

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 25 October 1598 from Richard Quiney (d.1602) to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon with respect to a loan of £30. Quiney had been London for four months pursuing a suit on behalf of the borough of Stratford upon Avon:

*October came, and Richard Quiney was again in London, this time to petition the Privy Council for a corporation charter on better terms and for relief from the latest subsidy voted by Parliament. With the bad weather and two devastating fires, Stratford had fallen on hard times, so Quiney had a good case. But he was forced to wait in London for four months.*

See Schoenbaum, *Samuel, William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 179-80.

Schoenbaum notes that both Richard Mytton and Peter Roswell were gentlemen in the service of the lord of the manor of Stratford, Sir Edward Greville (c.1565-1621), who had promised money 'for prosecuting the cause'. However as indicated in the letter below, Roswell had not yet arrived in London, and Quiney was anxious to clear the debts he had incurred in pursuing the suit, for which he required an interim loan of £30, the subject of the letter below. It appears from the letter that the loan was not to be supplied personally by William Shakespeare of Stratford Upon Avon, but by a third party, since Quiney promises to 'hold my time and content your friend' (i.e. pay your friend at the appointed date) and that William Shakespeare of Stratford will thus not lose 'credit' (i.e. personal reputation) by arranging the loan. The most likely explanation for the fact that the letter was apparently not delivered to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and that it was later found with other letters of Quiney's is that Peter Roswell arrived in London that day with money for Quiney from Sir Edward Greville, rendering the loan unnecessary.

For a facsimile of the letter, see Schoenbaum, p. 180. See also the image of the original document held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office at:

<http://calm.shakespeare.org.uk/dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqPos=0&dsqSearch=%28%28Refno=%27er27/4%27%29AND%28Repository=%27SBTRO%27%29%29>.

Loving countryman, I am bold of you as of a friend, craving your help with £30 upon Mr Bushell's & my security, or Mr Mytton's with me. Mr Roswell is not come to London as yet, & I have especial cause. You shall friend me much in helping me out of all the debts I owe in London, I thank God, & much quiet my mind, which would not be indebted. I am now toward the Court in hope of answer for the dispatch of my business. You shall neither lose credit nor money by me, the Lord willing, & now but persuade yourself so as I hope, & you shall not need to fear, but with all hearty thankfulness I will

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hold my time & content your friend, & if we bargain farther, you shall be the paymaster yourself. My time bids me hasten to an end, & so I commit this [+to] your care & hope of your help. I fear I shall not be back this night from the Court. Haste. The Lord be with you & with us all, amen. From the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 October 1598.

Yours in all kindness,  
Richard Quiney.

Endorsed: To my loving good friend and countryman, Mr W{illiam} Shackesp{er}e,  
deliver these.