

B.A. II (H), English Paper III
Character - Sketch of Edward II 4

Christopher Marlowe has left no stone unturned in painting the character - evaluation of the hero of a historical tragedy, Edward II, who is the King of England. The personality of Edward II is queer and unnatural, ~~and~~ which we can simply categorize as homosexual. But it is not the sole flaw of the King which brings about his downfall for ever. At the very beginning of the play Gaveston is seen on the stage reading loudly the lines of the letter sent by Edward II to him,

And share the kingdom with thy dearest
my father is deceased/come, Gaveston,
the reader can anticipate that Edward II seems to be an irresponsible King. He forgets to rule over the kingdom of England better, but enjoys with a person who has been banished by the King for some serious charges. Edward II quotes,
Music and poetry is his delight,
therefore I will have wanton poets and wits!

Edward II does not take an interest in tackling the problems of his subject, but instead he throws himself into the villainous hands of Piers Gaveston and aggravates the situation by trying to avenge the exile of Gaveston. Edward II's wife, Queen Isabella openly and publicly complains of his ill treatment. She says bitterly, the King regards me not - does not love the love of Gaveston. She further says, I never doted fare on Gaveston, I never doted Gaveston.

King Edward II displays his inefficiency as he cannot resist the collective conscience of the nobles and the clergymen. It is seen that they force him to give Gaveston the second banishment. Of course, King Edward II and Gaveston are responsible for the latter's exile. The King estimates correctly of the papal authority and the noble class when he bursts out in rage.

King Edward II is a shrewd politician. He commits another serious mistake that he regards his wife Queen Isabella as a political agent of blackmailing and compelling her to learn on to Mortimer. He is seen going on doing several grave mistakes until he is deprived of Gaveston.

But soon he accepts another fortune seeker in the form of young Spencer. It is only after the death of Gaveston and the revelation of the barons and lords as power-seeking hypocrites that the public come in favour of Edward II in sympathy.

vanquish King Edward is determined to do battle with the barons and the lords in the error of sending Mortimer to Tower. He does not recall his wife Queen Isabella ever after his victory. It gives an occasion for Mortimer and the Queen to make a group again, raise an army and invade England to defeat her.

In scene 1, Act V, the King is an irresponsible and weak total change.

King Edward II emerges before the audience as a tragic figure. His understanding of the intricacies of a king, stripped of power and self, makes Berkeley tries his best to console him, Edward II affirms,



Of this am I assured
That death ends all and I can die but
me!

When somebody reads his historical account, he can guess the inhuman and shocking death of Edward II after several tortures. We see feel the spectacles of his suffering on the stage beyond limits and become emotional with pity and fear. By the end of the play he is a miserable figure, though it is very difficult to defend his affairs as a king. His gruesome death ends his disastrous rule. His rule is bad for the state and bad for the people. There arises a civil war in England in his time.

Dr B.D. Shivastava,
Head,
Dept. of English,
Sher Shah College, Sasaram