

THE  
LIFE AND DEATH  
OF  
**FAIR ROSAMOND,**  
CONCUBINE  
to King Henry the II.



FALKIRK:

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## FAIR ROSAMOND.

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WHEN as King Henry rul'd this land,  
The second of that name;  
Besides the queen he loved dear,  
A fair and comely dame.  
Most peerless was her beauty found,  
Her favour and her face:  
A sweeter creature in the world,  
Could never prince embrace.  
Her crisped locks like threads of gold,  
Appear'd to each man's sight,  
Her comely eyes like orient pearl,  
Did cast a heavenly light.  
The blood within her crystal cheeks,  
Did such a colour drive,  
As though the lily and the rose  
For mastership did strive.  
Fair Rosamond, fair Rosamond,  
Her name was called so,  
To whom dame Eleanor our queen,  
Was known a deadly foe.  
The king therefore for her defence,  
Against the furious queen,  
At Woodstock builded such a bower,  
The like was never seen.

Most curiously the bower was built,  
 Of stone and timber strong,  
 An hundred and fifty doors,  
 Did to this tower belong.  
 And they so cunningly contriv'd,  
 With turnings round about,  
 That none without a clue of threa  
 Could enter in or out.  
 Now for his love and lady's sake,  
 Who was both fair and bright ;  
 The keeping of the bower he gave,  
 Unto a valiant knight.  
 But fortune that doth often frown,  
 Where it before did smile,  
 The king's delight, the ladys joy  
 Full soon she did beguile.  
 For why the king's ungracious son,  
 Whom he did high<sup>e</sup> advance,  
 Against his father raised wars,  
 Within the realms of France.  
 But yet before our gracious king  
 The English land forsook,  
 Of Rosamond his lady fair,  
 His farewell thus he took,  
 My Rosamond, my only Rose,  
 Who pleaseth best mine eye,  
 The fairest flower in all the world  
 To feed my phantasy.

The flower of my affected heart,  
 Whose sweetness doth excel;  
 My royal rose, an hundred times  
 I bid you now farewell.  
 For I must leave my fairest rose,  
 My sweetest rose apace,  
 And cross the ocean into France,  
 Proud rebels to debase.  
 But still my rose, be sure thou shalt,  
 My coming shortly see,  
 And in my heart, when hence I am,  
 I'll bear my rose with me.  
 When Rosamond the lady bright,  
 Did hear the king say so,  
 The sorrows of it grieved her so,  
 Her outward looks did show.  
 And from her clear and crystal eyes,  
 The tears gush'd out apace,  
 And like the silver pearl dew,  
 Ran down her comely face.  
 And falling down into a swoon,  
 Before King Henry's face;  
 Full oft within his princely arms,  
 Her body did embrace.  
 And twenty times with wat'ry eyes,  
 He kiss'd her tender cheek,  
 Until he had revived again,  
 Her spirit mild and meek.

Why grieves my rose? my sweetest rose  
 The king did often say,  
 Because, said she, to bloody wars,  
 My lord must pass away.  
 But since your grace in foreign parts,  
 Amongst your foes unkind,  
 Must go to hazard life and limb,  
 Why must I stay behind.  
 Nay, rather let me like a page,  
 Thy sword and target bear,  
 That on my breast the blow may light,  
 That should offend my dear.  
 O let me in your royal tent,  
 Prepare your bed at night!  
 And with sweet baths refresh you there  
 As you return from fight.  
 So I your presence will enjoy,  
 No toil I will refuse:  
 But wanting you, my life is death,  
 Which doth true love abuse.  
 Content thyself, my dearest love,  
 Thy rest at home shall be,  
 In England's sweet and pleasing court,  
 For travels fit not thee.  
 Fair ladies brook not bloody wars,  
 Sweet peace their pleasure breed,  
 The nourisher of hearts content,  
 Whose fancy first did feed.



My rose shall rest in Woodstock bower,  
 With music's sweet delight,  
 While I among the piercing pikes,  
 Against the foes do fight.  
 My rose in robes of pearl and gold,  
 With dimands rich and bright,  
 Shall dance the galliards of my love,  
 While I my foes do smite.  
 And you, Sir Thomas, whom I trust,  
 To be my love's defence ;  
 Be careful of my gallant rose,  
 When I am parted hence.  
 And here withal he fetch'd a sigh,  
 As though his heart would break,  
 And Rosamond for very grief,  
 Not one plain word could speak.  
 And at their parting well they might,  
 In heart be griev'd sore,  
 After that day, fair Rosamond  
 The King did ne'er see more.  
 For when his grace passed the seas,  
 And into France was gone,  
 Queen Eleanor with envious heart,  
 To Woodstock came anon.  
 And forth she calls the trusty knight,  
 Who kept this curious bower ;  
 And with a clue of twisted thread,  
 Come from this famous flower.

But when they had wounded him,  
The queen his thread did get,  
And went where Lady Rosamond  
Was like a lady set.

But when the queen with stedfast eyes  
Beheld her lovely face,  
She was amazed in her mind,  
At such exceeding grace.

Cast off, said she, these fine wrought  
That rich and costly be. (robes,  
And drink you up this deadly draught  
Which I have brought to thee.

But presently upon her knees,  
Fair Rosamond did fall,  
And pardon of the queen she crav'd,  
For her offences all.

Take pity on my youthful years,  
Fair Rosamond did cry ;  
And let me not with poison strong,  
Be forced for to die.

will renounce my sinful life,  
And in some cloister bide ;  
Or else be banished if you please,  
To range the world so wide.

And sure the fault which I have done,  
I was forced thereunto,  
Preserve my life and punish me,  
As you think fit to do.

And with these words her lily hands,  
 She rung full often there,  
 And down along her comely face,  
 Proceeded many a tear.  
 But nothing could this furious queen,  
 Herewith appeased be,  
 The cup of deadly poison strong,  
 Which she held on her knee,  
 She gave this comely dame to drink,  
 Who took it from her hand,  
 And from her bended knees arose,  
 And on her feet did stand :  
 When casting up her eyes to heav'n,  
 She did for mercy call,  
 And drinking up the poison strong,  
 She lost her life withal.  
 And when that death thro' every limb  
 Had done its greatest spite,  
 Her chiefest foes could but confess,  
 She was a glorious sight.  
 Her body then they did entomb,  
 When life was fled away,  
 At Woodstock, near to Oxford town,  
 As may be seen this day.

FINIS.