## PLAY SIXTEEN- Herod Questioning the Kings, and the Offering of the Magi

## (The Masons and Goldsmiths)

**THE MASONS:**

**HERODES**   The clouds clapped in clearness that their climates encloses,
Jupiter and Jovis, Mars and Mercury amid,
\*Raking over my royalty on \*\*row me rejoices, (\*Rushing) (\*\*i.e. in order)
Blundering their blasts to blow when I bid.
Saturn, my subject, that subtly is hid,
Listens at my liking and lays him full low.
The rack of the red sky full rapidly I rid,
Thunders full \*thrally by thousands I throw (\*boldly, violently)
When me likes.
Venus his voice to me owe
That princes to play in him picks. (i.e. Venus owes his beautiful voice to me.)

The prince of planets that proudly is \*pight (\*Put? Ornamented?)
Shall brace forth his beams that our \*belde blithes; (\*power) (\*makes happy)
The moon at my might he musters his might,
And \*kaisers in castles great kindness me \*\*kythes; (\*Caesars, i.e. emperors) (\*\*speaks)
Lords and ladies look lovely me \*lithes, (\*listens, attends)
For I am fairer of face and fresher on \*fold, (\*earth)
The \*sooth if I say shall, seven and sixty \*\*sithis (\*truth) (\*\*times)
Than glorious \*gulles that gayer is than gold (\*heraldic red)
In price.
How think ye these tales that I told,
I am worthy, witty, and wise.

**I MILES**   All kings to your crown may clearly commend
Your law and your lordship as lodestar on height.
What traitor untrue that will not attend
Ye shall lay them full low, from \*leeme and from light. (\*gleam, brightness)

**II MILES**   What \*faitoure, in faith, that does you offend, (\*deceiver, fraud)
We shall set him full sore, that sot, in your sight.

**HERODES**
In wealth shall I wise you to \*wonne ere I wend, (\*be accustomed)
For ye are \*wights full worthy, both witty and \*\*wight. (\*souls) (\*\*lively)

But ye know well, sir knights, in counsel full cunning,
That my region so royal is ruled here by \*rest; (i.e. in peace)
For I \*wot of no \*\*wight in this world that is woning (\*know) (\*\*person) (\*\*\*dwelling
That in \*forges any felon, with force shall be fast; (\*plans, plots)
Arrest ye those ribalds that unruly are \*rowning, (\*speaking)
Be they kings or knights, in \*care ye them cast. (\*prison)
Yaa, and wield them in woe to \*wonne, in the waning, (\*dwell)
What brawl(er) that is brawling his brain look ye burst,
And ding ye him down.

**I MILES**
Sir, what \*foode in faith will you \*\*feese, (\*child, young person) (\*\*drive, blast)
That sot full soon myself shall him cease.

**II MILES**   We shall not here doubt to do him dis-ease,
But with countenance full cruel we shall crack here his crown.

**HERODES**
My son that is seemly, how seems thee their \*saws? (\*speeches)
How comely these knights, they carp in this case.

**FILIUS**   Father, if they like not to listen your laws,
As traitors untrue ye shall teach them a \*trace, (\*path, way of living)
For, father, unkindness ye give them no cause.

**HERODES**   Fair fall thee, my fair son, so \*fettis of face, (\*fair)
And knights, I command, who to \*dole draws, (\*dolour, evil)
Those churls as \*chevaliers ye chastise and chase (\*horsemen)
And dread ye no doubt.

**FILIUS**   Father, I shall fell them in fight,
What \*renke that (be)reaves you your right. (\*robber)

**I MILES**   With dints to dead be he \*dight (\*put)
That liste(n) not your laws for to \*lowte. (\*laud, obey)

**GOLDSMITHS:**

**I REX**   Ah, Lord, that lives, everlasting life,
I love thee ever with heart and hand,
That me has made to see this sight
Which my kindred was coveting.
They said a star with gleams bright
Out of the east should stably stand,
And that it should move \*mickle might (\*great)
Of one that should be Lord in land,
That men of sin should safe be;
And \*certis I shall say, (\*surely, certainly)
God grant me \*happe to have (\*happiness)
\*Wising of ready way. (\*knowledge)

**II REX**   All-wielding God, that all has wrought,
I worship thee as is worthy
That with thy brightness has me brought
Out of my realm, rich Araby.
I shall not cease ‘til I have sought
What \*selcouth thing it shall signify, (\*miraculous)
God grant me happy so that I might
Have grace to get good company
And my comfort increase
With thy star shining sheen.
For \*certis, I shall not cease (\*certainly, surely)
‘Til I wit what it mean.

**III REX**   Lord God, that all good has begun
And all may end, both good and evil,
That made for man both moon and sun
And stood yon star to stand stone still.
‘Til I the cause may clearly know,
God wise me with his worthy will.
I hope I have here fellows fond,
My yearning faithfully to fulfil.
Sirs, God you save and see,
And \*ware you ever from woe. (\*warn, guard)

**I REX**   Amen, so might it be,
And save you, sir, also.

**III REX**   Sirs, with your will, I would you pray
To tell me some of your intent,
Whether ye wend forth in this way
And from what country ye are went.

**II REX**   Full gladly, sir, I shall you say,
A sudden sight was to us sent,
A royal star that rose ere day
Before us on the firmament
That got us fare from home
Some point thereof to prove.

**III REX**   \*Sertis, sirs, I saw the same (\*certainly, surely)
That makes us thus to move.

For sirs, I have heard say certain
It should be seen of \*selcouth \*seer (\*miraculous) (\*prophet, witness)
And further thereof I would \*freyne; (\*ask)
That makes me move in this manner.

**I REX**   Sir, of fellowship are we \*fayne, (\*desiring)
Now shall we wend forth all in \*feere, (\*fellowship)
God grant us ere we come again
Some good \*hearting thereof to hear. (\*encouragement)
Sir, here is Jerusalem,
To wise us as we go,
And beyond is \*Bedlam; (\*Bethlehem)
There shall we seek also.

**III REX**   Sirs, ye shall well understand
For to be wise now were it need,
Sir Herod is king of this land
And has his laws here for to lead.

**I REX**   Sir, since we nigh now thus nearhand, (i.e. since we draw near)
Unto his help us must take heed,
For have we his will and his warrant
Then may we wend without dread.

**II REX**   To have leave of the lord,
That is reason and skill.

**III REX**   And thereto we all accord;
Wend we and wit his will.

**MASONS AND GOLDSMITHS:**

**NUNCIUS**   My lord, sir Herod, king with crown.

**HERODES**   Peace, \*dastard, in the devil’s \*dispite. (\*wretch) (\*\*dis-pity)

**NUNCIUS**   My lord, now note is near this town.

**HERODES**   What, false harlot, list thee flight? (i.e. do you want to flee?)
Go beat yon boy and ding him down.

**II MILES**   Lord, messengers should no man \*wyte, (\*torment, punish)
It may be for your own renown.

**HERODES**   That would I hear, do tell on \*tyte. (\*quickly)

**NUNCIUS**   My lord, I met at morn
Three kings carping together
Of a bairn that is born,
And they \*hight to come hither. (\*hope, promise)

**HERODES**   Three kings, \*forsooth? (\*in truth)

**NUNCIUS**                                     Sir, so I say,
For I saw them myself all \*fere. (\*together)

**I CONSOLATOR**   My lord, oppose them, I you pray.

**HERODES**   Say, fellow, are they far or near?

**NUNCIUS**   My lord, they will be here this day,
That \*wot I well, without \*\*ware. (\*know) (\*\*doubt, fear)

**HERODES**   Do rule us then in rich array,
And \*ilke man make them merry cheer (\*each)
That no \*(dis)sembling be seen (\*lies, falsehood)
But friendship fair and still
‘Til we \*wit what they mean, (\*know)
Whether it be good or ill.

**I REX**   The lord that lends \*ay-lasting light (\*ever-lasting)
Which has us led out of our land,
Keep thee, sir king and \*comely knight (\*handsome)
And all thy folk that we here find.

**HERODES**   \*Mahounde, my god and most of might (\*Mohammed)
That has mine health all in his hand,
He save you, sirs, seemly in sight,
And tell us now some new tiding.

**II REX**   Some shall we say you, sir.
A star stood us before
That makes us speak and spur
Of one that is new born.

**HERODES**   New born? That burden hold I bad,
And, \*certis, \*\*unwitty men ye were (\*certainly, surely) (\*\*unwise)
To leap over land to \*leite a lad. (\*search, look for)
Say, when lost ye him, ought long before?
All wise men will \*wene ye mad, (\*think)
And therefore move this never more.

**III REX**
Yes, \*certis, such \*hearting have we had (\*certainly) (\*\*encouragement)
We will not cease ere we come there.

**HERODES**   This were a wonder thing.
Say, what bairn should that be?

**I REX**   \*Forsooth, he shall be king (\*In truth)
Of Jews and of \*Jude. (\*Judea)

**HERODES**   King? In the devil’s name, dogs, fie!
Now see I well ye \*roye and rave. (\*rant)
By any shimmering of the sky
When should ye know either king or knave?

**FILIUS**   Nay, he is king and none but he
That shall ye \*ken if that ye crave, (\*know)
And he is judge of all Jewry
To speak or spill, to say or save.

**HERODES**   Such \*gaudies may greatly grieve (\*tricks, jests)
To witness that ne’er was.

**II REX**   Now, lord, we \*axe but leave (\*ask)
By your power to pass.

**HERODES**   Whitherward, in the devil’s name,
To \*layte a lad here in my land? (\*seek, look for)
False harlots, \*but ye \*\*hie you home (\*unless) (\*\*go)
Ye shall be beat and bound in \*band(s). (\*i.e. chains)

**II CONSOLATOR**   My lord, to fell this foul defame,
Let all their high words fall on hand
And spare them sadly of the same,
So shall ye stably understand
Their mind and their meaning,
And takes good (at)tent thereto.

**HERODES**   I thank thee of this thing,
And \*certis so shall I do. (\*certainly)

Now, kings, to catch all care away
Since ye are come out of your \*kith, (\*people)
Look not ye \*legge against our \*\*laye, (\*claim, appeal) (\*\*laws)
Upon pain to lose both limb and \*lith. (\*life? Limb-joint?)
And so that ye the \*sooth will say (\*truth)
To come and go I grant you \*grith, (\*permission, protection)
And if your points be to my pay
May fall myself shall wend you with. (i.e. if what you find is to my profit, I’ll go with you.)

**I REX**   Sir king, we all accord
And says a bairn is born
That shall be king and lord,
And \*leech them that are \*\*lorne. (\*heal) (\*\*lost)

**II REX**   Sir, ye there marvel nothing
Of this \*ilke note that thus gets news, (\*each)
For Balaam said a star should spring
Of Jacob’s kind, and that is Jews.

**III REX**   Isaiah says a maiden young
Shall bear a bairn among Hebrews
That of all countries shall be king
And govern all that on earth grows.
Emanuel be his name,
To say, God’s Son of heaven.
And \*certis this is the same (\*certainly, surely)
That we here to you \*neven. (\*name, describe)

**I REX**   Sir, the proved prophet Hosea
Full truly told in town and tower,
A maiden of Israel, \*forsooth said he, (\*in truth)
Shall bear one like to lily flower.
He means a child conceived shall be
Without seed of man’s \*succour, (\*help)
And his mother a maiden free,
And he both Son and Saviour.

**II REX**   That, fathers told me before,
Has no man might to \*mar. (\*harm, damage)

**HERODES**   Alas, than am I \*lorne, (\*lost)
This \*wax \*\*ay worse and worse. (\*grows) (\*\*ever)

**I CONSOLATOR**   My lord, be ye nothing abashed,
This \*brigge to end shall well be brought. (\*strife)
Bid them go forth and friendly \*frayste (\*ask)
The \*sooth of this that they have sought, (\*truth)
And tell it you, so shall ye test
Whether their tales be true or not.
Then shall ye wait them with a \*wraste (\*trick, ill turn)
And make all waste that they have wrought.

**HERODES**   Now \*certis, this is well said, (\*certainly, surely)
This matter makes me \*fayne. (\*happy, joyful)
Sir kings, I hold me \*paid (\*satisfied)
Of all your purpose plain.

Wend forth your fore-word to fulfil,
To Bedlem is but here at hand,
And \*speris \*\*grathely both good and ill (\*spy, search) (\*\*solemnly)
Of him that should be lord in land,
And come again then me \*until (\*unto)
And tell me truly your tiding.
To worship him then were my will,
This shall ye stably understand.

**II REX**   \*Certis, sir, we shall you say (\*certainly, surely)
The \*soth of that same child, (\*truth)
In all the haste we may.

**II CONSOLATOR**   Farewell. Ye be beguiled.

**HERODES**   Now, \*certis, this is a subtle \*\*trayne. (\*certainly) (\*\*test, torment)
Now shall they truly take their \*trace (\*path)
And tell me of that \*swittering \*\*swain (\*splashing, helpless) (\*\*infant)
And all their counsel in this case.
If it be \*soth they shall be slain, (\*truth)
No gold shall get them better grace.
But go we ‘til they come again
And play us in some other place.
This hold I good counsel,
Yet would I no man \*wiste; (\*know, i.e. discover)
For \*certis, we shall not fail (\*surely)
To \*lose them as us \*\*liste. (\*kill) (\*\*likes)

**GOLDSMITHS:**

 *Note: The Herod passes and the three kings come again to make their offerings.*

**I REX**   Ah, sirs, for sight what shall I say,
Where is our sign? I see it not.

**II REX**   No more do I; now dare I lay
In our wending some wrong is wrought.

**III REX**   Unto that prince I \*rede we pray (\*advise)
That to us sent his sign unsought,
That he \*wise us in ready way (\*advise)
So friendly that we find him might.

**I REX**   A, sirs, I see it stand
Above where he is borne;
Lo, here is the house at hand.
We have not missed this morn.

**ANCILLA**   Whom seek ye, sirs, by ways wild
With talking, traveling to and fro?
Here \*wonnes a woman with her child, (\*lives, dwells)
And her husband; here are no more.

**II REX**   We seek a bairn that all shall \*bylde; (\*shelter, protect)
His certain sign has said us so,
And his mother, a maiden mild,
Her hope we to find them two.

**ANCILLA**   Come near, good sirs, and see:
Your way to end is brought.

**III REX**   Behold here, sirs, hear and see
The same that ye have sought.

**I REX**   Loved be that Lord that lasts \*aye, (\*forever)
That us has \*kydde thus courteously (\*shown)
To wend by many a \*wilsom way (\*desolate, wild)
And come to this clean company.

**II REX**   Let us make now no more delay
But \*tyte take forth our treasury (\*quickly)
And ordained gifts of good array
To worship him as is worthy.

**III REX**   He is worthy to wield
All worship, wealth, and \*wynne; (\*joy)
And for honour and \*eld, (\*age)
Brother, ye shall begin.

**I REX**   Hail, the fairest of \*felde, folk for to find, (\*world)
From the fiend and his \*feeres faithfully us (de)fend; (\*fellows)
Hail, the best that shall be born to unbind
All the bairns that are born and in \*bale bound. (\*punishment, i.e. hell)
Hail, thou mark us thy men and make us in mind
Since thy might is on \*mold \*\*mis-ease to amend. (\*earth) (\*\*sins)
Hail, clean that is come of a king’s kind
And shall be king of this \*kith, all clergy has kenned. (\*people) (\*\*known)
And since it shall worth on this wise,
Thyself have I sought soon, I say thee,
With gold that is greatest of price.
Be \*paied of this present, I pray thee. (\*happy, paid)

**II REX**   Hail, food that thy folk fully may feed;
Hail, flower fairest that never shall fade;
Hail, Son that is sent of this same seed
That shall save us of sin that our sires had;
Hail, mild, for thou met to mark us to \*mede, (\*reward)
Of a maid \*makeles thy mother thou made. (\*matchless, immaculate)
In that good through grace of thy Godhead,
As the gleam in the glass gladly thou glad
And \*sithen thou shall sit to be \*\*demand, (\*since) (\*\*deeming, judging)
To hell or to heaven for to have us,
Incense to thy service is \*semand. (\*seemly, appropriate)
Son, see to thy subjects and save us.

**III REX**   Hail, bairn that is best our \*balys to beat, (\*sorrows, punishments)
For our \*boote shall thou be bound and beat; (\*reward)
Hail, friend faithful, we fall to thy feet,
Thy father’s folk from the fiend to thee fetch.
Hail, man that is made to thy men meet
Since thou and thy mother with mirths are met;
Hail, duke that drives death under feet,
But when thy deeds are done, to die is thy debt.
And since thy body buried shall be,
This myrrh will I give to thy graving.
The gift is not great of degree,
Receive it, and see to our saving.

**MARIA**   Sir kings, ye travel not in vain,
As ye have meant, here may ye find,
For I conceived my Son certain
Without \*mis of man in mind, (\*sin, misery)
And bare him here without pain
Where women are wont to be pained.
God’s angel in his greeting plain
Said he should comfort all mankind;
Therefore doubt you no \*dele (\*grief, i.e. have no fear)
Here for to have your boon;
I shall witness full well
All that is said and done.

**I REX**   For solace, sir, now may we sing,
All is performed that we for prayed.
But good bairn, give us thy blissing,
For fair \*happe is before thee laid. (\*happiness, fortune)

**II REX**   Wend we now to Herod the king,
For of this point he will be \*paid (\*pleased, content)
And come himself and make offering
Unto this same, for so he said.

**III REX**   I \*rede we rest a throw (\*advise)
For to maintain our \*might, (\*strength)
And then do as we \*awe (\*owe, ought)
Both unto king and knight.

**ANGELUS**   Now courteous kings, to me take (at)tent,
And turn betime ere ye be \*tenyd, (\*pained)
From God himself thus am I sent
To warn you as your faithful friend.
Herod the king has malice meant
And \*shappis with shame you for to \*shend, (\*creates, forms) (\*destroy)
And for that ye none harms should \*hente (\*have, encounter)
By other ways God will ye wend
Even to your own country.
And if ye ask him boon,
Your \*beelde \*\*ay will he be (\*shelter, protection) (\*\*ever)
For this that ye have done.

**I REX**   Ah, Lord, I love thee inwardly.
Sirs, God has goodly warned us three.
His angel here now heard have I,
And how he said.

**II REX**                 Sir, so did we,
He said Herod is our enemy
And makes him bound our \*bale to be (\*torment)
With feigned falsehood, and \*forthy (\*therefore)
Far from his force I \*rede we flee. (\*advise)

**III REX**   Sirs, fast I \*rede we flit (\*advise)
\*Ilkone to our country (\*each one)
He that is well of wit
Us wise, and with you be.