

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 6 December 1611 from Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, Dowager Countess of Oxford, to Sir Christopher Hatton expressing her concern that her underage son, Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, could forfeit his hereditary rights in the Forest of Essex if he failed to care for the game to the King's satisfaction because the King feels that to properly protect the game he should take the Forest into his own hands.

The transcript below is modernized from the original spelling version in Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 439-40.

Good Sir Christopher, out of my assurance of your love and well-wishing to my son, I think fit to impart some things unto you which much concern him.

You know his Majesty hath been pleased, though not without much difficulty, to give allowance to my son's hereditary interest in the custody of Havering house and park, whereby there is made unto him a fair entrance for recovery of his other rights within the Forest if he use this he hath so as may give his Majesty contentment, but some of his best and greatest friends have in private intimated to me the hazard & danger of this fair show of good fortune in obtaining the possession of that which hath been kept from his ancestors so many years past. They have let me know his Majesty's great desire to compass the disposal of the said Forest and park at his own pleasure, and have made me understand the nature & quality of this inheritance, which standeth subject to forfeiture by not using this office as it ought to be. And these cautions I find are not to be neglected.

On thother part, you know my son is young, not able to advise himself, and I know he is too much guided by some about him who aim only at their own private ends without respect either of his honour or profit, whereof some, as I hear, have gotten from him grants or promises of several matters of benefit within the park and house of Havering without ever acquainting me therewith, who by the laws of God, of nature, and of this land have the charge and custody of him, wherein howsoever my son forget his duty to me, yet hoping it rather proceedeth from their ill counsel than from his own disposition, I cannot so far neglect him as not to cease(?) and oppose these proceedings which may so much wrong and prejudice him with his Majesty.

Good sir, let me therefore entreat you for prevention thereof to take notice from me, and as occasion shall serve to make it known, that my Lord, his father, for avoiding of these hazards, did in his life so settle the state both of the custody of the said house and park and also of his rights in the Forest as my son hath naught to do in either till he come of full age, and that therefore till then no act or grant he shall make or do concerning either shall, without my allowance, stand good to any, hoping there ere his full age God will give him to understand better his own good.

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If you come to town, I desire to let you know these things more fully. In the meantime I shall rest upon your love unto him that you will use that interest you have in him to persuade him to that which is truly for his own good.