## PLAY NINETEEN- The Massacre of the Innocents

## (The Girdlers and Nailers)

**HEROD**   Poor \*bewcheris about, (\*dear ones- used sarcastically)  
Pain of limb and land,  
Stint of your \*stevenes stout, (\*shouting)  
And still as stone ye stand,  
And my carping record.  
Ye ought to dare and doubt,  
And \*lere you low to \*\*lowte (\*learn) (\*\*bow, praise)  
To me, your lovely lord.  
  
Ye ought in field and town  
To bow at my bidding  
With reverence and renown,  
As falls for \*swilk a king, (\*such)  
The lordliest on live  
Who hereto is not \*bowne, (\*bowed, bent)  
By almighty Mahound,  
To dead I shall him drive.  
  
So bold look no man be,  
For to ask help nor \*hold (\*support)  
But of Mahound and me  
That has this world in wield  
To maintain us \*emell; (\*together, among)  
For well of wealth are we,  
And my chief help is he;  
Hereto what can ye tell?  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   Lord, what you likes to do  
All folk will be full \*fayne, (\*happy)  
To take intent thereto,  
And none grudge there again.  
That full well \*wit shall ye, (\*know)  
And if they would not so,  
We should soon work them woe.  
  
**HERODES**   Ya, fair sirs, so should it be.  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   Lord, the \*sooth to say, (\*truth)  
Full well we understand,  
Mahounde is god \*verray, (\*truly)  
And ye are lord of \*ilke a land. (\*each, every)  
Therefore so have I \*seell, (\*happiness)  
I \*rede we wait always(s), (\*advise)  
What mirth most mend you may.  
  
**HERODES**   \*Sertis, ye say right well. (\*certainly, surely)  
  
But I am (an)noyed of new(s),  
That blithe may I not be,  
For three kings, as ye know,  
That come through this country,  
And said they sought a \*swain. (\*squire)  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   That \*rewlle I hope them rue, (\*action)  
For had their tales been true  
They had come this way again.  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   We heard how they you \*hight (\*called, promised)  
If they might find that child,  
For to have told you right,  
But \*certis they are beguiled. (\*certainly, surely)  
\*Swilke tales are not to trust, (\*such) (\*\*trust)  
Full well \*wot \*\*ilke a \*\*\*wight, (\*knows) (\*\*every) (\*\*\*person, soul)  
There shall never man have might  
Nor mastery unto you.  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   Them shames so, for certain,  
That they dare meet you no more.  
  
**HERODES**   Wherefore should they be \*fayne (\*happy)  
To make \*swilke fare before, (\*such)  
To say a boy was born  
That should be most of \*main? (\*power)  
This \*gadling shall again (\*bastard)  
If that the devil had sworn.  
  
For be well never they \*wot, (\*think)  
Whether they work well or wrong,  
To \*frain got them thus got, (\*ask, enquire)  
To seek that \*gadlng \*gaine, (\*bastard) (\*\*to go)  
And \*swilke carping to \*\*kith. (\*such) (\*\*friends, relations)  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   Nay, lord, they \*lered over late (\*learned)  
Your bliss shall never abate,  
And therefore, lord, be blithe.  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Mahounde without peer,  
My lord, you save, and see.  
  
**HERODES**   Messenger, come near,  
And, \*bewcher, well thee be. (\*dear sir)  
What tidings, tells thou, any?  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Ya, lord, since I was here,  
I have sought sides \*seere (\*diverse)  
And seen marvels full many.  
  
**HERODES**   And of marvels to move,  
That were most mirth to me.  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Lord, even as I have seen,  
The \*sooth soon shall ye see, (\*truth)  
If ye will, here in hie.  
I met two towns between  
Three kings with crowns clean,  
Riding full royally.  
  
**HERODES**   Ah, my bliss; boy, thou \*burdis too broad. (\*jokes)  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Sir, there may no \*botment be. (\*remedy, cure)  
  
**HERODES**   Ow, by sun and moon,  
Then tides us tales tonight. (i.e. we are promised news tonight)  
Hopes thou they will come soon  
Hither, as they have \*hight, (\*said, promised)  
For to tell me tidings?  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Nay, lord, that dance is done.  
  
**HERODES**   Why, whither are they gone?  
  
**NUNCIUS**   \*Ilkone into their own land. (\*each one)  
  
**HERODES**   How says thou, lad? Let be.  
  
**NUNCIUS**   I say, for they are past.  
  
**HERODES**   What, forth away from me?  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Ya, lord, in faith full fast,  
For I heard and took heed  
How that they went, all three,  
Into their own country.  
  
**HERODES**   Ah, dogs, the devil you speed.  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Sir, more of their meaning  
Yet well I understood,  
How they had made offering  
Unto that \*frely food (\*noble)  
That now of new is born.  
They say he should be king,  
And wield all earthly thing.  
  
**HERODES**   Alas, than am I \*lorne. (\*lost)  
  
Fie on them, \*faytours, fie! (\*beggars, frauds)  
Will they beguile me thus?  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Lord, by their prophecy  
They named his name Jesus.  
  
**HERODES**   Fie on thee, lad, thou lies.  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   Hence \*tyte, \*\*but thou thee hie, (\*quickly) (\*\*unless)  
With \*dole here shall thou die (\*dolour, sadness)  
That \*wreyes him in this wise. (\*reveals, makes known)  
  
**NUNCIUS**   Ye \*wyte me all with wrong, (\*accuse)  
It is thus and well \*warre. (\*worse)  
  
**HERODES**   Thou lies! false traitor strange,  
Look never thou nigh me near. (\*i.e. never come near me)  
Upon life and limb  
May I that \*faitour fange, (\*fraud) (\*grasp, seize)  
Full high I shall get him hang,  
Both thee, harlot, and him.  
  
**NUNCIUS**   I am not worthy to \*wyte, (\*be blamed)  
But fare-well, all the \*heppe. (\*crowd)  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   Go, in the devil’s \*dispite, (\*dis-pity, i.e. malice)  
Or I shall get thee leap,  
And dear a-buy this \*brew. (i.e. unsavoury business)  
  
**HERODES**   \*Als for sorrow and sight, (\*alas? As?)  
My woe no \*wight may write. (\*soul, person)  
What devil is best to do?  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   Lord, amend your cheer,  
And takes no needless \*noy, (\*annoyance, pain)  
We shall you loyally \*lere (\*teach, learn)  
That lad for to destroy  
By counsel if we can.  
  
**HERODES**   That may ye not come near,  
For it is past two year  
Since that this \*bale began. (\*torment)  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   Lord, therefore have no doubt  
If it were four or five.  
\*Gars gather in great \*rowte (\*get) (\*rout, group, riot)  
Your knights keen \*belyve, (\*lively, quickly)  
And bids them \*ding to dead (\*strike, hit)  
All knave childer kept in \*clout (\*i.e. baby clothes)  
In Bedlem and all about,  
To \*layte in \*\*ilke a \*\*\*stead. (\*seek, find) (\*\*each) (\*\*\*place)  
  
**II CONSOLATOR**   Lord, save none, for your \*seell, (\*health, happiness)  
That are of two year age within,  
Then shall that \*foundling fell (\*i.e. bastard)  
\*Belyve his bliss shall \*\*blynne, (\*swiftly, lively) (\*\*end)  
With \*bale when he shall bleed. (\*torment)  
   
**HERODES**   \*Sertis, ye say right well (\*certainly, surely)  
And as ye deem \*ilke \*\*dele, (\*each) (\*\*thing)  
Shall I \*garre do indeed. (\*get, have done)  
  
Sir knights, courteous and \*hende, (\*skilful, noble)  
Thou ne not be now all new, (i.e. although nothing has changed)  
Ye shall find me your friend,  
\*And ye this time be true. (\*if)  
  
**I MILES**   What say ye, lord, let see.  
  
**HERODES**   To Bedlehem \*bus ye wend, (\*must)  
That \*shrew with shame to \*\*shend (\*unruly child) (\*\*destroy)  
That means to master me.  
  
And about Bedlehem \*boght (\*? Both?)  
\*Bus you well \*\*spere and spy, (\*must) (\*\*enquire)  
For else it will be \*wathe (\*dangerous)  
That he loses this Jewry.  
And \*certis that were great shame. (\*certainly, surely)  
  
**II MILES**   My lord, that were us loath,  
And he escaped it were \*skathe, (\*dangerous- cf. unscathed)  
And we well worthy blame.  
  
**I MILES**   Full soon he shall be sought,  
That make I mine avow.  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   I bid for him you \*loghte, (\*seize, capture)  
And let me tell you how  
To work when ye come there,  
Because ye \*ken him not, (\*know)  
To dead they must be brought,  
Knave children, less and more.  
  
**HERODES**   Ya, all within two year,  
That none for speech be spared.  
  
**II MILES**   Lord, how ye us \*lere (\*teach, learn)  
Full well we take reward,  
And \*certis we shall not rest. (\*certainly, surely)  
  
**I MILES**   Comes forth, fellows, in \*feere, (\*fellowship, together)  
Loo(k), \*foundlings find we here (\*bastards)  
[LINE MISSING]

**I MULIER**   Out on you thieves, I cry!  
Ye slay my \*seemly son. (\*worthy, handsome)  
  
**II MILES**   Their brawls shall dear a-buy  
This \*bale that is begun; (\*torment, struggle)  
Therefore lay fro(m) thee fast.  
  
**II MULIER**   Alas, for \*dole I die. (\*dolour, sadness)  
To save my son shall I,  
Aye whilst my life may last.  
  
**I MILES**   Ah, dame, the devil thee speed,  
And me, but it be quit.  
  
**I MULIER**   To die I have no dread,  
I do thee well to \*wit, (\*know)  
To save my son so dear.  
  
**I MILES**   As arms! for now is need,  
But if we do yon deed,  
The \*queans will quell us here. (\*lowborn woman, harlot)  
  
**II MULIER**   Alas, this loathly strife.  
No bliss may be my \*bette, (\*cure, comfort)  
The knight upon his knife  
Has slain my son so sweet;  
And I had but him alone.  
  
**I MULIER**   Alas, I lose my life;  
Was never so woeful a wife  
Nor half so \*will of \*\*wone. (\*wilsome, wild) (\*\*living)  
  
And \*certis, me were full loathed (\*certainly, surely)  
That they thus harmless \*yede. (\*leave, go)  
  
**I MILES**   The devil might speed you both,  
False witches, are ye \*woode? (\*mad)  
  
**I MULIER**   Nay, false \*lurdans, ye lie. (\*sinners, cowards)  
  
**I MILES**   If ye be \*woode or wroth, (\*mad)  
Ye shall not (e)scape from \*skathe; (\*harm)  
Wend we us hence in hie.  
  
**I MULIER**   Alas, that we were wrought  
In world women to be,  
The bairn that we dear bought  
Thus in our sight to see  
Dis-piteously spill.   
  
**II MULIER**   And \*certis, their \*\*nott is nought, (\*certainly, surely) (\*\*work)  
The \*same that they have sought (\*i.e. Jesus)  
Shall they never come till.  
  
**I MILES**   Go we to the king;  
Of all this \*contek keen (\*conflict, strife)  
I shall not let for nothing  
To say as we have seen.

**II MILES**   And \*certis, no more shall I. (\*certainly, surely)  
We have done his bidding;  
How so they \*wrast or wring, (\*wrestle, twist)  
We shall say \*sothfastly. (\*truthfully, steadfastly)  
  
**I MILES**   Mahounde, our god of might,  
Save thee, sir Herod the king!  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   Lord, take keep to your knight;  
He will tell you now tidings  
Of \*bordis where they have been. (\*tricks, works)  
  
**HERODES**   Ya, and they have gone right,  
And hold that they us \*hight; (\*promised)  
Then shall solace be seen.  
  
**II MILES**   Lord, as ye \*demed us to done, (\*doomed, ordered)  
In countries where we come . . . [line obscured]  
  
**HERODES**   Sir, by sun and moon,  
Ye are welcome home  
And worthy to have reward.  
Have ye gotten us this \*gome? (\*baby boy)  
  
**I MILES**   Where we found \*fell or \*fone, (i.e. many or few)  
Witness we will that there was none.  
  
**II MILES**   Lord, they are dead \*ilkone, (\*each one)  
What would ye we \*ded more? (\*did? Dead/kill?)  
  
**HERODES**   I ask but after one  
The kings told of before  
That should make great mastery.  
Tell us if he be ta’en.  
  
**I MILES**   Lord, tokening had we none  
To know that \*brothell by. (\*scoundrel, rascal)  
  
**II MILES**   In \*bale we have them brought (\*torment)  
About all Bedleham town.  
  
**HERODES**   Ye lie, your \*note is nought, (\*speech? Work?)  
The devils of hell you drown!  
So may that boy be fled,  
For in waste have ye wrought.  
Ere that same lad be sought,  
Shall I never bide in bed.  
  
**I CONSOLATOR**   We will wend with you then  
To \*ding that \*\*dastard down. (\*strike) (\*\*rascal)   
  
**HERODES**   As arm, ever \*ilke man (\*each)  
That holds of Mahounde.  
Were they a thousand score,  
This \*bargain shall they \*\*banne (\*i.e. fate) (\*\*summon)  
Come after as ye can,  
For we will wend before.