

Take the Chance of Anger:
A Study in Shifts

Characters

Harry – costermonger in London

Martha – Harry’s wife

Oliver – their son (about 17 years old)

Eliza – their daughter (about 15 years old)

Clarence – Nobleman in London; member of House of Commons

Susan – Clarence’s wife

John Milton, Hawker-woman, Sir Francis Bacon (*The Advancement of Learning*, 1605), Galileo Galilei (Inquisition, 1633), Richard Brome (*The Antipodes*, 1638), Oliver Cromwell (d. 1658), Thomas Hobbes (*The Leviathan*, 1651), Robert Boyle (*The Spring and Weight of the Air*, second edition, 1662)

Hawker-woman in and out of the play; Milton and the two families constantly onstage.

Stage is divided into 4 sections: on stage right, Harry and Martha’s room, out of which the entire family lives; stage left, the sitting room/library of Clarence and Susan’s house. Centerstage/downstage, nondescript streets of London. Upstage, slightly raised, and in progressively greater and greater darkness, is Milton. At first, he moves amongst the two sides of the action; gradually, he recedes, and by the end stands immobilized in his section upstage. Action is constant in both houses throughout the play, even if the dialogue received by the audience is not.

<http://lewis.up.edu/efl/asarnow/eliz4.htm> (Bacon)

http://www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/John_Milton/milton_contents.htm (Milton, *Paradise Regained*)

<http://www.swan.ac.uk/poli/texts/hobbes/leva.htm> (Hobbes)

<http://www.woodrow.org/teachers/chemistry/institutes/1992/Boyle.html> (Boyle)

http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery;jsessionid=6lfzdg7lq7?method=4&dsid=2222&dekey=Coldstream+Guards&gwp=8&curtab=2222_1&sbid=lc01a (Coldstream Guards)

Brome’s *The Antipodes* (1638)

Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), various poems

Richard Dunn’s *The Age of Religious Wars: 1559-1689* (1970)

Preface to Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1973)

Argument (construction and intent of the play)

The basis for the entire play is the various shifts that took place across the mid-17th century in England, and how they affected and changed the lives of two very different segments of the English population. Overall, the play focuses on how language can express the positions of various people in society, and how that changed from prewar to postwar.

In aid of these shifts, I inserted the various characters of the 17th century whose contributions to society helped produce the England of the Restoration period, while loosely abiding the chronological path they took.

The first shift comes from Bacon, whose scientific method announced a new way of articulating the phenomena of the world. The nobility would have been affected by his ideas, and either rejected them as vulgar (the induction – deduction debate), or made use of them. I chose the more interesting latter route: Clarence attempts to make observations on his world, but they have no structure or basis to them, and come out like the Chinese Encyclopaedia referred to in Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Bacon did not write to or for the lower classes, nor would they have much access or interest in his ideas, so he ignores Harry's family.

The next shift comes from Galileo. Galileo serves to focus the course of science at a time when science was as grounded as someone trying to take in all the stars in the sky at once. He also introduces instrumentation into the play: the telescope is an *essential* piece of his scientific understanding. Once again, as a court scientist, his immediate reach remains with the nobility. Nevertheless, Galileo's indirect reach extended a lot further. The concept of heliocentrism entered popular culture, and the

telescope was sold as a toy in the streets (Brecht's *Galileo*). The hawker's ballad is a good example of how Galileo's ideas would have trickled into common consciousness.

Brome is the first person I used for linguistic effects, though he has more of an impact than that. He uses language to explore a shaky world, where the things held important are in flux. By pointing Clarence's telescope to the ground, he destabilizes Clarence's perspective and suggests that there is much more out there to be discovered.

Cromwell provides the first, and only, important shift for Harry's family. Cromwell uses simple, direct speech as a political tool. He wins Oliver over by appealing to his religious and social sense of duty. By doing so, he breaks apart Harry's family, while providing Oliver with perhaps the only chance he will have to make something of himself on a larger scale than Harry has. Cromwell's shift belies Harry's early comment about nothing changing with the change in political power. Cromwell lies by assuming a digger's perspective, which brings into question his claim to be fighting a justified religious battle.

The next shift is Hobbes. Hobbes is a linguistically simplifying factor for Clarence and Susan: his prose prompts them to shift to prose. He also provides justification for the restoration of the dominance of the nobility that is to come with the Restoration. Men of lower class give expression to the baser motives that are common to all mankind; hierarchical power is necessary to prevent the baser motives from taking power.

Boyle's shift allows tying together of the rest of the play. Clarence becomes able to return to his categorization of his room, but with a better-defined, simpler system. For uneducated Harry, science is still a foreign concept. However, he is able to understand,

Boyle's law, at least superficially, and so like with the boys in Brecht's *Galileo*, there is hope for the future.

There are other, overarching shifts. First, Clarence and Susan's language shifts from ornate blank verse to a simpler prose. Second, the relationship between Clarence and Harry shifts from one of a self-assured dominant nobility, as in Shakespeare, to a dominant nobility that is aware of the potent strength of the lower classes. The former appears in the *Taming of the Shrew*-like word misunderstandings of the first encounter between Clarence and Harry. In the second encounter, the physical moment has shifted.

Milton is a major component of the play. He sets the stage for the comparison between classes, and tries to direct the flow of the shifts. He is aware of the forces at work on both sides of the stage. However, he sees things going awry, and is unable to steer things back to where he would like them to be. By the time he physically intervenes (with Hobbes), he has been physically removed from the world (through his blindness). Milton's lines usually have little directly to do with what is happening onstage, but they provide more of an abstract assessment of what is happening, and his relation to what is happening. In places where I could not find appropriate quotes from Milton's own writings, I gave him lines (attempting to capture as much as possible his complex style).

The Hawker-woman has two main functions. First, she is an accurate portrayal of one of the primary means by which information trickled down to the lower classes. Second, she adds musicality to the world, and a different linguistic mode than anyone else in the play.

The title, *Take the Chance of Anger*, is one of the First Servant's lines (3.7) in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. I used this title for a few reasons. First, it relates well to the

roles Harry and Oliver perform in the play, especially since, like the First Servant, they are peasants who take up arms against nobles. Also, the First Servant, along with nearly all of the lower class presence of Shakespeare's *Lear*, is removed in Tate's *Lear*.

Therefore, with this play, I am criticizing the fallacious removal of the peasants from Restoration drama, as well as highlighting the differences in literary style between early Jacobean drama and Restoration drama. Finally, it reflects my attempt to give voice to a poorly represented group in the latter 17th century.

Take the Chance of Anger, overall, follows the tradition of Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. There is a great deal that is theatrical about it, but its main thrust is in the ideas expressed through the language. There is a great deal of standing around and talking, punctuated by a few moments of physicality.

Enjoy!

Lights up. Milton alone on stage, in the upstage region.

Milton

“For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people’s praise, if always praise unmixed?
And what delight to be by such extolled,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?”
[Milton’s Paradise Regained: The Third Book]

Enter Harry, Martha, Oliver, and Eliza. They are finishing their breakfast.

Harry

Wherefore are you not ready, son? We must to our cart as soon as may be, for I hear our spot hath been plucked for use by our dastardly competitors.

Oliver

Aye, so have I heard.

Martha

Wilt thou be back ere nightfall, or is it to be another long day?

Harry

If our spot be not lost to us, we shan’t be back till we ha’e no legs to stand on.

They continue with their tasks. Milton walks down towards Harry’s family, and observes them.

Milton

A family life, a group of common birth,
Unique in little but their Christian souls
Which carry them most roughly, much alike
A heron that doth bear a fish, through fields
Of destitution having naught to find
But meager sustenance borne all the while.

He then shifts his gaze to the other side of the stage, where Clarence and Susan have entered.

And here across the way, find we a couple
Of another station, who need not tax
Themselves, when th’ other’s prime for such purpose.
Instead, they bear the fruit of modern thought;
In their lips, and in their brains is transpos’d
Sweet sustenance for body and for soul.

Pause; change of thought.

“Language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known.”

[Quote from Milton's Of Education, 1644.]

On the downstage left side of the stage, Clarence is sitting in the library, drinking beer, and reading Aristotle. Susan enters.

Susan

God-den, my dear, how fare you with your book?

Clarence

Quite well, my sweet, I read *Metaphysics*:
The rules of logic Aristotle set.
From this I'll cull as much as any man.

Bacon enters their room. He takes the book from Clarence, replacing it with a pen, and blank parchment from Clarence's desk. Meanwhile, he says:

Bacon

“For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but it if work upon itself, as the spider worketh in its web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.”

[From The Advancement of Learning, Book I, by Sir Francis Bacon (1605)]

Clarence

How mean you by this, sir?

Bacon

I mean no jest;
But you will have no impact stealing words
From one who died two thousand years ago.

Clarence

But sir, what shall I write?

Bacon

Man, just observe,
And God will guide your pen to greater things.

Bacon leaves, looks across the way to Harry and Martha, shrugs, and exits.

Clarence

“Just observe,” quoth he. Zouns, what meant he thence?
Ah! Quoth he there'pon, “God will guide your pen.”
A righteous man: so shall Grace guide me now.

He looks around the room, and starts cataloging what he sees. Modeled after the preface to Foucault's The Order of Things.

Clarence

“Just observe”... this room’s hierarchy!
Class: One: Costing more than 100 pounds,
Two: Items colored gold or bright yellow,
Three: Objects that tend to burst into flames,
Four: The furniture on which I may rest,
Five: Books of classic discourse in Latin,
Six: Pertaining to what my wife hath broke,
Seven: et cetera;
Eight: That which connotes common, lower men.

Susan

Tush: he meant not that; ponder further off!
You always think so narrowly, my dear.

Clarence

Do not push me, woman!
What God has willed for man to find, man shall;
But no faster than man’s capacity.

Susan

Alas, time may run out till that be so;
Yet thou rebukest me so I will go.

Clarence walks to the window and gazes intently at the sky. Milton walks towards stage left, but includes all in his speech that follows:

Milton

Man gazes with intent upon the Work
Of forces beyond mortal reckoning;
To comprehend the causes of our state
And educate of how the stars doth move
Is task to all who would, for their soul’s sake
Achieve redemption and lead extoll’d lives.

Scene shifts to Harry and Oliver at their cart in the street. Hawker-woman enters.

Hawker-woman

Come all you mongers and listen to me,
Tra la, tra la, tra la,
For I shall tell you of the king’s decree,
Tra la, tra la, tra lee.

Of Parliament’s Eliot who sent a call,
Tra la, tra la, tra la,

T'improve state relations for one and all,
Tra la, tra la, tra lee.

'Gainst chance of fate wherein coffers be poor,
Tra la, tra la, tra la,
King Charles will turn to Parliament no more
Tra la, tra la, tra lee.

An the rest you will have ere I go hence,
To me you must give the sum of three pence.
Aye, you, sir? *[She exits, chasing after a potential customer]*

Harry

Would I had money to waste on a broadside. Alas, it seems King Charles will nae' listen to the counsels of his nobles. Parliament now can levy no taxes; but the King shall try his best. Marry, for a man of my state, there's little difference 'twixt personal rule and Parliamentary rule; 'tis but a choosing of one overlord or two, and the choice is ne'er ours in the making. Whichever way, 'fore man I am poor; 'fore God there stays hope.

Back in Clarence's house.

Clarence returns to his desk, and picks up the pen and thinks. Night falls. Clarence still has the pen in his hand, and is wondering what to write about now. In walks Galileo, who hands him a smallish telescope, points to Clarence's eyes, then to the sky.

Galileo

Osservate!

He then pats Clarence on the shoulder, and leaves. Clarence points it lazily at the wall, and is thrown back by the magnification of the telescope. He then points it at the sky; considers; puts the telescope down.

Clarence

But no, that cannot be, for I perceive,
There's more there now than ever was before.

He hesitates, then picks up the telescope again. He points it at the sky again. After a few moments of looking, he turns from it and begins drawing on his paper. Galileo enters in the street, just across from Harry's house. He considers.

Galileo

[To Harry] Osservate!
Harry is perplexed.
Eh,... look! Observe!

Harry

Look at what, Sir? Perchance, would ye care for some grapes? A juicy, ripe apple?

Galileo

Eh, non importa. Non possono pagare [*Makes money hand-gesture*].
Galileo walks off.

Harry

Villainous drudge. Oliver, how much d'ye expect we made today?

Oliver

[*Packing up the cart*] Alas, not half of what we earned in a day a year past.
And these fools [*referring to Galileo*] taunt us, but naught do they buy!

Harry

Son, bite not the hand that feedeth thee.

Oliver

Is that not our hand?

Harry

Perhaps, but we hath not the power to bite back.

Oliver

Then we must find the power!

Harry

Patience, lad. Alas, a long day, not as fruitful as I had hoped. Let us return home to thy mother and sister, who verily shall feedeth thee.

They exit downstage right.

Milton

“The jeweled sky embraces softly, tight;
Its minion, man, doth mark a little while
By sending surly signals of reproach
To slice through fault and bold aberration
True its gaudy plea must find a firm voice.
But ere Divine blaze illumines us all,
Man's desp'rate stroke will pierce a willing mark.”
[*From Milton's lesser known works, conceived and written posthumously.*]

*Lights fade. Dawn. Activity in Harry's house.
Harry and Oliver go out and set up their cart. The hawker enters, and they hear her singing:*

Hawker-woman

All you folk, please come here to me,

Hear of Signore Galilei.
He's the magician of Italy.

For seeing what does not exist,
Florence hopes he shan't be much missed,
He's punished by Inquisition's twist.

By this time she is out of hearing.

Oliver

And who has use for the stars, pray tell? There's naught there for my livelihood.

Harry

Back in Clarence's house, Susan is busy cleaning, and Brome enters. He taps Clarence on the shoulder, and motions for him to move out of the way. He then turns Clarence's desk with Clarence's help. Brome gestures impatiently, and then he and Clarence each take one end of the desk and move it (the latter confused all the while) 180 degrees, to face the stage left wall. Brome then does the same with the chair. While he moves the desk and chair, he says:

Brome

"But let us know your pleasure, you shall find
The state and commonwealth in all obedient
To alter custom, law, religion, all,
To be conformable to your commands."
[Brome's The Antipodes, 4.1.375-8, 1638]

Finally, he takes the telescope from Clarence, and points it at the ground between the desk and the stage left wall. Contented, he hands the telescope back to Clarence, smiles, and leaves.

Susan

Prithee Clarence, what dost thou see?

Clarence

When last hadst thou cleaned? For here I do see,
Such a mess beyond all imagining.

He returns the telescope's gaze to the sky, but every once in a while, he examines some other feature of the room through its lenses.

Street; nondescript part. Harry is bringing the cart to his post, and travels on the inside part of the road. He does not see Clarence ahead, walking in the opposite direction. Clarence, on his way to a nobleman's meeting, refuses to shift position, and they collide.

Clarence

[Astonished] Swine, dost thou cart me hence?

Harry

Why, no, sir, I am not a constable.

Clarence

I would not broach constables were I thou.

Harry

I broached them not; you mark me wrongly sir.

Clarence

I'll mark thine ears if thou pratest thus.

Clarence does so (cuffs Harry on the ears).

Harry

But gentle sir, I protest I wronged you not, nor gave you cause to strike me thus.

Clarence

Rogue, dost thou persist in thy lack of deference?

Clarence gives him another whack. Harry stays silent.

Clarence

'Sblood, now thou'lt think twice ere carting me thus.

He continues on his way. Harry takes a moment to recover, and then continues offstage toward his post. He reenters in the street, and joins Oliver.

Harry and Oliver are busy selling fruit, when Oliver Cromwell enters. He immediately draws Oliver's attention.

Cromwell

Come here, lad.

Oliver

Sir? Would ye like to buy a bunch of grapes of me? Only a tuppence.

Cromwell

I'll take some, boy *[the exchange happens as he continues to speak]*. But how would thou like free access to the land where thou pickst those grapes? What right does the nobleman have to the land God gave unto us all?

Oliver

I'faith, you speak true. But what have you to say of this?

Cromwell

Forsooth, I'm looking for young lads like thyself for my New Model Army. My name is Oliver Cromwell.

Oliver

[Shaken, not by the famous and powerful person before him, but by the first name attached to such a personage. He blurts out:] A pleasure to make your acquaintance.

Cromwell

God has fated us to reassert his will in this land, and reclaim England from the Cavaliers in His divine name.

Oliver

And may I be one of those so fated?

Cromwell

'Faith, without a doubt. God requires our constant devotion and attention to His justice.

Oliver

I have thought of these issues much, and have often inclined towards the Digger philosophy. But wherein have I cause to abandon my father in these hard times?

Cromwell

When in hard times, one must become closer to God, and more obedient to His will.

Oliver

The money I may earn from selling must serve my family.

Cromwell

When we win, thy family will have less need to worry about such things.

Oliver

Y'are in the right. Give me leave till the morrow, and I'll be ready to serve God and country.

Cromwell

May the good Lord keep you in this mind.

Oliver

Amen.

Cromwell leaves, with his grapes.

Oliver

My father shall resist; oh, I must prepare!

He runs off downstage right, returning shortly after upstage right, and going into his house. Martha and Eliza are there, cleaning up and making preparations for supper.

Martha

Wherefore beest thou not with thy father?

Oliver

He remains at the mart; with the cart.

Martha

How doth the fruit sell? Do not stammer so! And why hast thou returned? Hie thee back to the cart where thy father stands, mongering with solitary sorrow.

Oliver

Mother, I cannot. For I must prepare myself.

Martha

Prepare thyself? For what, prithee tell?

Oliver

For my duty to God, country, and self.

Martha

The army?? [*He acknowledges*] What about thy duty to thy family?

Oliver

Do you not see? If, no, when we win, we will have less need to worry about such things as resources, for we shall throw off the tyranny of land ownership. We shall have land to farm on for ourselves!

Martha

And if Cromwell and his forces achieve not the sweeping victory thou speakest of? Or if Cromwell betrays thy cause? For what is his, may not be thine.

Oliver

You are wrong, for we are bound by God's love, and our obedience to His will. Our names are the same; God hath willed it to be so.

Martha

The devil may come with any manner of name, and still be the devil. How if he fails thy glorious expectations?

Oliver

Then we are all lost.

Martha

There is nothing I can say to sway thee?

Oliver

No.

Martha

Go, tell your father of your purpose; if he is unable to knock sense into you, then I shall be resigned.

Oliver

Yes, mother, I shall tell him.

*He exits the house, and then exits upstage right (towards the street-market).
The hawker enters downstage left. Oliver reenters downstage right, with slow excitement over all that is happening.*

Hawker-woman

Aimed at Oliver, who stops and listens.

“O where ha’e you gone, our nervous King Charles?
O where ha’e you gone, our nervous King Charles?”
“I ha’e fast fled to Scotland to ‘scape Cromwell’s men,
But I shall be back to rule England again.”

“Why ha’e you left us, O Charles our king?
Why ha’e you left us, O Charles our king?”
“Parliament hath usurp’d power that’s mine,
They thought that before them I would just resign.”

“How will you come back, O Charlie our lord?
How will you come back, O Charlie our lord?”
“With cavalry true, upon steeds milky white,
To send the bold rebels back into the night.”

Oliver

The power is thine, the power is mine, we together shall send tyrant “Charlie” into that night!

The hawker laughs and continues offstage, and Oliver continues on his way. He meets up with Harry, who is returning home with the cart.

Harry

Where hast thou been, lad? I had need of thy assistance. *[Oliver is silent]* You’re leaving.

Oliver

God has called me to serve in Cromwell's army, for His justice.

Harry

Aye. *[Pause]* Well: God grant ye good fortune.

Oliver

Thank you, father.

They exit, stage right, with Oliver pushing the cart (for the last time), and Harry's arm around Oliver's shoulders.

Milton

"What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

Lights dim, and then up on a later date. Cromwell enters on Clarence's side of the stage. He stops by Clarence's window, and, bowing his head, says:

Cromwell

God be with you, and with our pious republic of England.

He eats a grape as he walks away, offstage via upstage left.

Susan

[Standing on the other side of the window; she speaks to Clarence]

Pious republic indeed; the devil take
Him, that our Lord Protectorate should make
Our nation a tyrannous dictatorship.

Enter Hobbes, who takes Clarence heartily around the shoulder, and leads him to his seat, himself sitting in a nearby chair. He instructs Clarence as follows:

Hobbes

"NATURE (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings."

He stands and turns to go, but pauses, and speaks to them again:

"Nosce teipsum, Read thyself: which was not meant, as it is now used, to countenance either the barbarous state of men in power towards their inferiors, or to encourage men of

low degree to a saucy behaviour towards their betters; but to teach us that for the similitude of the thoughts and passions of one man, to the thoughts and passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself and considereth what he doth when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts and passions of all other men upon the like occasions.”
[From the introduction to Hobbes’ The Leviathan, 1651]

Clarence

Peculiar, and radical, advice, sir.

Hobbes

Aye. Use it wisely. Good day to you.

Susan

Good day to you, sir.

Hobbes leaves, walking stage-right. Milton, who has been listening, approaches him, slowly, blindly.

Milton

You speak of man as machine, as mass-produced automata, and yet find course to exclude some men as being even lower. What separates man from machine is choice, and all may choose God’s path. “I call, therefore, [for] a complete and generous education. To set forward all these proceedings in nature and mathematics, what hinders but that [students] may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries; and in the other sciences, architects, engineers, mariners, anatomists” who may help man to God’s path. *[He refers (with a gesture) to Harry and Eliza (who has replaced Oliver) as capable of such help.]*
Quote from Milton’s Of Education.

Hobbes

Them? I would not descend to encourage their saucy behaviors.

He turns upstage, ignoring Harry and Eliza entirely, and then exits upstage right.

Susan

What did you make of him?

Clarence

He seemed a proper gentleman.

Susan

Aye, but what of his words? What make you of them?

Clarence

He spoke clearly, with a logical, scientific discourse. His ideas, however... I'm not sure what to make of them.

Susan

I think he looks within himself and assumes others are precisely the same. And this is simply not so.

Clarence

Marry, true enough; thou certainly thinkest different than I.

Focus shifts to Milton, who feels his way slowly from stage right towards center stage. He is now completely blind, and will recite his poem facing stage left, never turning towards the audience. He veers towards Harry's cart, and Eliza, taking pity on him, runs up and tries to help him on his way.

Eliza

Here, sir! Let me guide you anent along your path.

He cautiously accepts for the first few steps, but pride wins out, and he pushes her away. He continues on his path, alone, while Eliza, after brief contemplation, returns to work. By the end, Milton is upstage-center, still in the light.

Milton

“When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask.”

The earthly world hath left me, like a prisoner, ablaze with ideas of worth, that none may hear – unless I can escape. My English eyes hath betrayed me; all England lies condemned.

Milton sits in place.

Enter hawker.

Hawker-woman

Old King Charles is gone and dead,
With a hey-diddle, hey-diddle, hey,
In Whitehall he hath lost his head,
But now is the Restoration.

Milton's sight has up and fled,

With a hey-diddle, hey-diddle, hey,
To detach'd darkness is he wed,
But now is the Restoration.

Pious Cromwell is no more,
With a hey-diddle, hey-diddle, hey,
Ere he could rule here for a score,
But now is the Restoration.

Richard tried his father's place,
With a hey-diddle, hey-diddle, hey,
But now Charles two completes that space.
And now is the Restoration.

As before, she wanders off by the end of the song.

Eliza

Kings and rulers come and go, but we are as poor as e'er we were.

Harry

Ack! I have forgotten one of the bags of fruit! Mind the cart, would ye lass, while I fetch the load hence.

He runs off toward the house. Enters downstage left as Clarence is returning to his home from downstage right; they collide.

Harry

[Dignified] My apologies.

Clarence

In a rush, thy tail in full spin, and yet thou disregardest my state?

Harry

I hath apologized, *sir*; I need do no more.

Clarence

Doth I hear a-right? Get you gone, before I whip you from hence!

Harry

No, I shall not. For servant to you I am not.

Harry stands ready, making known to the entire street his full physical presence.

Clarence

[Fuming, but terrified of the man in front of him] Thou art fortunate that no constable is near, or I would have thy irreverent hide drawn and quartered!

Having said all he could muster, he turns and walks rapidly home. Harry, too, has been fear-stricken, and he calms himself down and then walks offstage downstage right, head held high, eyes fixed forward.

Milton speaks from upstage, in complete darkness, apart from any light from downstage that has found its way up.

Milton

“The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on th' eternal spring.”

[Milton's Paradise Lost, Book IV, lines 264-268; 1667]

Back to Clarence and Susan. They are having a peaceful, quiet, cup of tea, when Boyle enters. Without sitting, he addresses the couple, and says:

Boyle

Pressure multiplied by volume yields a constant value.

Clarence

How simple!

Susan

And yet quite elegant, and practical.

Boyle

It explains many things. It is the fruit of a new scientific method of practice, reliant on uncontestable, reproducible, ocular proof.

Clarence

In this restored kingdom, men have the power to advance human understanding to human limits, before God our creator.

Boyle

Ah, and there is much more important knowledge I have obtained with my air pump! For instance –

Susan

Uh, no, please, you have been most helpful. We are greatly obliged to you!

Boyle, slightly saddened, bows and leaves, exiting the house to his right and leaving upstage left without so much as a glance to the other side of the stage.

Clarence

I shall improve my hierarchy of the room:

He writes:

Item one, my bible;

Item two, my desk, and the parchments contained within;
Items three through five, my books in Latin, French, and English, respectively;
Item six, the oak clock;
Item seven, the viol and its accompanying bow;
Item eight, the book of Scotch songs.
They are ranked according to their value to my soul.

Susan

Thou art surely finding God's enlightenment now.

Clarence

[Flustered] This is but the start of a new era of knowledge.

Susan

Marry, as long as this new knowledge doth not keep thee from thy sleep tonight.

Clarence

I'll be along in a little while.

Susan leaves. Clarence, who has been sitting poised to write more, relaxes his body, puts down the pen, and sighs.

Harry enters upstage right. Martha is there, darning clothing.

Harry

[Still flushed from the encounter with Clarence] I've come back for a sack I hath forgot.

Martha

Aye, I noticed, and it lies ready for thou to take. I have –

Harry

[His "I" overlaps with hers] I had the most extraordinary encounter in the street a moment back.

Martha

Oh?

Harry

Aye. With a man I hath run into before, a pompous prick, asserting the superiority of his social state.

Martha

Unconscionable. Harry, I have news of our son –

Harry

[Overlapping] I taught that man a lesson, 'if aith, one he shan't soon forget. Our son, sayeth thou?

Martha

Aye, Oliver. Monck's regiment hath been incorporated into Charles II's army; our son is now an active member of 'The Lord General's Regiment of Foot Guards.'

Harry

[Somberly] That's wonderful, our son hath found a place for himself.

Martha

A place, yes. And abandoned our place. Abandoned his ideals.

Harry

Nay; he hath matured, become a man.

Martha

Aye. A man of advancing status.

Harry

Perhaps the Commonwealth hath left us with something: a future for our lad.

Martha

And meanwhile, we struggle with the present.

Harry

Our future is the present; let Oliver's be yet to arrive. 'Sblood, I hath left Eliza alone to mind the cart for too long; God alone knows what mischief she hath perpetrated. We shan't be long in returning, dusk draws near.

Martha

Goodbye, my love.

Harry

Goodbye, love.

He grabs the sack, and leaves upstage right, entering the street downstage right, as the hawker enters from upstage left, and walks through centerstage. She speaks to Harry.

Hawker-woman

Here's a gem of science for thee,
By Robert Boyle 'twas derived,
The rule is P V equals C,
However that may be contrived.

Harry considers, and then, reaching into the sack, pulls out a bunch of grapes. He grips them in his fist, and then squeezes with all his might. The grapes bursts, with grape-juice

squirting out and dripping onto the ground; grape also sluices down his arm. With a chuckle, he hands the remains of the bunch of grapes to the hawker, and continues on his way.

Lights out.