN: You say well my worthy host. *(Taking the tankard he gets up.)* They that are moody should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy. I will drink a round with your guest with all my heart. *(He raises his glass.)* Your good health, gentlemen!

(LAMBOURNE raises his glass.)

LAMBOURNE: Your good health, sir.

GOSLING: What name shall I present to Lambourne?

TRESSILIAN: You may call me Edmund Tressilian. *(He sits.)*

GOSLING: A worthy name, of Cornish lineage?

LAMBOURNE: *(To GOSLING.)* What has become of Tony Foster? They called him Tony Fire-The-Fagot because he brought a light to kindle the pile around Latimer and Ridley, when wind blew out Jack Thong's torch. No man would give him light for love or money. *(He sits.)*

GOSLING: He lives and thrives. Do not call him Tony-Fire-The-Fagot., if you would not brook the stab.

LAMBOURNE: Has he grown ashamed? He was wont to boast of it.

GOSLING: That was in Mary's time, when his father was steward to the Abbot of Abingdon. Tony is married and a good protestant. Holds his head high, and scorns his old companions.

LAMBOURNE: Then he has prospered?

GOSLING: You remember Cumnor Place, the old mansion-house? It was the old Abbot's residence. Tony Foster lives there by some grant from a great courtier. He dwells as if he were a belted knight.

TRESSILIAN: There is a fair lady in the case. Tony will not let the light of day look on her.

LAMBOURNE: Did you say Foster was married?

GOSLING: Married to a bitter puritan. A cat and dog life she gave him. She is dead and leaves him a slip of a daughter. It is thought he means to marry this stranger that men keep so coil about.

TRESSILIAN: Why do they keep coil about her?

GOSLING: Men say she is beautiful as an angel. No one knows whence she comes and wish to know why she is kept closely mewed up. I have never seen her.

TRESSILIAN: I saw her the day I passed the east window. I heard the lattice open and there stood a woman as fair as ever crossed my eyes.

LAMBOURNE: I will bet you a piece of Hollands linen against these five angels, that I go up to the Hall tomorrow, and force Tony Foster to introduce me to this fair lady.

TRESSILIAN: I will accept your wager.

LAMBOURNE: You?

TRESSILIAN: You have the impudence of the devil. I shall gain on you this bout. The landlord shall hold the stakes. I will put down gold until I send for the linen.

GOSLING: I will not hold stakes on such a matter. Drink your wine and leave such ventures alone.

TRESSILIAN: I will gladly pay your half of the risk to accompany you. I am a traveller who seeks for strange adventures.

LAMBOURNE: If it pleases you to see a trout tickled. *(He raises his glass.)* To the success of my enterprise! To tomorrow, my friends!
(They all raise their tankards.)

ALL: To tomorrow! *(And as they drink, the curtains close on end of scene.)*

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

On the way to Cumnor Place

(A front of tabs scene the next morning, on the way to Cumnor Place. MICHAEL LAMBOURNE and EDMUND TRESSILIAN enter DR.)

LAMBOURNE: You still choose to come with me?

TRESSILIAN: I must uphold my share of the wager. Who is this Foster? Why such mystery of his inmate?

LAMBOURNE: (*Stopping CS.*) I can add little. He was one of Queen Mary's Papists, now one of Queen Elizabeth's Protestants A hanger on at Abbot of Abington. He lives as master of the manor house, was poor and now is rich.

TRESSILIAN: How come?

LAMBOURNE: Gosling spoke of apartment's fine enough to serve the Queen. Some men think he sold himself to the devil for treasure. Some say he cheated the Abbot out of church plate. Rich he is, and God and his conscience only know how he came by it. He has sulky ways and some strange secret. I think he will quarrel if I thrust myself on him.

TRESSILIAN: You are still going to visit him?

LAMBOURNE: I am.

TRESSILIAN: Then I mean to follow.

LAMBOURNE: The worst of Tony was he loved to take pleasure by himself.

TRESSILIAN: Why are you desirous to renew acquaintance with him?

LAMBOURNE: Why are you desirous to accompany me?

TRESSILIAN: I told my motive when I took your wager, simple curiosity.

LAMBOURNE: You a gentleman, yet you associate with a scant-of-grace man as me, to visit a man whom you are a stranger, out of curiosity?

TRESSILIAN: If your suspicions were just, you have shown no confidence in me to invite mine.

LAMBOURNE: My motives lie above water. (*Taking out his purse.*) While this gold lasts, I will buy pleasure. When it has gone I must have more. (*He puts his purse back on his belt.*) This morning I know something more of Toney's affairs. Without taking a step inside this manor, our visit will not be without risk.

TRESSILIAN: We must make the best we can it.

LAMBOURNE: Here we are best leave me to do the talking.

(The two exit DL on end of scene.)

ACT ONE SCENE THREE

The Parlour at Cumnor Place

(The scene opens in blackout. The spotlights come up to reveal a fireplace UC, a door BR a window with sunlight shining through it R and a door L. The only furniture is a table and three chairs UC. Spotlighting is used to light certain areas of the stage.)

JANET, the young daughter of ANTONY FOSTER enters L and shows in MICHAEL LAMBOURNE and EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)

JANET: What is the reason of your visit?

LAMBOURNE: To speak with Master Foster on pressing business of the state.

JANET: I should not let anyone in. Please wait here. (*She exits UR.*)

TRESSILIAN: You will find that difficult to make good.

LAMBOURNE: Let us make his acquaintance first. All will go well enough.

TRESSILIAN: What business will you say we have?

LAMBOURNE: Leave that to me.

(After a moment the door UR opens and ANTHONY FOSTER enters. The ugliness of the man is considerably more than they had expected. He is of middle stature, strongly built, clumsily as to border on deformity. His attire is a doublet of russet leather, girded with a buff belt, in which is stuck on the right a long knife and on the other a cutlass. He fixes them with a penetrating glance.)

FOSTER: Tell me, the reason of your visit. *(He looks at Edmund Tressilian to answer.)*

LAMBOURNE: *(Coming forward.)* My dear friend, Tony Foster! Have you forgotten Michael Lambourne?

FOSTER: *(Stepping forward.)* What may you expect from this visit here?

LAMBOURNE: I expected a better welcome.

FOSTER: You are a gambler and live by it. Tell me the odds that I do not throw you out.

LAMBOURNE: Twenty to one you do not.

FOSTER: Why not?

LAMBOURNE: Because you dare not lay a finger on me. I am younger and stronger. I have a double portion of fighting devil in me.

(ANTHONY FOSTER looks at him and then turns away to the window .After a moment he turns back.)

FOSTER: Be not wroth with me. I wondered if you had parted with your old frankness. *(Pointing to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)* Who is this gallant?

LAMBOURNE: Master Tressilian, a gentleman of many qualities. He traffics not in my line of business.

FOSTER: I do not usually allow strangers to enter this house.

LAMBOURNE: Surely I am no stranger?

FOSTER: An old acquaintance from the past. Your companion will have to wait in another chamber. What I have to say is for your ear only. Come this way, sir. *(He leads EDMUND TRESSILIAN to the door L.)* You are to abide in another apartment without leaving it. There are others in this house who would be alarmed at the sight of a stranger.

(He leads the way out and EDMUND TRESSILIAN follows. MICHAEL LAMBOURNE crosses to look out the window. After a moment ANTHONY FOSTER returns.)

FOSTER: You should not have brought him here. What business have you with me? What hopes bring you here?

LAMBOURNE: The hope of bettering myself. When the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one. You have a deep sagacity. I am bolder, quicker and more ready in action. We drive the world before us. Shall we hunt in couples? I have come to be busy, either with you or against you.

FOSTER: I will rather be your friend than enemy. I prefer you to the service of a patron, with enough means to make us both a hundred and more.

LAMBOURNE: What is the name of this nobleman?

(There is a scream from the next room.)

FOSTER: By the Holy Cross-of-Abingdon! I am a ruined man! Come with me! We must find that other man! *(They hurry out through the door L.)*

(AMY ROBSART enters through the door BR, followed by EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)

AMY: How did you get in here?

TRESSILIAN: I came with another man.

AMY: What do you want?

TRESSILIAN: Amy! I will not leave the pursuit of you, the object of my purest devoted affection. I will save you from your betrayer. I will restore you to your parent. Amy, fear me not.

(AMY ROBSART is the young eighteen-year-old wife of the EARL OF LEICESTER. She puts her hand to her face as she goes to the window. Then she removes her hands and turns to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)

AMY: Why should I fear you? You have intruded into my dwelling uninvited, sir?

TRESSILIAN: Your dwelling, Amy, is a prison your dwelling?

AMY: It is now my home.

TRESSILIAN: Guarded by one of the most sordid of men, not a greater wretch than his employer!

AMY: This house is mine while I choose to live here. It is my pleasure to live in seclusion.

TRESSILIAN: Your father, Sir Hugh Robsart, has dispatched me in quest of you, with authority, which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body, which stunned the agony of his mind. *(He gives her the letter.)*

AMY: The pain? Is my father ill?

TRESSILIAN: So ill, your haste may not restore his health. All shall instantly be prepared for your departure.

AMY: Tressilian, I dare not leave this place. Go to my father; tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours. Tell him I am well, happy and am now greater than I dare name. *(Going to him.)* I have injured you, but I have power to heal your wounds. I robbed you of a childish heart, not worthy of you. I can repay the loss with honour and advancements.

TRESSILIAN: *(Taking her hand.)* You say this to me? You offer me pageants of idle ambition, for the peace of mind you have robbed me of?

AMY: I am sorry if I have done you wrong.

TRESSILIAN: You cannot disguise that you are a prisoner. Otherwise your once kind heart would already be at your father's bedside.

AMY: I will come when I have discharged my other binding duties. I will come when I obtain permission.

TRESSILIAN: Permission from whom, the villain under disguise of friendship?

AMY: He is no villain.

TRESSILIAN: Who stole you from your father's roof?

AMY: Do him no slander. He wears a sword as sharp as yours.

TRESSILIAN: And calls himself the Earl of Leicester's servant?

AMY: Leave me, do my errand to my father.

TRESSILIAN: Amy, this rank of which you boast, do you share it with him?

AMY: In what way?

TRESSILIAN: Does he control your husband's right to control your emotions?

AMY: Stop your tongue! *(She turns away to the window.)* No question that derogates from my honour, do I deign an answer.

TRESSILIAN: You have said enough. I will save you from the slavery of sin and sorrow. In the name of your excellent father, I command you to follow me! *(He advances on her.)*

AMY: *(Shrinking back.)* No! No!

(ANTHONY FOSTER and MICHAEL LAMBOURNE enter BR and come between them.)

FOSTER: What have we here? *(Turning to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)* No wonder we couldn't find you. *(He turns to AMY ROBSART.)* Madam, what brings you out of bounds? Retire! There is life and death in this matter.

(FOSTER turns to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)

FOSTER: You, whoever you may be, leave this house. Draw Mike, and rid us of this knave!

LAMBOURNE: Not I! He came here in my company and is safe from me. *(He turns to EDMUND TRESSILIAN.)* My Cornish comrade, make yourself scarce! Depart, vanish!

TRESSILIAN: Away base groom! *(He pushes MICHAEL LAMBOURNE away and then bows to AMY ROBSART.)* Madam, fare you well.

FOSTER: *(Turning to AMY ROBSART.)* Go to your chamber, my lady. *(To MICHAEL LAMBOURNE.)* Follow this meddling coxcomb. Draw your sword and after him.

LAMBOURNE: I'll see him out. *(He follows EDMUND TRESSILIAN L.)*

FOSTER: You, my lady, come with me. *(He ushers her out BR.)*

(As EDMUND TRESSILIAN and MICHAEL LAMBOURNE cross to door L, so they find RICHARD VARNEY standing in the doorway.)

TRESSILIAN: Varyney!

VARNEY: Tressilian! What brings you here?

TRESSILIAN: No, Varney! What brings you here? Have you come to triumph over the innocence you have destroyed?

VARNEY: I have destroyed no one.

TRESSILIAN: Draw, dog, and defend yourself! *(He draws his sword.)*

VARNEY: *(His hand on the hilt of his sword.)* You are mad, Tressilian! Appearances are against me, Mistress Amy Robsart has no injury from me. I am loath to hurt you in this cause. You know I can fight.

TRESSILIAN: I have heard you say so. I would have some evidence of your word.

VARNEY: That shall not be lacking, if blade and hilt are true to me. *(He draws his sword with his right hand and throws his cloak around his left hand.)* Have at you, Tressilian!

(RICHARD VARNEY attacks EDMUND TRESSILIAN with vigour. EDMUND TRESSILIAN determined on revenge is well adapted to the use of the rapier. RICHARD VARNEY receives one of EDMUND TRESSILIAN'S passes in his cloak, and before his adversary can extricate his rapier, closes with him. EDMUND TRESSILIAN, on guard, unsheathes his poniard, parried with the blade, and gives RICHARD VARNEY a fall so sudden and violent that his sword flies from his hand, and before he can recover his feet, EDMUND TRESSILIAN'S sword was pointing at his throat.)

LAMBOURNE: *(Who has been watching.)* Come, comrade! Here is enough! *(He grasps EDMUND TRESSILIAN'S arm.)*

TRESSILIAN: Off abject! *(He strikes himself free from MICHAEL LAMBOURNE.)*

LAMBOURNE: Abject? That shall be answered with cold steel whenever a bowl of sack has washed out memory of the morning's draught we had together. In the meantime, we are two to one. Be gone!

(RICHARD VARNEY picks up his sword. EDMUND TRESSILIAN takes his purse from his belt and takes out two gold nobles, which he flings to MICHAEL LAMBOURNE.)

TRESSILIAN: There caitiff! You shall not say you have been my guide un-hired. *(He turns to RICHARD VARNEY.)* Varney! We shall meet where there are none to come between us. *(He exits L and we hear an outer door sham shut.)*

VARNEY: *(Sheathing his sword.)* Are you a comrade of Fosters?

LAMBOURNE: Sworn friends and old comrades.

VARNEY: Follow yon fellow and see where he takes earth. Bring me word to the mansion-house here. Cautious and silent, knave, if you value your throat.

LAMBOURNE: Enough said.

VARNEY: Be gone! *(There is the sound of a whistle.)* It is the Lord's signal. Make haste! The Earl of Leicester returns!

(MICHAEL LAMBOURNE exits L. ANTHONY FOSTER enters BR, followed by AMY ROBSART.)

FOSTER: What do I say about the disorder which has happened in this household?

VARNEY: Better not mention it.

AMY: Peace, sir. Your master arrives. Open the door. Did you hear the whistle on his arrival?

(ANTHONY FOSTER bows to her and exits L. AMY sees RICHARD VARNEY.)

AMY: Pooh! It is Richard Varney.

VARNEY: Aye, madam! *(He bows to her.)* Even the first grey cloud should be acceptable, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun.

AMY: How comes my lord today?

VARNEY: With happiness at the thought of seeing you, my lady.

AMY: *(Turning to the door BR.)* Janet! Come to my retiring room instantly. *(Turning to RICHARD VARNEY.)* Has my Lord sent any further commendations to me?

VARNEY: This letter, honoured madam, sent with a token to the Queen of his affections. *(He takes a small parcel from his bosom which is wrapped in scarlet silk. He gives it to AMY ROBSART.)*

(JANET enters BR.)

AMY: *(Taking the parcel to the window.)* Janet, please open the package.

AMY ROBSART reads the letter while JANET opens the parcel and gives it back to her.)

JANET: Surely, lady, the daughters of tyre wore no fairer jewels than these.

AMY: Each word in his dear letter is worth the whole string of pearls. *(She turns to RICHARD VARNEY.)* My lord bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is law. I bid to you a collation in my bower this afternoon, also Master Foster. Give orders that preparations be made for my lord's reception tonight. *(She exits BR, followed by JANET.)*

FOSTER: She takes state on her already. She will soon be beyond reach. She holds me already in slight regard.

VARNEY: Your own fault. You know no mode of control, save brute force. How came Tressilian here?

FOSTER: I never heard of the name.

VARNEY: Villain! The Cornish fool, whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy. Luckily I doubt if he knows anything of my Lord. He thinks he has only to deal with me.

FOSTER: He came with Michael Lambourne.

VARNEY: Do you invite every stroller to see what you should keep secret?

FOSTER: You charged me to seek out a fellow who had a good sword.

VARNEY: Did he bring Tressilian with him?

FOSTER: They came together. Tressilian obtained a few moments with our pretty moppet, while I was talking to Lambourne.

VARNEY: Villian! We are lost men. Get from your daughter what passed between them.

FOSTER: My daughter shall not enter our purpose. She said he called upon the sickness of her father.

VARNEY: That is a hint worth catching. Tressilian must be looked after. Your ruffian has gone to dog him.

FOSTER: I have a poor lease of this mansion under you.

VARNEY: If you do great and secret service, the leasehold might come to you. The Earl of Leicester must have lawyers, physicians, and ruffian swordsmen who would fight the devil. He must have godly, innocent puritanical souls like you.

FOSTER: I promise you Dame Amy sits yonder, proud and gay as if she were the Queen of Sheba.

VARNEY: We must found our fortunes on her good liking.

FOSTER: Supposing she sails away to court in her Lord's dignity and authority?

VARNEY: Who took her, destined to be the bride Tressilian? Who held out to her the brightest fortune in England, I on behalf of the Earl of Leicester?

FOSTER: She would rather shine as a Countess.

(Sound of knocking on front door.)

VARNEY: Who knocks on the front door? My Lord himself would enter.

FOSTER: It will be Michael Lambourne.

VARNEY: Admit him.

(ANTHONY FOSTER exits door L. RICHARD VARNEY paces the room and then stops.)

VARNEY: Amy loves me not. I wish I loved her not. Idiot I was to move her on my own behalf, when wisdom bade me be a broker to my Lord. I cannot look at her without fear, hate and fondness. *(He exits L.)*

(After a moment AMY ROBSART enters BR, followed by JANET.)

AMY: Janet, I must see your father before my Lord enters, also, Master Varney, whom I could tell things that would loose him favour.

JANET: Do not do so, my lady. Leave him to God who will punish the wicked.

AMY: I ought to hold sympathy with your kind heart. My father lays sick and sorrowful for my worthless sake. Call your father and Varney. *(She crosses to look out of window.)*

(JANET exits door L and returns with RICHARD VARNEY and ANTHONY FOSTER.)

AMY: *(Advancing, holding out her hand.)* Master Varney, this morning you brought me such welcome tidings. I offer you my hand in recognition.

VARNEY: I am unworthy to touch it, save as a subject honours a Prince. *(He kneels and touches her fingers with his lips, and then gets up.)* Allow me to take you into dinner this evening.

AMY: My Lord himself will conduct me.

VARNEY: In doing the commands of my Lord I hope I have not incurred your displeasure?

AMY: No, sir. Where is my husband?

VARNEY: He will be with you in a moment.

AMY: I have received today a pleasant surprise, Master Foster.

FOSTER: I leave you with Master Varney. He has something to say from your noble Lord.

AMY: Will your daughter remain here out of earshot?

FOSTER: As you wish. *(He bows and exits door L.)*

AMY: I hope my husband will not be long. *(She turns away to window.)*

VARNEY: Foster was mistaken in my purpose. I was not from your husband that I am led to speak.

AMY: Be brief, I expect his hasty approach.

VARNEY: You have this day seen Tressilian.

AMY: What of it?

VARNEY: Nothing that concerns me. Your husband will hear it with equal equanimity.

AMY: To me Tressilian's visit was embarrassing and painful. He brought me news of my father's illness.

VARNEY: It must have been sudden. The messenger I sent found the good Knight on the hunting field.

AMY: Why should I not do justice to Tressilian's worth, before my husband's friend?

VARNEY: Will you this night tell my noble Lord, Tressilian has discovered your place of residence?

AMY: It will be the first thing that I tell him.

VARNEY: He who possesses the treasure, and values it, is often anxious to secure it from others.

AMY: Would you believe my noble Lord is jealous? I know the cure. To speak the truth at all times.

VARNEY: I have no reason to grieve for the gentleman. You know my Lord better than I.

AMY: I will tell the whole matter to my Lord. Let us drop the theme. *(Sound of door opening and closing.)* Hark! I hear my husband! He comes! *(She jumps in ecstasy.)*

VARNEY: I trust what I have spoken will not be turned to my ruin?

The door L opens and a man of majestic middle age, muffled in folds of long dark riding cloak, enters. It is the EARL OF LEICESTER. AMY throws herself into his arms.)

AMY: At last you have come!

(RICHARD VARNEY exits BR. JANET is about to exit but AMY signals for her to remain. The EARL returns to his lady's caress with affectionate ardour, and tries to resist when she strives to take his cloak from him.)

AMY: Nay! I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great Earl men call you, not like a private cavalier.

LEICESTER: You are like the rest of the world. The jewels are more to them than the man they adorn. Many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard.

(She drops his cloak to the floor, showing him dressed in a Princely costume.)

AMY: Do not think I can love you better in this glorious garb than when I gave my heart to you who wore a russet brown cloak in the woods of Devon.

LEICESTER: You too have donned a dress that becomes your rank, though it cannot improve your beauty.

AMY: I have a wish to make.

LEICESTER: What is that?

AMY: I long to sit in one of your principal halls.

LEICESTER: Are these apartments not decorated with sufficient splendour?

AMY: Nay lord, you mock me. Shall not your wife one day be surrounded with honour?

LEICESTER: Yes, my love, one day this shall surely happen. You cannot wish for that more than I

AMY: Why can it not now take place?

LEICESTER: *(Crossing and looking out of window.)* Amy, I stand not secure enough. To declare my marriage would be my own ruin. *(He turns to her.)* I will do justice to you and myself. Do not poison the present by desiring that which cannot be at present.

AMY: Foster discharges his tasks with fidelity. Janet is the kindest companion of my solitude.

LEICESTER: She must not pass unrewarded. Take these for my lady's sake. *(Turning to JANET, he gives her five gold pieces from his purse.)*

JANET: I would not accept this gold, but that it will find a blessing to us all.

LEICESTER: Please yourself, Janet. I shall be satisfied.

AMY: I have a boon to beg of you and a secret to tell you.

LEICESTER: Leave both for tomorrow, my love. A cup of wine will not be unacceptable.

(He takes her hand and leads her out BR, followed by JANET, as the lights fade to blackout on end of scene.)