

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 *gadIng *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 *frelly 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,
And we well worthy blame.

(*dangerous- cf. unscathed)

I MILES Full soon he shall be sought,
That make I mine avow.

I CONSOLATOR I bid for him you *loghte,
And let me tell you how
To work when ye come there,
Because ye *ken him not,
To dead they must be brought,
Knave children, less and more.

(*seize, capture)

(*know)

HERODES Ya, all within two year,
That none for speech be spared.

II MILES Lord, how ye us *lere
Full well we take reward,
And *certis we shall not rest.

(*teach, learn)

(*certainly, surely)

I MILES Comes forth, fellows, in *feere,
Loo(k), *foundlings find we here
[LINE MISSING]

(*fellowship, together)
(*bastards)

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;
Therefore lay fro(m) thee fast.

(*torment, struggle)

II MULIER Alas, for *dole I die.
To save my son shall I,
Aye whilst my life may last.

(*dolour, sadness)

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,
To save my son so dear.

(*know)

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, The knight upon his knife Has slain my son so sweet; And I had but him alone.	(*cure, comfort)
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 That they thus harmless *yede.	(*certainly, surely) (*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, Ye shall not (e)scape from *skathe; Wend we us hence in hie.	(*mad) (*harm)
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, The *same that they have sought Shall they never come till.	(*certainly, surely) (**work) (*i.e. Jesus)
I MILES Go we to the king; Of all this *contek keen I shall not let for nothing To say as we have seen.	(*conflict, strife)
II MILES And *certis, no more shall I. We have done his bidding; How so they *wrast or wring, We shall say *sothfastly.	(*certainly, surely) (*wrestle, twist) (*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;
Then shall solace be seen. (*promised)

II MILES Lord, as ye *demed us to done,
In countries where we come . . . (*doomed, ordered)
[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,
Witness we will that there was none. (i.e. many or few)

II MILES Lord, they are dead *ilkone,
What would ye we *ded more? (*each one)
(*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
About all Bedleham town. (*torment)

HERODES Ye lie, your *note is nought,
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. (*speech? Work?)

I CONSOLATOR We will wend with you then
To *ding that **dastard down. (*strike) (**rascal)

HERODES As arm, ever *ilke man
That holds of Mahounde. (*each)
Were they a thousand score,
This *bargain shall they **banne
Come after as ye can, (*i.e. fate) (**summon)
For we will wend before.