

END OF THE DARK LADY SERIES TO ELIZABETH

OXFORD'S FINAL STATEMENT
UPON THE QUEEN'S DEATH

Sonnet 152

*And All My Honest Faith In Thee Is Lost
To Swear Against the Truth so Foul a Lie
March 24, 1603*

In Oxford's final words to Elizabeth, he accuses her of having played the false role of Virgin Queen to the very end of her life. "And all my honest faith in thee is lost," he writes. She has caused him to swear against his own truth -- "To swear against the truth so foul a lie!" This verse corresponds in time to Sonnet 105 of the Fair Youth series, marking the death of Elizabeth. In his early sonnet to her entitled "Love Thy Choice," he asked himself: "Above the rest in Court who gave thee grace? Who made thee strive in honor to be best, in constant truth to bide so firm and sure" -- and here, three decades later, he recalls having sworn "Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy." But it turns out that he has sworn falsely; she has proved him wrong. Having testified in her behalf, and having trusted her, Oxford has "perjured" himself. Likewise, Southampton, in Sonnet 125 upon the Queen's funeral, is a "suborned Informer" who must swear against the truth for the remainder of his life.

Sonnet 152

Translation

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn to me love swearing;
In act thy bed-vow broke and new faith torn
In vowing new hate after new love bearing:

But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjured most,
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost.

For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,
And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see.

For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured eye,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie.

You know that in serving you I am perjured,
But you are twice perjured by vows to me;
You broke your contract to me and your son
By hiding him after begetting new blood:

But why do I accuse you of breaking these,
When I break more vows? I am the big liar,
For all my vows to you are abusing you,
And I have lost all faith in your promises.

For I have deeply vowed your motherhood,
Vowed your true and eternal royal blood,
And to make you see gave you my sight,
Or made myself swear against my truth.

For I have sworn you royal: I lie even more,
By denying my own truth and lying with you!

Sonnet 152

1 IN LOVING THEE THOU KNOW'ST I AM FORSWORN,

FORSWORN = In serving you (and believing in you) I break my faith with not only with you but also with our son; I have lied because you lied to me; *for swear* = “to refuse or renounce upon oath; to swear that one will have nothing to do with a person or thing; to deny upon oath; to swear falsely, to perjure one’s self; to commit perjury” - Schmidt; “And *purest faith unhappily forsworn*” – Sonnet 66, line 4, referring to Elizabeth having broken faith with Oxford and Southampton; and once the bargain is made to reduce Southampton’s crime to “misprision” of treason, marked in Sonnet 87, in the next verse Oxford tells him: “Upon thy side against myself I’ll fight,/ And prove thee virtuous, though thou art *forsworn*” – Sonnet 88, line 4, i.e., Southampton henceforth must testify falsely against his royal identity: “Hence, thou *suborned informer!*” – Sonnet 125, line 13

But thou dost *swear* only to be *forsworn*,
And most *forsworn*, to keep what thou dost *swear*.
Therefore thy later *vows* against the first
Is in thyself rebellion to thyself

King John, 3.1.211-215

2 BUT THOU ART TWICE FORSWORN TO ME LOVE SWEARING:

But you have twice broken faith with me; **LOVE SWEARING** = first vowing to me to remain true to your royal blood in our son, then vowing the same to him; “Now to my word; it is ‘Adieu, adieu, remember me.’ *I have sworn it*” – the Prince, swearing to do the bidding of the Ghost of his murdered father, in *Hamlet*, 1.5.110-112

3 IN ACT THY BED-VOW BROKE AND NEW FAITH TORN

BED-VOW = “marriage vow, whether formal or informal” - Booth; by your deeds, i.e., your actions against our son, you have broken the vow you made when we were betrothed and conceived our son; (“Now by my sceptre’s awe *I make a vow*” – the King in *Richard II*, 1.1.118; **AND NEW FAITH TORN** = and then you tore up newer vows, which you made to our son; an image of tearing up a contract; you broke the first vow, to me, and then you broke your vow to our royal son; “False king! Why hast thou *broken faith with me*, knowing how hardly I can brook abuse? King did I call thee? No, thou art not king; not fit to govern and rule multitudes” – 2 *Henry VI*, 5.1.91-94; “But to prevent the tyrant’s violence – *for trust not him that hath once broken faith* – I’ll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary to save at least the heir of Edward’s right” – 3 *Henry VI*, 4.4.29-32

4 IN VOWING NEW HATE AFTER NEW LOVE BEARING:

VOWING = (echoing “Bed-Vow” in line 3 and anticipating “Vows” in line 7); by destroying our son’s royal hopes after giving birth to him (see the early poem, possibly by Oxford, following notes for this sonnet); **BEARING** (giving birth to) his new royal blood; “Sweet *love*, I see, changing his property, turns to the sourest and most deadly *hate*” – *Richard II*, 3.2.135-136; “Now welcome more, and ten times more beloved, than if thou never hadst deserved our *hate*” – King Edward to George (Duke of Clarence) in 3 *Henry VI*, 5.1.106-107

5 BUT WHY OF TWO OATHS’ BREACH DO I ACCUSE THEE,

TWO OATHS = the oaths you made to me and our son; **ACCUSE** = echoing the accusations against Essex and Southampton at their treason trial; **BUT WHY OF TWO OATHS’ BREACH DO I ACCUSE THEE** =

But *why accuse* I him,
Whom th’earth hath covered long?
There be of his posterity
Alive, I do him wrong

E. O. The Paradise of Dainty Devices, 1576

6 WHEN I BREAK TWENTY? I AM PERJURED MOST,

When I, Oxford, being forced to disavow my fatherhood of Southampton, have broken many more vows; **I AM PERJURED MOST** = I have done much more to perjure myself, by lying about the truth; echoing the trial, when Oxford was forced to cast a guilty vote against his royal son, failing to speak the truth in a court of law; (just as Southampton must be a “*suborned informer*” against his royal blood in Sonnet 125, line 11, upon the Queen’s funeral and the end of the Tudor Rose dynasty); “*more perjured eye,/ To swear against the truth so foul a lie*” – lines 13-14 below; “*Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured kings!*” – *King John*, 3.1.33

The’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action lust
Is *perjured*, murd’rous, bloody, full of blame Sonnet 129, lines 1-3

7 FOR ALL MY VOWS ARE OATHS BUT TO MISUSE THEE,

ALL = Southampton, *One for All, All for One*; **ALL MY VOWS ARE OATHS BUT TO MISUSE THEE** = all my promises have been only to deny your own son’s royalty, and thereby to misuse or misrepresent or deceive you; “*Proof enough to misuse the Prince*” – *Much Ado About Nothing*, 2.2.27; yet in the Fair Youth series after the Queen’s death, he will address Time on behalf of Southampton: “*This I do vow, and this shall ever be,/ I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee*” – Sonnet 123, lines 13-14; one way he will remain true to Time is to record and preserve the truth in these private sonnets that hopefully will survive for posterity; meanwhile, in serving the Queen and following her will, he has joined with her in the destruction of her own lineage and dynasty

To dash our late decree in Parliament
Touching King Henry’s *oath* and your *succession* 3 *Henry VI*, 2.1.118-119

8 AND ALL MY HONEST FAITH IN THEE IS LOST.

ALL = Southampton; **AND ALL MY HONEST FAITH IN THEE IS LOST** = “*And all my confident trust of you is gone*” – Booth; Oxford’s final statement about his long relationship of service to the Queen, having held onto his faith that she would act to preserve “*beauty’s Rose*” or the Tudor Rose dynasty, as he had indicated in Sonnet 1, line 1: “*That thereby beauty’s Rose might never die*”; but Elizabeth spared her son’s life while leaving him in perpetual confinement, unable to succeed her: “*And purest faith unhappily forsworn*” – Sonnet 66, line 4

“I beseech Your Majesty, in whose service I have faithfully employed myself (I will not entreat that you suffer it yourself thus to be abused), but that you will not suffer me thus to be flouted, scorned and mocked.” – Oxford to Elizabeth, June 1599; Cecil Papers 71.26; Chiljan, 122

FAITH = Oxford’s use of “*faith*” provides specific support for the implication that he and the Queen were formally betrothed in 1573 or 1574, perhaps with Archbishop Parker presiding at a private ceremony. In the sixteenth century, a betrothal still had “*strict legal importance*,” Percy Macquoid wrote in *Shakespeare’s England*, vol. 2, 1916, p. 114; “*Shakespeare shows that a form of betrothal still existed in his time*,” he added, citing Olivia’s speech to Sebastian, in which she refers to the betrothal as a plight of “*faith*”:

Now go with me and with this holy man
Into the chantry by; there, before him,
And underneath that consecrated roof,
Plight me the full assurance of your faith. *Twelfth Night*, 4.3.23-26

It appears, then, that such is the “*faith*” to which Oxford refers, telling Elizabeth here at the end of his diary to her, “*And all my honest faith in thee is lost*.” In the play, Sebastian replies to Olivia as Oxford to Queen Elizabeth: “*I’ll follow this good man, and go with you, and having sworn truth, ever will be true*” – with “*truth*” and “*ever*” and “*true*” indicating Edward de Vere.

9 FOR I HAVE SWORN DEEP OATHS OF THY DEEP KINDNESS:

SWORN = see Sebastian's line above, telling Olivia that "having *sworn* truth," he "ever will be true"; **DEEP OATHS** = solemn vows; for I have sworn, to myself and to our son, that you would remain true to your *kind* or natural offspring and heir (and, since you broke faith, I swore falsely and thereby committed perjury); **KINDNESS** = motherhood of Southampton; kinship by blood; ("either in *kindness*, which I find beyond mine expectation in you, or in *kindred* ... in all *kindness and kindred*" – Oxford to his brother-in-law Cecil, May 1601); "*Kind* is my love today, tomorrow *kind*" – Sonnet 105, line 5, referring to his royal son by the Queen; "Fair, *kind*, and true, is all my argument,/ Fair, *kind*, and true, varying to other words" – Sonnet 105, lines 9-10

And trust not simple Henry nor his *oaths* 3 Henry VI, 1.2.59

He *swore consent to your succession*,

His *oath* enrolled in the Parliament 3 Henry VI, 2.1.172-173

10 OATHS OF THY LOVE, THY TRUTH, THY CONSTANCY,

I swore these solemn oaths about you; **THY LOVE** = your royal blood; **THY TRUTH** = your honesty to me; **TRUTH** = Oxford, *Nothing Truer than Truth*; your true relationship to me as mother of my royal son; "I shall desire your Lordship that those matters which I allege and bring forth to be judged by you: that they be so pondered that reason be not oppressed, with a vain confidence in a light person, *nor truth smothered up rather by false appearance*" – Oxford to Burghley, June 7, 1595 (PRO SP 12/252, ff. 108-09; Chiljan, 106); **THY CONSTANCY** = your commitment to your own lineage; of Southampton: "Still *constant* in a wondrous excellence;/ Therefore my verse, to *constancy* confined,/ One thing expressing, leaves out difference" – Sonnet 105, line 6-8; ("In *constant truth* to bide so firm and sure," Oxford's early sonnet to Elizabeth, circa early 1570s):

Above the rest in Court who gave thee grace?

Who made thee strive in honor to be best?

In *constant truth to bide so firm and sure*,

To scorn the world regarding but thy friends...

Love then thy choice wherein such choice thou bind,

As naught but death may *ever change thy mind*. Earle of Oxenforde

Rawlinson Poet MS 85, f.16

Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends:

And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults,

For I will henceforth *be no more unconstant* 3 Henry VI, 5.1.103-105

11 AND TO ENLIGHTEN THEE GAVE EYES TO BLINDNESS,

And to make you see I gave you my own eyes; **ENLIGHTEN** = give you wisdom and *light*, i.e., royal light from the sun or royal son; help you see the truth; shed light on, make bright; "for those who were once enlightened" – Hebrews, 6.4; "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" – Ephesians, 1.18; **GAVE EYES TO BLINDNESS** = gave you my own eyes, so you, being blind, could see the truth; also, to make you bright, I made myself blind; "And *keep my drooping eyelids open wide*,/ Looking on *darkness which the blind do see*" – Sonnet 27, lines 7-8

What cunning can express

The favor of her face?

To whom in this distress,

I do appeal for grace.

A thousand Cupids fly

About *her gentle eye*.

The Phoenix' Nest, 1593;

Earle of Oxenford - *England's Helicon*, 1600

"Yet sith I have engaged myself so far in Her Majesty's service **to bring truth to light**..."

- Oxford to Burghley, June 13, 1595; PRO SP 12.252 ff. 133-34; Chiljan, 109

As, painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth; while **truth the while**
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by *losing of your eyes.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1.74-79

12 OR MADE THEM SWEAR AGAINST THE THING THEY SEE.

Or made my own eyes refuse to admit to what they see; a reference to Oxford's sacrifice of himself, of his identity, of the truth of Southampton; "But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind;/ Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind" – Sonnet 149, lines 13-14; **OR MADE THEM SWEAR AGAINST THE THING THEY SEE** =

I am not as I seem to be,
For when I smile I am not glad...
O cruel hap and hard estate,
That forceth me to love my foe;
Accursed be so foul a fate... *E. O. - The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576

13 FOR I HAVE SWORN THEE FAIR: MORE PERJURED EYE,

FOR I HAVE SWORN THEE FAIR = for I have sworn you are my royal sovereign; **FAIR** = "but in her maiden hand/ The *fairest votary* took up that fire" – Sonnet 154, referring to Elizabeth in 1574, after Southampton's birth

Faction that ever dwells
In court, where wit excels,
Hath set defiance:
Fortune and Love have *sworn*
That they were never born
Of one alliance *E. O., Earl of Oxford*, by 1576

MORE PERJURED EYE = all the more have my own eyes perjured themselves; "perjured eye" = "perjured I"; "Now, *perjured* Henry, wilt thou kneel for grace" – *3 Henry VI*, 2.2.81

14 TO SWEAR AGAINST THE TRUTH SO FOUL A LIE!

TRUTH = Oxford, *Nothing Truer than Truth*; **TO SWEAR AGAINST THE TRUTH** = to swear against myself and against the truth of our son; **FOUL** = "Your Lordship I know can easily see that he doth err by the part to account the whole, and this is *foul* abuse" – Oxford to Burghley, June 7, 1595 (PRO SP 12/252, ff. 108-09; Chiljan, 107); "Murder most *foul*, as in the best it is, but this most *foul*, strange and unnatural" – the Ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet*, 1.5.27-28; **SO FOUL** = "Accursed be *so foul* a fate" – Oxford poem, *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576; **LIE** = opposite of Truth, literally the final word to Elizabeth, destroyer of truth and perpetuator of the "Big Lie" as the Virgin Queen who died childless and without an heir to throne