Richard II (c. 1595–1596) is the first play in Shakespeare’s great four-play historical saga, or tetralogy, that continues with the two parts of Henry IV (c. 1596–1598) and concludes with Henry V (1599). In this, his second, tetralogy, Shakespeare dramatizes the beginnings of the great conflict called the Wars of the Roses, having already dramatized the conclusion of that civil war in his earlier tetralogy on Henry VI and Richard III (c. 1589–1594). Both sequences move from an outbreak of civil faction to the eventual triumph of political stability. Together, they comprise the story of England’s long century of political turmoil from the 1390s until Henry Tudor’s victory over Richard III in 1485. Yet Shakespeare chose to tell the two halves of this chronicle in reverse order. His culminating statement about kingship in Henry V focuses on the earlier historical period, on the education and kingly success of Prince Hal.

With Richard II, then, Shakespeare turns to the events that had launched England’s century of crisis. These events were still fresh and relevant to Elizabethan minds. Richard and Bolingbroke’s contest for the English crown provided a sobering example of political wrongdoing and, at least by implication, a rule for political right conduct. One prominent reason for studying history, to an Elizabethan, was to avoid the errors of the past. The relevance of such historical analogy was, in fact, vividly underscored some six years after Shakespeare wrote the play: in 1601, followers of the Earl of Essex commissioned Shakespeare’s acting company to perform a revived play about Richard II on the eve of what was to be an abortive rebellion, perhaps with the intention of inciting a riot. Whether the play was Shakespeare’s is not certain, but it seems likely. The acting company was ultimately exonerated, but not before Queen Elizabeth concluded that she was being compared to Richard II. When he wrote the play, Shakespeare presumably did not know that it would be used for such a purpose, but he must have known that the overthrow of Richard II was, in any case, a controversial subject because of its potential use as a precedent for rebellion. The scene of Richard’s deposition (4.1) was considered so provocative by Elizabeth’s government that it was censored in the printed quartos of Shakespeare’s play during the Queen’s lifetime.

In view of the startling relevance of this piece of history to Shakespeare’s own times, then, what are the rights and wrongs of Richard’s deposition, and to what extent can political lessons be drawn from Shakespeare’s presentation?

To begin with, we should not underestimate Richard’s attractive qualities, as a man and even as a king. Throughout the play, Richard is consistently more impressive and majestic in appearance than his rival, Bolingbroke. Richard fascinates us with his verbal sensitivity, his poetic insight, and his dramatic self-consciousness. He eloquently expounds a sacramental view of kingship, according to which “Not all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king” (3.2.54–5). Bolingbroke can depose Richard but can never capture the aura of majesty Richard possesses; Bolingbroke may succeed politically but only at the expense of desecrating an idea. Richard is much more interesting to us as a man than Bolingbroke, more capable of grief, more tender in his personal relationships, and more in need of being understood. Indeed, a major factor in Richard’s tragedy is the conflict between his public role (wherein he sees himself as divinely appointed, almost superhuman) and his private role (wherein he is emotionally dependent and easily hurt). He confuses what the medieval and Renaissance world knew as the king’s “two bodies,” the sacramental body of kingship, which is eternal, and the human body of a single occupant of the throne, whose frail mortal condition is subject to time and fortune. Richard’s failure to perceive and to act wisely on this difference is part of his tragic predicament, but his increasing insight, through suffering, into the truth of the distinction is also part of his spiritual growth. His
dilemma, however poignantly individual, lies at the heart of kingship. Richard is thus very much a king. Although he sometimes indulges in childish sentimentality, at his best he is superbly refined, perceptive, and poetic.

These qualities notwithstanding, Richard is an incompetent ruler, compared with the man who supplants him. Richard himself confesses to the prodigal expense of "too great a court." In order to raise funds, he has been obliged to "farm our royal realm"; that is, to sell for ready cash the right of collecting taxes to individual courtiers, who are then free to extort what the market will bear (1.4.43–5).

Similarly, Richard proposes to issue "blank charters" (line 48) to his minions, who will then be authorized to fill in the amount of tax to be paid by any hapless subject. These abuses were infamous to Elizabethan audiences as symbols of autocratic misgovernment. No less heinous is Richard’s seizure of the dukedom of Lancaster from his cousin Bolingbroke. Although Richard does receive the consent of his Council to banish Bolingbroke because of the divisiveness of the quarrel between him and Mowbray, the King violates the very idea of inheritance of property when he takes away Bolingbroke’s title and lands.

And, as his uncle the Duke of York remonstrates, Richard’s own right to the throne depends on that idea of due inheritance. By offending against the most sacred concepts of order and degree, he teaches others to rebel.

Richard’s behavior even prior to the commencement of the play arouses suspicion. The nature of his complicity in the death of his uncle Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, is perhaps never entirely clear, and Gloucester may have given provocation. Indeed, one can sympathize with the predicament of a young ruler prematurely thrust into the center of power by the untimely death of his father, the crown prince, now having to cope with an array of worldly-wise, advice-giving uncles. Nevertheless, Richard is unambiguously guilty of murder in the eyes of Gloucester’s widow, while her brother-in-law John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, assumes that Richard has caused Gloucester’s death, "the which if wrongfully / Let heaven revenge" (1.2.39–40). Apparently, too, Gaunt’s son Bolingbroke believes Richard to be a murderer, and he brings accusation against Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, partly as a means of embarrassing the King, whom he cannot accuse directly. Mowbray’s lot is an unenviable one: he was in command at Calais when Gloucester was executed there, and he hints that Richard ordered the execution (even though Mowbray alleges that he himself did not carry out the order). For his part, Richard is only too glad to banish the man suspected of having been his agent in murder. Mowbray is a convenient scapegoat.

The polished, ceremonial tone of the play’s opening is vitiates, then, by our growing awareness of hidden violence and factionalism going on behind the scene. Our first impression of Richard is of a king devoted to the public display of conciliatory even-handedness. He listens to the rival claims of Bolingbroke and Mowbray, and, when he cannot reconcile them peacefully, he orders a trial by combat. This trial (1.3) is replete with ceremonial repetition and ritual. The combatants are duly sworn in the justice of their cause, and God is to decide the quarrel by awarding victory to the champion who speaks the truth. Richard, the presiding officer, assumes the role of God’s anointed deputy on earth. Yet it becomes evident in due course that Richard is a major perpetrator of injustice rather than an impartial judge, that Bolingbroke is after greater objectives than he acknowledges even to himself, and that Richard’s refusal to let the trial by combat take place and his banishment of the two contenders are his desperate ways of burying a problem he cannot deal with forthrightly.

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power to govern wisely. Thus it is that, despite his perception of what will follow, Richard habitually indulges his worst instincts, buying a moment of giddy pleasure at the expense of future disaster.

Granted Richard’s incompetence as a ruler, is Bolingbroke justified in armed rebellion against him? According to Bolingbroke’s uncle, the Duke of York (who later, to be sure, shifts his allegiance), and to the Bishop of Carlisle, Bolingbroke is not justified in the rebellion. The attitude of these men can be summed up by the phrase “passive obedience.” And, although Bolingbroke’s own father, John of Gaunt, dies before his son returns to England to seize power, Gaunt, too, is opposed to such human deficiencies of the sacred institution of kingship. “God’s is the quarrel,” he insists (1.2.37). Because Richard is God’s anointed deputy on earth, as Gaunt sees the matter, only God may punish the King’s wrongdoing. Gaunt may not question Richard’s guilt, but neither does he question God’s ability to avenge. Gaunt sees human intervention in God’s affair as blasphemous: “for I may never lift / An angry arm against His minister” (1.2.40–1).

To be sure, Gaunt does acknowledge a solemn duty to offer frank advice to extremists of both sides, and he does so unsparingly. He consents to the banishment of his son, and he rebukes Richard with his dying breath.

This doctrine of passive obedience was familiar to Elizabethans, for they heard it in church periodically in official homilies against rebellion. It was the Tudor state’s answer to those who asserted a right to overthrow reputedly evil kings. The argument was logically ingenious. Why are evil rulers permitted to govern from time to time? Presumably, because God wishes to test a people or to punish them for waywardness. Any king performing such chastisement is a divine scourge. Accordingly, the worst thing a people can do is to rebel against God’s scourge, thereby manifesting more waywardness. Instead, they must attempt to remedy the insolence in their hearts, advise the King to mend his ways, and patiently await God’s pardon. If they do so, they will not long be disappointed. The doctrine is essentially conservative, defending the status quo. It is reinforced in this play by the Bishop of Carlisle’s prophecy that God will avenge through civil war the deposition of his anointed (4.1.126–50); an Elizabethan audience would have appreciated the irony of the prophecy’s having come true and having been the subject of Shakespeare’s first historical tetralogy. Moreover, in Richard II the doctrine of passive obedience is a moderate position between the extremes of tyranny and rebellion, and is expressed by thoughtful, selfless characters. We might be tempted to label it Shakespeare’s view if we did not also perceive that the doctrine is continually placed in ironic conflict with harsh political realities. The character who most reflects the ironies and even ludicrous incongruities of the position is the Duke of York.

York is to an extent a choric character, that is, one who helps direct our viewpoint, because his transfer of loyalties from Richard to Bolingbroke structurally delineates the decline of Richard’s fortunes and the concurrent rise of Bolingbroke’s. At first York shares his brother Gaunt’s unwillingness to act, despite their dismay at Richard’s willfulness. It is only when Richard seizes the dukedom of Lancaster that York can no longer hold his tongue. His condemnation is as bitter as that of Gaunt, hinting even at loss of allegiance (2.1.200–8). Still, he accepts the responsibility, so cavalierly bestowed by Richard, of governing England in the King’s absence. He musters what force he can to oppose Bolingbroke’s advance and lectures against this rebellion with the same vehemence he had used against Richard’s despotism. Yet, when faced with Bolingbroke’s overwhelming military superiority, he accedes rather than fight on behalf of a lost cause. However much this may resemble cowardice or mere expediency, it also displays a pragmatic logic. Once Bolingbroke has become de facto king, in York’s view, he must be acknowledged and obeyed. By a kind of analogy to the doctrine of passive obedience (which more rigorous theorists would never allow), York accepts the status quo as inevitable. He is vigorously ready to defend the new regime, just as he earlier defended Richard’s de jure rule. York’s inconsistent loyalty helps define the structure of the play.

When, however, this conclusion brings York to the point of turning in his own son, Aumerle, for a traitor and quarreling with his wife as to whether their son shall live, the ironic absurdity is apparent. Bolingbroke, now King Henry, himself is amused, in one of the play’s rare light-hearted moments (5.3.79–80). At the same time, the comedy deals with serious issues, especially the conflict between public responsibility urged by York and private or emotional satisfaction urged by his Duchess—a conflict seen earlier, for example, in the debate between Gaunt and his sister-in-law, the widowed Duchess of Gloucester (1.2). When a family and a kingdom are divided against one another, there can be no really satisfactory resolution.

We are never entirely convinced that all the fine old medieval theories surrounding kingship—divine right, passive obedience, trial by combat, and the like—can ever wholly explain or remedy the complex and nasty political situation afflicting England. The one man capable of decisive action, in fact, is he who never theorizes at all: Bolingbroke. As we have seen, his avowed motive for opposing Mowbray—simple patriotic indignation—is uttered with such earnestness that we wonder if indeed Bolingbroke has examined those political ambitions in
himself that are so plainly visible to Richard and others. This same discrepancy between surface and depth applies to Bolingbroke’s motives in returning to England. We cannot be sure at what time he begins to plot that return; the conspiracy announced by Northumberland (2.1.224–300) follows so closely after Richard’s violation of Bolingbroke’s hereditary rights and is already so well advanced that we gain the impression of an already existing plot, though some of this impression may be simply owing to Shakespeare’s characteristic compression of historic time. When Bolingbroke arrives in England, in any case, he protests to York with seemingly passionate sincerity that he comes only for his dukedom of Lancaster (2.3.113–36). If so, why does he set about executing Richard’s followers without legal authority and otherwise establishing his own claim to power? Why does he indulge in homophobic slurs against Richard, insinuating that Richard’s favorites have “Broke the possession of a royal bed” (3.1.13), when, as far as we can see from the devotion Richard shows to his queen, the charges are trumped up and untrue? Does Bolingbroke seriously think he can reclaim his dukedom by force and then yield to Richard without either maintaining Richard as a puppet king or placing himself in intolerable jeopardy? And can he suppose that his allies, Northumberland and the rest, who have now openly defied the King, will countenance the return to power of one who would never trust them again? It is in this context that York protests, “Well, well, I see the issue of these arms” (2.3.152). The deposition of Richard and then Richard’s death are unavoidable conclusions once Bolingbroke has succeeded in an armed rebellion. There can be no turning back. Yet Bolingbroke simply will not think in these terms. He permits Northumberland to proceed with almost sadistic harshness in the arrest and impeachment of Richard and then admonishes Northumberland in public for acting so harshly; the dirty work goes forward, with Northumberland taking the blame, while Bolingbroke assumes a statesmanlike pose. When the new King Henry discovers—to his surprise, evidently—that Richard’s life is now a burden to the state, he ponders aloud, “Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?” (5.4.2) and then rebukes Exton for proceeding on cue.

Bolingbroke’s pragmatic spirit and new mode of governing are the embodiment of de facto rule. Ultimately, the justification for his authority is the very fact of its existence, its functioning. Bolingbroke is the man of the hour. To apply William Butler Yeats’s striking contrast, the Lancastrian usurpers, Bolingbroke and his son, are vessels of clay, whereas Richard is a vessel of porcelain. One is durable and utilitarian, yet unattractive; the other is exquisite, fragile, and impractical. The comparison does not force us to prefer one to the other, even though Yeats himself characteristically sided with beauty against politics. Rather, Shakespeare gives us our choice, allowing us to see in ourselves an inclination toward political and social stability or toward artistic temperament.

The paradox may suggest that the qualities of a good administrator are not those of a sensitive, thoughtful man. However hopeless as a king, Richard stands before us increasingly as an introspective and fascinating person. The contradictions of his character are aptly focused in the business of breaking a mirror during his deposition: it is at once symbolic of a narcissistic, shallow concern for appearances and a quest for a deeper, inward truth, so that the smashing of the mirror is an act both of self-destruction and of self-discovery. When Richard’s power crumbles, his spirit is enhanced, as though loss of power and royal identity were necessary for the discovery of true values.

In this there is a faint anticipation of King Lear’s self-learning, fearfully and preciously bought. The trace is only slight here, because in good part Richard II is a political history play rather than a tragedy and because Richard’s self-realization is imperfect. Nevertheless, when Richard faces deposition and separation from his queen, and especially when he is alone in prison expecting to die, he strives to understand his life and through it the general condition of humanity. He gains our sympathy in the wonderfully humane interchange between this deposed king and the poor groom of his stable, who once took care of Richard’s horse, roan Barbary, now the possession of the new monarch (5.5.67–94). Richard perceives a contradiction in heaven’s assurances about salvation: Christ promises to receive all God’s children, and yet He also warns that it is as hard for a rich man to enter heaven as for a camel to be threaded through a needle’s eye (5.5.16–17). The paradoxe echoes the Beatitudes: the last shall be first, the meek shall inherit the earth. Richard, now one of the downtrodden, gropes for an understanding of the vanity of human achievement whereby he can aspire to the victory Christ promised. At his death, that victory seems to him assured: his soul will mount to its seat on high “Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die” (line 112).

In this triumph of spirit over flesh, the long downward motion of Richard’s worldly fortune is crucially reversed. By the same token, the worldly success of Bolingbroke is shown to be no more than that: worldly success. His archetype is Cain, the primal murderer of a brother. To the extent that the play is a history, Bolingbroke’s de facto success is a matter of political relevance; but, in the belated movement toward Richard’s personal tragedy, we experience a profound countermovement that partly achieves a purgative sense of atonement and reassurance. Whatever Richard may have lost, his gain is also great.
Balance and symmetry are unusually important in Richard II. The play begins and ends with elaborate ritual obeisance to the concept of social and monarchic order, and yet, in both cases, a note of personal disorder refuses to be subdued by the public ceremonial. Shakespeare keeps our response to both Richard and Bolingbroke ambivalent by clouding their respective responsibilities for murder. Just as Richard’s role in Gloucester’s death remains unclear, so Bolingbroke’s role in the assassination of Richard remains equally unclear. Mowbray and Exton, as scapegoats, are in some respects parallel. Because Richard and Bolingbroke are both implicated in the deaths of near kinsmen, both are associated with Cain’s murder of Abel. As Bolingbroke rises in worldly fortune, Richard falls; as Richard finds insight and release through suffering, Bolingbroke finds guilt and remorse through distasteful political necessity. Verbally and structurally, the play explores the rhetorical figure of chiasmus, or the pairing of opposites in an inverted and diagonal pattern whereby one goes down as the other goes up and vice versa. Again and again, the ritual effects of staging and style draw our attention to the balanced conflicts between the two men and within Richard. Symmetry helps to focus these conflicts in visual and aural ways. In particular, the deposition scene, with its spectacle of a coronation in reverse, brings the sacramental and human sides of the central figure into poignant dramatic relationship.

Women play a subsidiary role in this play about male struggles for power, and yet the brief scenes in which women take part—the Duchess of Gloucester with Gaunt (1.2), Richard’s queen with his courtiers and gardeners and then with Richard himself (2.2, 3.4, 5.1), the Duchess of York with her husband and son and King Henry (5.2–5.3)—highlight for us important thematic contrasts between the public and private spheres, power and powerlessness, political struggle and humane sensitivity, the state and the family. The women, excluded from roles of practical authority, offer, nonetheless, an invaluable critical perspective on the fateful and often self-consuming political games that men play among themselves. As in Julius Caesar and Troilus and Cressida, the men of Richard II ignore women’s warnings and insights to their own peril and to the discomfiting of the body politic.

The imagery of Richard II reinforces structure and meaning. The play is unlike the history plays that follow in its extensive use of blank verse and rhyme and in its interwoven sets of recurring images; Richard II is, in this respect, more typical of the so-called lyric period (c. 1594–1596) that also produced Romeo and Juliet and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Image patterns locate the play in our imaginations as a kind of lost Eden. England is a garden mismanaged by her royal gardener, so that weeds and caterpillars (e.g., Bushy, Bagot, and Green) flourish. The “garden” scene (3.4), located near the center of the play, offering a momentary haven of allegorical reflection on the play’s hectic events, is central in the development of the garden metaphor. England is also a sick body, ill tended by her royal physician, and a family divided against itself, yielding abortive and sterile progeny. Her political ills are attested to by disorders in the cosmos: comets, shooting stars, withered bay trees, and weeping rains. Night owls, associated with death, prevail over the larks of morning. The sun, royally associated at first with Richard, deserts him for Bolingbroke and leaves Richard as the Phaëthon who has mishandled the sun-god’s chariot and so scorched the earth. Linked to the sun image is the prevalent leitmotif of ascent and descent. And, touching on all these, a cluster of biblical images sees England as a despoiled garden of Eden witnessing a second fall of humanity. Richard repeatedly brands his enemies and deserters as Judases and Pilates—not always fairly; nonetheless, in his last agony, he finds genuine consolation in Christ’s example. For a man so self-absorbed in the drama of his existence, this poetic method is intensely suitable. Language and stage action have combined perfectly to express the conflict between a sensitive but flawed king and his efficient but unlovable successor.

In performance, the play belongs to Richard. However much he ends up the loser, his role calls for a kind of royal charisma that Bolingbroke never achieves. Such was the effect, at any rate, in Brian Bedford’s enactment of the role at Stratford, Canada, in 1983; his appearance on the walls of Flint Castle in 3.3, splendidly attired in white robes with gold trim, embodied a regal image of kingship that was then forced to humble itself before Bolingbroke’s brute might. John Gielgud, Alec Guinness, Michael Redgrave, Paul Scofield, John Neville, Ian McKellen, Ian Richardson, Richard Pasco, Derek Jacobi, Alan Howard, Jeremy Irons, Ralph Fiennes, the actress Fiona Shaw, and still other leading performers of their day have found the role one in which they could enthral audiences with the nuanced cadences of Richard’s speeches. The role has also afforded a wide range of interpretations; Guinness saw him as unhappily neurotic, Gielgud as kindly, Redgrave as effeminate, Scofield as cerebral and remote, McKellen as one who is convinced of his semi-divine nature. The play has also become a vehicle for spectacle and striking visual effects emphasizing the symmetries of the text’s attention to poetic symbolism and social ritual; glittering pageantry and fading splendor vie for our interest and our loyalties.
The Tragedy of King Richard the Second

[Dramatis Personae

KING RICHARD THE SECOND
QUEEN, Richard's wife
JOHN OF GAUNT, Duke of Lancaster, King Richard's uncle
HENRY BOLINGBROKE, John of Gaunt's son, Duke of Hereford and claimant to his father's dukedom of Lancaster, later King Henry IV
DUKE OF YORK, Edmund of Langley, King Richard's uncle
DUCHESS OF YORK, Duke of Lancaster, later King Henry IV
DUKE OF AUMERLE, John of Gaunt's son, Duke of Hereford and claimant to his father's dukedom of Lancaster, later King Henry IV
DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER, widow of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester (King Richard's uncle)
THOMAS MOWBRAY, Duke of Norfolk,
EARL OF SALISBURY,
LORD BERKELEY,
DUKE OF SURREY,
DUKE OF NORTHERN
HARRY PERCY, Northumberland's son,
LORD ROSS,
LORD WILLOUGHBY,
LORD FITZWATER,
SIR PIERCE OF EXTON,
LORD MARSHAL,
TWO HERALDS
GARDENER
GARDENER'S MAN
LADY ATTENDING THE QUEEN
KEEPER OF THE PRISON
A MAN ATTENDING EXTON
SERVINGMAN TO YORK
GROOM OF THE STABLE
LORDS, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS, LADIES ATTENDING THE QUEEN

supporters of Bolingbroke

supporters of King Richard

favorites of King Richard,

CAPTAIN of the Welsh Army,

scene: England and Wales]

[1.1]

Enter King Richard, John of Gaunt, with other nobles and attendants.

KING RICHARD

Old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster,
Hast thou according to thy oath and bond

Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,
Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

GAUNT I have, my liege.

KING RICHARD

Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him

4 late recent. appeal accusation, formal challenge or impeachment that the accuser was obliged to maintain in combat 5 our, us (The royal plural.) leisure i.e., lack of leisure 7 liege i.e., sovereign. 8 sounded inquired of
If he appeal the Duke on ancient malice,
Or worthily, as a good subject should,
On some known ground of treachery in him?

GAUNT
   As near as I could sift him on that argument,
   On some apparent danger seen in him
   Aimed at Your Highness, no inveterate malice.

KING RICHARD
   Then call them to our presence.    [Exit an attendant.]
   Face to face,
   And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
   The accuser and the accused freely speak.
   High-stomached are they both, and full of ire;
   In rage, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

   Enter Bolingbroke and Mowbray.

BOLINGBROKE
   Many years of happy days befall
   My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!

MOWBRAY
   Each day still better others’ happiness,
   Until the heavens, envying earth’s good hap,
   Add an immortal title to your crown!

KING RICHARD
   We thank you both. Yet one but flatters us,
   As well appeareth by the cause you come:
   Namely, to appeal each other of high treason.
   Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object
   Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

BOLINGBROKE
   First—heaven be the record to my speech!—
   In the devotion of a subject’s love,
   Tend’ring the precious safety of my prince,
   And free from other misbegotten hate,
   Come I appellant to this princely presence.
   Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
   And mark my greeting well, for what I speak
   My body shall make good upon this earth
   Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
   Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
   Too good to be so and too bad to live,
   Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,
   The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.
   Once more, the more fair and crystal is the sky,
   The accuser and the accused freely speak.
   With a foul traitor’s name stuff I thy throat,
   Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
   And mark my greeting well, for what I speak
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   Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
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   Too good to be so and too bad to live,
   Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,
   The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.
   Once more, the more fair and crystal is the sky,
   The accuser and the accused freely speak.
   With a foul traitor’s name stuff I thy throat,
   Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
   And mark my greeting well, for what I speak
   My body shall make good upon this earth
   Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
   Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
   Too good to be so and too bad to live,
   Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,
   The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.
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   The accuser and the accused freely speak.
   With a foul traitor’s name stuff I thy throat,
   Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
   And mark my greeting well, for what I speak
   My body shall make good upon this earth
   Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
   Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
   Too good to be so and too bad to live,
The which he hath detained for lewd employments, like a false traitor and injurious villain. Besides I say, and will in battle prove or here or elsewhere to the furthest verge that ever was surveyed by English eye, that all the treasons for these eighteen years Complotted and contrived in this land fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.

Further I say, and further will maintain upon his bad life to make all this good, that he did plot the Duke of Gloucester’s death, suggest his soon-believing adversaries, and consequently, like a traitor coward, slued out his innocent soul through streams of blood—Which blood, like sacrificing Abel’s, cries even from the tongueless caverns of the earth to me for justice and rough chastisement. And, by the glorious worth of my descent, this arm shall do it or this life be spent.

KING RICHARD
How high a pitch his resolution soars!
Thomas of Norfolk, what say’st thou to this?

MOWBRAY
Oh, let my sovereign turn away his face and bid his ears a little while be deaf, till I have told this slander of his blood how God and good men hate so foul a liar!

KING RICHARD
Mowbray, impartial are our eyes and ears. Were he my brother, nay, my kingdom’s heir, as he is but my father’s brother’s son, now, by my scepter’s awe I make a vow, such neighbor nearness to our sacred blood should nothing privilege him nor partialize the unstooping firmness of my upright soul. He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou. Free speech and fearless I to thee allow.

MOWBRAY
Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart through the false passage of thy throat thou liest! Three parts of that receipt I had for Calais disburset I duly to His Highness’ soldiers; the other part reserved by I consent, for that my sovereign liege was in my debt upon remainder of a dear account since last I went to France to fetch his queen. Now swallow down that lie. For Gloucester’s death, I slew him not, but to my own disgrace neglected my sworn duty in that case. To Gaunt! For you, my noble lord of Lancaster, the honorable father to my foe, once did I lay an ambush for thy life, a trespass that doth vex my grieved soul; but ere I last received the sacrament I did confess it, and exactly begged your Grace’s pardon, and I hope I had it. This is my fault. As for the rest appealed, it issues from the rancor of a villain, a recreant and most degenerate traitor, which in myself I boldly will defend, and interchangeably hurl down my gage upon this overweening traitor’s foot, to prove myself a loyal gentleman even in the best blood chambered in his bosom.

In haste whereof most heartily I pray your Highness to assign our trial day.

KING RICHARD
Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me; let’s purge this choler without letting blood. This we prescribe, though no physician; deep malice makes too deep incision. Forget, forgive; conclude and be agreed; our doctors say this is no month to bleed. Good uncle, let this end where it begun; we’ll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

GAUNT
To be a make-peace shall become my age. Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk’s gage.

KING RICHARD
And Norfolk, throw down his.

GAUNT
When, Harry, when? Obedience bids I should not bid again.

KING RICHARD
Norfolk, throw down, we bid; there is no boot.

90 lewd vile, base 93 Or either 95 these eighteen years i.e., ever since the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 96 Complotted plotted in a conspiracy 97 Fetch derive. head and spring (Sy nonymous words meaning “origin.”) 100 Duke of Gloucester’s death (Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, a younger son of Edward III and brother of John of Gaunt, was murdered at Calais in September 1397, while in Mowbray’s custody.) 101 Suggest . . . adversaries did prompt Gloucester’s easily persuaded enemies (to believe him guilty of treason) 102 consequently afterward 103 Sluiced out let flow (as by the opening of a sluice, or valve) 104 Abel’s (for the story of Cain’s murder of his brother Abel, the first such murder on earth and the archetype of the killing of a kinsman, see Genesis 4:3–12.) 105 tongueless resonant but without articulate speech; echoing 109 pitch highest reach of a falcon’s flight 113 this slander . . . blood this disgrace to the royal family 118 my scepter’s awe the reverence due my scepter 120 nothing not at all. partialize make partial, bias 126 receipt money received 129 For that because 131 Upon . . . account for the balance of a heavy debt 131 Since . . . queen (Mowbray went in 1395 to France to negotiate the King’s marriage to Isabella, daughter of the French King Charles VI, but Richard himself escorted her to England.) 132–4 For . . . case (Mowbray speaks guardedly but seems to imply that he postponed the execution of Gloucester that he was ordered by Richard to carry out.) 132 For As for 140 exactly (1) explicitly (2) fully 142 appealed of which I am charged 144 recreant cowardly; or, coward (used as a noun) 145 Which which charge. in myself in my own person 146 interchangeably in exchange, reciprocally 147 overweening arrogant, proud 149 Even in by shedding 150 In haste whereof To hasten which proof of my innocence 153 Let’s . . . blood let’s treat this wrath (caused by an excess of bile or choler) by purging (vomiting or evacuation) rather than by medical bloodletting. (With a play on “bloodshed in combat.”) 156 conclude come to a final agreement 157 no month to bleed (learned authorities often differed as to which months or seasons were best for medicinal bloodletting.) 164 boot help for it.
MOWBRAY [kneeling]
Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at thy foot.
My life thou shalt command, but not my shame.
The one my duty owes; but my fair name,
Despite of death that lives upon my grave,
To dark dishonor’s use thou shalt not have.
I am disgraced, impeached, and baffled here,
Pierced to the soul with slander’s venomed spear,
The which no balm can cure but his heart-blood
Which breathed this poison.

KING RICHARD
Rage must be withstood.
Give me his gage. Lions make leopards tame.

MOWBRAY
Yea, but not change his spots. Take but my shame,
And I resign my gage. My dear gage, my lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation; that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times-barred-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honor is my life; both grow in one;
Take honor from me, and my life is done.
Then, dear my liege, mine honor let me try;
In that I live, and for that will I die.

KING RICHARD [to Bolingbroke]
Cousin, throw up your gage; do you begin.

BOLINGBROKE
Oh, God defend my soul from such deep sin!
Shall I seem castrefallen in my father’s sight?
Or with pale beggar-fear impeach my height
Before this out-dared dastard? Ere my tongue
Shall wound my honor with such feeble wrong,
Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear,
The slavish motive of recanting fear
And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace,
Where shame doth harbor, even in Mowbray’s face.

[Exit Gaunt.]

KING RICHARD
We were not born to sue but to command;
Which since we cannot do to make you friends,
Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,
At Coventry upon Saint Lambert’s day.

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165 Myself I throw i.e., I throw myself, instead of my gage
168 Despite . . . grave that will live in the epitaph on my grave in spite of devouring Death 170 impeached accused. baffled publicly dishonored 173 Which . . . poison of him who uttered this slander. 174 Lions . . . tame (The royal arms showed a lion rampant; Mowbray’s emblem was a leopard.) 175 spots (1) leopard spots 177 mortal times our earthly lives 182 in one inseparably 184 try put to the test 186 throw . . . gage i.e., surrender your gage up to me, thereby ending the quarrel. (Richard is probably seated on a raised throne, as in scene 3.) 189 impeach my height discredit my high rank 190 out-dared dared down, cowed. dastard coward. 191 feeble wrong dishonorable submission 192 sound . . . parle trumpet so shameful a negotiation, i.e., consent to ask a truce 192–5 my teeth . . . face my teeth will bite off my tongue as a craven instrument of cowardly capitulation and spit it out bleeding, to its (the tongue’s) great disgrace, into Mowbray’s face, where shame abides perpetually. 195.3 Earl Gaunt (A stage direction from the Folio, adopted by most editors so that Gaunt will not be required to exit at the end of scene 1 and then immediately reenter.) 199 Saint Lambert’s day September 17.
Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee.
That which in mean men we entitle patience
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.
What shall I say? To safeguard thine own life
The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

GAUNT
God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute,
His deputy anointed in His sight,
Hath caused his death; the which if wrongfully
Let heaven revenge, for I may never lift
An angry arm against His minister.

DUCHESS
Where then, alas, may I complain myself?

GAUNT
To God, the widow's champion and defense.

DUCHESS
Why then, I will. Farewell, old Gaunt.
Thou goest to Coventry, there to behold
Our cousin Hereford and fell Mowbray fight.
Oh, sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,
That it may enter butcher Mowbray's breast!
Or if misfortune miss the first career,
Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom
That they may break his foaming courser's back
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,
A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford!
Farewell, old Gaunt. Thy sometimes brother's wife
With her companion, Grief, must end her life.

GAUNT
Sister, farewell. I must to Coventry.
As much good stay with thee as go with me!

DUCHESS
Yet one word more. Grief boundeth where it falls,
Not with the empty hollowness, but weight.
I take my leave before I have begun,
For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done.
Commend me to thy brother, Edmund York.
Lo, this is all. Nay, yet depart not so!
Though this be all, do not so quickly go;
And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms,
In God's name and the King's, say who thou art
And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms,
Both to defend my loyalty and truth
For nothing but His Majesty's approach.

MARSHAL [to Mowbray]
My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
Who hither come engaged by my oath—
Which God defend a knight should violate!—
Both to defend my loyalty and truth
To God, my king, and my succeeding issue
Against what man thou com'st, and what thy quarrel.
Speak truly on thy knighthood and thy oath,
As so defend thee heaven and thy valor!

MOWBRAY
My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, Norfolk in arms, defendant,
To swear him in the justice of his cause.
Ask him his name, and orderly proceed
To swear him in the justice of his cause.

MARSHAL
Stays but the summons of the appellant's trumpet.
The Duke of Norfolk, sprightfully and bold,
Who hither come engaged by my oath—
Against the Duke of Hereford that appeals me,
To prove him, in defending of myself,
A traitor to my God, my king, and me;
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

The trumpets sound. Enter [Bolingbroke,] Duke of Hereford, appellant, in armor, [with a herald].

KING RICHARD

MARSHAL
My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford armed?

AUMERLE
Yea, at all points, and longs to enter in.

MARSHAL
The Duke of Norfolk, sprightly and bold,
Stays but the summons of the appellant's trumpet.

AUMERLE
Why then the champions are prepared, and stay
For nothing but His Majesty's approach.

33 mean lowly 37 God's substitute i.e., the King, God's deputy on earth 39 his i.e., Gloucester's 42 complain myself lodge a complaint on my own behalf. 46 cousin kinman. fell fierce 47 sit... wrongs may my husband's wrongs sit 49 misfortune i.e., Mowbray's downfall. career charge of the horse in a tourney or combat 52 lists barriers enclosing the tournament area 53 caitiff base, cowardly 54 sometimes late 58 boundeth bounces, rebounds, returns. (The Duchess apologizes for speaking yet again; her grief, she says, continues on and on, like a bouncing tennis ball.) 59 Not... weight (Grief is not hollow, like a tennis ball, but continues to move because of its heaviness.) 60 begun i.e., begun to grieve 62 Edmund York Edmund of Langley, fifth son of Edward III. 66 Pleshey Gloucester's country seat, in Essex. 68 unfurnished bare 69 offices service quarters, workrooms

1. The lists at Coventry. Scaffolds or raised seats are provided for the King and his nobles, and chairs are provided for the combatants. 2 at all points completely. in i.e., into the lists, the space designed for combat. 3 sprightly with high spirit. 4 Stays awaits 9 orderly according to the rules. 13 quarrel complaint. 18 defend forbid 21 appeals accuses
Both who he is and why he cometh hither
Thus plated in habiliments of war;
And formally, according to our law,
Depose him in the justice of his cause.

MARSHAL [to Bolingbroke]
What is thy name? And wherefore com'st thou hither,
Before King Richard in his royal lists?
Against whom comest thou? And what's thy quarrel?
Speak like a true knight, so defend thee heaven!

BOLINGBROKE
Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby
Am I, who ready here do stand in arms
To prove, by God's grace and my body's valor,
In lists, on Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
That he is a traitor foul and dangerous
To God of heaven, King Richard, and to me;
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

MARSHAL
On pain of death, no person be so bold
Or daring-hardy as to touch the lists,
Except the Marshal and such officers
Appointed to direct these fair designs.

BOLINGBROKE
Lord Marshal, let me kiss my sovereign's hand
And bow my knee before His Majesty;
For Mowbray and myself are like two men
That vow a long and weary pilgrimage.
Then let us take a ceremonious leave
And loving farewell of our several friends.

MARSHAL [to King Richard]
The appellant in all duty greets Your Highness
And craves to kiss your hand and take his leave.

KING RICHARD [coming down]
We will descend and fold him in our arms.

[He embraces Bolingbroke.]

Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause is right,
So be thy fortune in this royal fight!
Farewell, my blood—which if today thou shed,
Lament we may, but not revenge thee dead.

BOLINGBROKE
Oh, let no noble eye profane a tear
For me if I be gored with Mowbray's spear.
As confident as is the falcon's flight
Against a bird do I with Mowbray fight.

[To the King] My loving lord, I take my leave of you;
[To Aumerle] Of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle;
Not sick, although I have to do with death,
But lusty, young, and cheerly drawing breath.
Lo, as at English feasts, so I regreet
The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet.

[To Gaunt] O thou, the earthly author of my blood,
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,
Doth with a twofold vigor lift me up
To reach at victory above my head,
Add proof unto mine armor with thy prayers,
And with thy blessings steel my lance's point
That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat
And furbish new the name of John o' Gaunt
Even in the lusty havior of his son.

GAUNT
God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!
Be swift like lightning in the execution,
And let thy blows, doubly redoubled,
Fall like amazing thunder on the casque
Of thy adverse pernicious enemy.
Rouse up thy youthful blood, be valiant, and live.

BOLINGBROKE
Mine innocence and Saint George to thrive!

MOWBRAY
However God or fortune cast my lot,
There lives or dies, true to King Richard's throne,
A loyal, just, and upright gentleman.

KING RICHARD
Farewell, my lord. Securely I espy
Virtue with valor couchèd in thine eye.—
Order the trial, Marshal, and begin.

MARSHAL
Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,
Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!

[28]

BOLINGBROKE
Strong as a tower in hope, I cry "Amen!"

MELHORN [to an officer]
Go bear this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.

[29]

FIRST HERALD
Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby
Stands here for God, his sovereign, and himself,
On pain to be found false and recreant,
To prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray,

[70]

regenerate born anew 71 twofold i.e., of father and son 73 proof invulnerability 75 enter . . . coat pierce Mowbray's armor as though it were made of wax 76 furbish polish 77 lusty havior vigorous behavior, deportment 81 amazing bewildering. casque helmet 84 Mine . . . thrive! May my innocence and the protectorship of Saint George bring me victory! 90 enfranchisement freedom 94 Take . . . years take from me the wish that you may enjoy many happy years. 95 gentle unperturbed in spirit. to jest i.e., to a play or entertainment 96 quiet calm 97 Securely Confidently 98 couched lodged, expressed, leveled in readiness (as with a lance) 102 Strong . . . hope (Alludes to Psalm 61:3: “for thou hast been my hope, and a strong tower for me against the face of the enemy.”)
A traitor to his God, his king, and him,
And dares him to set forward to the fight.

SECOND HERALD
Here standeth Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
On pain to be found false and recreant,
Both to defend himself and to approve
Henry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,
To God, his sovereign, and to him disloyal,
Courageously and with a free desire
Attending but the signal to begin.

MARSHAL
Sound, trumpets, and set forward, combatants!
[Charge is sounded. Richard throws down his baton.]

Stay! The King hath thrown his warder down.

KING RICHARD
Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,
And both return back to their chairs again.
[To his counselors] Withdraw with us, and let the trumpets sound
While we return these dukes what we decree.
[A long flourish. Richard consults apart with Gaunt and others.]

Draw near,
And list what with our council we have done.
For that our kingdom's earth should not be soiled
With that dear blood which it hath fosterèd;
And for our eyes do hate the dire aspect
Of civil wounds plowed up with neighbors' sword;
And for we think the eagle-wingèd pride
Of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts,
With rival-hating envy, set on you
To wake our peace, which in our country's cradle
Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep,
Which, so roused up with boist'rous untuned drums,
With harsh-resounding trumpets' dreadful Bray
And grating shock of wrathful iron arms,
Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace
And make us wade even in our kindred's blood:
You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of life,
To keep the oath that we administer:
Our part therein we banish with yourselves—
Lay on our royal sword your banished hands.
Return again, and take an oath with thee.
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

Which I with some unwillingness pronounce:
The sly slow hours shall not determinate
The dateless limit of thy dear exile.
The hopeless word of "never to return"
Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life.

MOWBRAY
A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
And all unlooked-for from Your Highness' mouth.
A dearer merit, not so deep a maim
As to be cast forth in the common air,
Have I deserve'd at Your Highness' hands.
The language I have learned these forty years,
My native English, now I must forgo;
And now my tongue's use is to me no more
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument casèd up,
Or, being open, put into his hands
That know no touch to tune the harmony.
Within my mouth you have enjailed my tongue,
Doubly portocullisèd with my teeth and lips,
And dull unfeeling barren ignorance
Is made my jailer to attend on me.
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now.
What is thy sentence then but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

MOWBRAY
Then thus I turn me from my country's light,
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD
It boosts thee not to be compassionate.
After our sentence plaining comes too late.

MOWBRAY
Then thus I turn me from my country's light,
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD
Return again, and take an oath with thee.
Lay on our royal sword your banished hands.
[They place their hands on Richard's sword.]

Swear by the duty that you owe to God—
Our part therein we banish with yourselves—
To keep the oath that we administer:
You never shall, so help you truth and God,
Embrace each other's love in banishment,
Nor never look upon each other's face,
Nor never write, regret, nor reconcile
This louring tempest of your homebred hate;
Nor never by advised purpose meet
To plot, contrive, or complot any ill
'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

BOLINGBROKE
I swear.
And I, to keep all this.

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:
By this time, had the King permitted us,
One of our souls had wandered in the air,
Banished this frail sepulchre of our flesh,
As now our flesh is banished from this land.
Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm.
Since thou hast far to go, bear not along
The clogging burden of a guilty soul.

MOWBRAY

No, Bolingbroke. If ever I were traitor,
My name be blotted from the book of life,
And I from heaven banished as from hence!
But what thou art, God, thou, and I do know,
And all too soon, I fear, the King shall rue.—
Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray;
Save back to England, all the world’s my way. Exit.

KING RICHARD [to Gaunt]

Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes
I see thy grieved heart. Thy sad aspect
Hath from the number of his banished years
Plucked four away. [To Bolingbroke] Six frozen winters
spent,
Return with welcome home from banishment.

BOLINGBROKE

How long a time lies in one little word!
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word; such is the breath of kings.

GAUNT

I thank my liege that in regard of me
He shortens four years of my son’s exile.
But little vantage shall I reap thereby;
For, ere the six years that he hath to spend
Can change their moons and bring their times about,
My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;
My inch of taper will be burnt and done,
And blindfold Death not let me see my son.

KING RICHARD

Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.

GAUNT

But not a minute, King, that thou canst give.
Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow;
Thou canst help Time to furrow me with age,
But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage;
Thy word is current with him for my death,
But dear, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

KING RICHARD

Thy son is banished upon good advice,
Whereto thy tongue a party verdict gave.
Why at our justice seemedst thou then to lour?

GAUNT

Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
You urged me as a judge, but I had rather
You would have bid me argue like a father.
Oh, had it been a stranger, not my child,
To smooth his fault I should have been more mild.
A partial slander sought I to avoid
And in the sentence my own life destroyed.
Alas, I looked when some of you should say
I was too strict, to make mine own away;
But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue
Against my will to do myself this wrong.

KING RICHARD

Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, bid him so.
Six years we banish him, and he shall go.

AUMERLE [to Bolingbroke]

Cousin, farewell. What presence must not know,
From where you do remain let paper show. [Exit.]

MARSHAL [to Bolingbroke]

My lord, no leave take I, for I will ride,
As far as land will let me, by your side.

BOLINGBROKE makes no answer. The Lord Marshal
stands aside.

GAUNT [to Bolingbroke]

Oh, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,
That thou returnest no greeting to thy friends?

BOLINGBROKE

I have too few to take my leave of you,
When the tongue’s office should be prodigal
To breathe the abundant dolor of the heart.

GAUNT

Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

BOLINGBROKE

Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

GAUNT

What is six winters? They are quickly gone.

BOLINGBROKE

To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

GAUNT

Call it a travel that thou tak’st for pleasure.

BOLINGBROKE

My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,
Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage.

GAUNT

The sullen passage of thy weary steps

234 a party verdict one person’s share in a joint verdict
240 smooth extenuate
241 partial slander accusation of partiality (on behalf of my son)
243 looked when expected that, awaited the point at which
244 to . . . away in making away with my own (son)
249 What . . . know What I cannot learn from you in person
250 s.d. Exit (The exit is uncertain; see 1.4.1–4.)
251 no leave take I e., I will not take my leave of you, my lord; I will not say good-bye
256 office function.
257 To breathe in uttering
258 grief grievance
262 travel (The quarto spelling: “trauaile,” suggests an interchangeable meaning of “travel” and “labor.”)
265 sullen (1) melancholy (2) dull
Esteem as foil wherein thou art to set
The precious jewel of thy home return.

BOLINGBROKE
Nay, rather every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world
I wander from the jewels that I love.
Must I not serve a long apprenticeship
To foreign passages, and in the end,
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else
But that I was a journeyman to grief?

GAUNT
All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus:
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the King did banish thee,
But thou the King. Woe doth the heavier sit
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honor,
And not the King exiled thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime.
Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou com'st.
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strewed,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance:
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

BOLINGBROKE
Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasian?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking of fantastic summer's heat?
Oh, no, the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
Fell Sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when he bites but lanceth not the sore.

266 foil thin metal leaf set behind gems to show off their luster; hence, that which sets something off to advantage
269 remember remind.
A deal of world a great distance
272 passages wanderings, experiences
273 Having my freedom (1) having completed my apprenticeship (2) having been allowed to return home
274 journeyman (Literally, one who labors for day wages as a fully qualified craftsman—with a hint also of one who makes a journey. Bolingbroke will be professor only in grief.)
275 the eye of heaven the sun
280 But . . . King i.e., but suppose that you are banishing the King to the moral wilderness his crimes deserve.
280–1 Woe . . . borne Woe is all the more oppressive when it perceives that the sufferer is faint-hearted.
282 purchase acquire, win
286 Look what Whatever
289 the presence strewed the royal presence chamber strewn with rushes
291 measure stately, formal dance
292 gnarling snarling, growling
293 sets it light regards it lightly
295 Caucasus mountain range between the Black and Caspian seas
299 fantastic imagined
302 Fell Fierce. rankle cause irritation and festering
303 lanceth not does not open the wound (to permit the release of the infection; Bolingbroke's point is that sorrow should be openly confronted, not rationalized or covered over and thus allowed to fester)

Then, England's ground, farewell. Sweet soil, adieu,
My mother and my nurse that bears me yet!
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can:
Though banished, yet a trueborn Englishman.

Exeunt.
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
As ‘twere to banish their affects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With “Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends,”
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects’ next degree in hope.

GREEN
Well, he is gone, and with him go these thoughts.
Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland,
Expedient manage must be made, my liege,
Ere further leisure yield them further means
For their advantage and Your Highness’ loss.

KING RICHARD
We will ourself in person to this war.
And, for our coffers with too great a court
And liberal largess are grown somewhat light,
We are enforced to farm our royal realm,
The revenue whereof shall furnish us
For our affairs in hand. If that come short,
Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters,
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,
They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold
And send them after to supply our wants;
For we will make for Ireland presently.

Enter Bushy.

BUSHY

Old John of Gaunt is grievous sick, my lord,
Suddenly taken, and hath sent post haste
To entreat Your Majesty to visit him.

KING RICHARD

Where lies he?

BUSHY

At Ely House.

KING RICHARD

Now put it, God, in the physician’s mind
To help him to his grave immediately!
The lancing of his coffers shall make coats
To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.
Come, gentlemen, let all go visit him.
Pray God we may make haste and come too late!

Amen.

Exeunt.
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder;
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far as from home
For Christian service and true chivalry
As is the sepulcher in stubborn Jewry
Of the world’s ransom, blessed Mary’s son,
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out—I die pronouncing it—
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of wat’ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
Withinky bolts and rotten parchment bonds.
That England that was wont to conquer others
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death!

Enter King [Richard] and Queen, [Aumerle, Bushy, Green, Bagot, Ross, and Willoughby,] etc.

YORK
The King is come. Deal mildly with his youth,
For young hot colts being reined do rage the more.

QUEEN
How fares our noble uncle Lancaster?

KING RICHARD
What comfort, man? How is’t with aged Gaunt?

GAUNT
Oh, how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old.
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast,
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
For sleeping England long time have I watched;
Watching bred leanness, leanness is all gaunt.
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
Is my strict fast—I mean, my children’s looks—
And, therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt.
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
Whose hollow womb inherits naught but bones.

KING RICHARD
Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

GAUNT
No, misery makes sport to mock itself.
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
I mock my name, great King, to flatter thee.

KING RICHARD
Should dying men flatter with those that live?

GAUNT
No, no, men living flatter those that die.

KING RICHARD
Thou, now a-dying, sayest thou flatterest me.

GAUNT
Oh, no, thou diest, though I the sicker be.

KING RICHARD
I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

GAUNT
Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.

Thy deathbed is no lesser than thy land,
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Commit’st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee.
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head,
And yet, encaged in so small a verge,
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.
Oh, had thy grandsire with a prophet’s eye
Seen how his son’s son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy land,
Deposing thee before thou wert possessed,
Which art possessed now to depose thyself.
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;

36 betimes soon, early 38 Light vanity frivolous dissipation. cormorant gluton. (Literally, a voracious seabird.) 39 means i.e., means of sustenance 41 earth of majesty land fit for kings. seat of Mars residence of the god of war 44 infection (1) plague (2) moral pollution 45 happy breed fortunate race 47 office function 51 teeming fruitful 52 by their breed for their ancestral reputation for prowess 55 stubborn Jewry i.e., Judea, called stubborn because it resisted Christianity. 60 tenement land or property held by a tenant. pelting paltry 61 bound in bordered, surrounded 63 bound in legally constrained 64 blots . . . bonds i.e., the blank charters. 66 ensuing approaching 73 composition constitution. 76 meat food 77 watched kept watch at night, been vigilant 80 Is . . . fast is something I must forgo 81 therein fasting i.e., since I am starved of that pleasure 83 inherits possesses, will receive 84 nicely (1) ingeniously (2) trillingly 85 to mock of mocking 86-7 Since . . . thee Since you seek to destroy my family name (by banishing my son), I mock my name to please you and flatter your greatness. 88 flatter with try to please 89 flatter i.e., are attentive to, offer comfort to 94 Ill . . . ill I am starved of that pleasure 99 physicians i.e., the King’s favorites 101 compass circle, circumference 102 verge (1) circle, ring (2) the compass about the King’s court, which extended for twelve miles 103 waste (1) waist, circumference (2) that which is destroyed. (With a quibble on the legal meaning of waist, “damage done to property by a tenant.”) 105 destroy his sons (1) destroy Edward III’s sons, Richard’s uncles (2) destroy Richard’s own heritage 106 From . . . shame he would have put the matter you have shamefully handled out of your reach. 107 Deposing dispossessing, possessed put in possession of the crown 108 Which . . . thyself you who are now seized with an obsessive desire to give away your authority (by leasing the realm to favorites). 109 cousin kinsman, nephew. regent ruler
But, for thy world enjoying but this land, 
Is it not more than shame to shame it so? 
Landlord of England art thou now, not king. 
Thy state of law is bondslove to the law, 
And thou—

KING RICHARD A lunatic lean-witted fool, 
Presuming on an auge’s privilege, 
Darest with thy frozen admonition 
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood 
With fury from his native residence. 
Now, by my seat’s right royal majesty, 
Wert thou not brother to great Edward’s son, 
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head 
Should run thy head from thy unrevenged shoulders.

GAUNT Oh, spare me not, my brother Edward’s son, 
For that I was his father Edward’s son! 
That blood already, like the pelican, 
Hast thou tapped out and drunkenly caroused. 
My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul— 
Whom fair behall in heaven ‘mongst happy souls!— 
May be a precedent and witness good 
That thou respect’st not spilling Edward’s blood. 
Join with the present sickness that I have, 
And thy unkindness be like crooked age 
To crop at once a too-long-withered flower!— 
Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee! 
These words hereafter thy tormentors be!— 
Convey me to my bed, then to my grave. 
Love they to live that love and honor have. 
Exit [borne off by his attendants].

KING RICHARD And let them die that age and sullens have, 
For both hast thou, and both become the grave. 

YORK I do beseech Your Majesty, impute his words 
To wayward sickliness and age in him. 
He loves you, on my life, and holds you dear 
As Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

111 But . . . land i.e., but since you enjoy as your domain only this land of England (rather than the whole world) 113 Landlord i.e., One who leases out property 114 Thy . . . to the law i.e., Your legal status as King is now subservient to and at the mercy of the law governing contracts, such as blank charters 116 an auge’s privilege i.e., a sick person’s right to be testy 117 frozen (¢) chilly (2) caused by a chill 119 his its 120 seat’s throne’s 121 great Edward’s son Edward the Black Prince, Richard’s father 122–3 runs . . . run runs on, talks . . . drive, chase 122 roundly unceremoniously, bluntly 123 unrevenger irreverent, disrespectful 125 For that simply because 126 pelican (The pelican was thought to feed its ungrateful and murderous young with its own blood.) 127 tapped out drawn as from a tapped barrel. caroused guilely, quaffed. 128 Whom fair behall to whom may good come 131 thou respect’st not you care nothing about 132–4 Join . . . flower May your unnatural behavior act in concert with my present illness and my advanced years to cut down my life like a too-long-withered flower! (Unkindness means both cruelty and behavior contrary to the natural bond that should exist in blood ties.) 135 die . . . thee i.e., may your shame live after you. 138 Love they Let them desire 139 sullens sullenness, melancholy 140 become suit 144 As i.e., as he would love. (But see the next note.)

KING RICHARD Right, you say true. As Hereford’s love, so his; 
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is. 

[Enter Northumberland.]

NORTHUMBERLAND My liege, old Gaunt commends him to Your Majesty.

KING RICHARD What says he?

NORTHUMBERLAND Nay, nothing, all is said. 
His tongue is now a stringless instrument; 
Words, life, and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

MORT Be York the next that must be bankrupt so! 
Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe.

KING RICHARD The ripest fruit first falls, and so doth he; 
His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be. 
So much for that. Now for our Irish wars: 
We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns, 
Which live like venom where no venom else. 
But only they have privilege to live. 
And, for these great affairs do ask some charge, 
Towards our assistance we do seize to us 
The plate, coin, revenues, and movables; 
Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possessed.

YORK How long shall I be patient? Ah, how long 
Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong? 
Not Gloucester’s death, nor Hereford’s banishment, 
Nor Gaunt’s rebukes, nor England’s private wrongs, 
Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke 
About his marriage, nor my own disgrace, 
Have ever made me sour my patient cheek 
Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign’s face. 
I am the last of noble Edward’s sons, 
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first. 
In war was never lion raged more fierce, 
In peace was never gentle lamb more mild, 
Than was that young and princely gentleman. 
His face thou hast, for even so looked he, 
Accomplished with the number of thy hours; 
But when he frowned, it was against the French 
And not against his friends. His noble hand

145 Right . . . his (Richard deliberately takes the opposite of what York had intended to say; Richard gibes that Gaunt is as little fond of the King as is Hereford.) 152 Though . . . woe Though death is the privation of life, it does end the misery of human existence which is itself a kind of death in life. 154 our . . . be i.e., our journey through life is yet to be completed but will also end. 156–8 We . . . live We must expel these shaggy-haired light-armed Irish foot soldiers, who live there like poisonous snakes where no others are allowed to exist. (Richard alludes to the freedom of Ireland from snakes, traditionally ascribed to Saint Patrick.) 159 for because ask some charge require some expenditure 161 movables personal property 166 Nor . . . wrongs nor the rebukes given to Gaunt, nor wrongs inflicted on private English subjects 167–8 prevention . . . marriage (Holinshed’s Chronicles report that Richard had forestalled Bolingbroke’s intended marriage with the Duke de Berri’s daughter.) 170 Or bend . . . face or ever frown at the King, or give him reason to frown. 173 was . . . fierce never was there a lion more fiercely enraged 177 Accomplished . . . hours i.e., when he was your age
Did win what he did spend, and spent not that
Which his triumphant father’s hand had won.
His hands were guilty of no kindred blood,
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.
Oh, Richard! York is too far gone with grief,
Or else he never would compare between.

**KING RICHARD**

Why, uncle, what’s the matter?

**YORK**

O my liege,
Pardon me, if you please; if not, I, pleased
Not to be pardoned, am content withal.
Seek you to seize and grip into your hands
The royalties and rights of banished Hereford?
Is not Gaunt dead? And doth not Hereford live?
Was not Gaunt just? And is not Harry true?
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?
Is not his heir a well-deserving son?
Take Hereford’s rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not tomorrow then ensue today;
Be not thyself; for how art thou a king
But by fair sequence and succession?
Now, afore God—God forbid I say true!—
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford’s rights,
Call in the letters patents that he hath
By his attorneys general to sue
His livery, and deny his offered hommage,
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts,
And pricky my tender patience to those thoughts
Which honor and allegiance cannot think.

**KING RICHARD**

Think what you will, we seize into our hands
His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

**YORK**

I’ll not be by the while. My liege, farewell.
What will ensue hereof there’s none can tell;
But by bad courses may be understood
That their events can never fall out good.

**KING RICHARD**

Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight.
Bid him repair to us to Ely House
To see this business. Tomorrow next
Do not for Ireland, and ‘tis time, I trow.
And quite lost their hearts; the nobles hath he fined
The commons hath he pilled with grievous taxes,
And daily new exactions are devised,
And what i’ God’s name doth become of this?
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.
And what i’ God’s name doth become of this?
That will the King severely prosecute
‘Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

**ROSS**

No good at all that I can do for him,
Unless you call it good to pity him,
Bereft and gelded of his patrimony.

**KING RICHARD**

Think what you will, we seize into our hands
His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

**YORK**

I’ll not be by the while. My liege, farewell.
What will ensue hereof there’s none can tell;
But by bad courses may be understood
That their events can never fall out good.

**KING RICHARD**

Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight.
Bid him repair to us to Ely House
To see this business. Tomorrow next
We will for Ireland, and ‘tis time, I trow.
And we create, in absence of ourself,
Our uncle York Lord Governor of England,
For he is just and always loved us well.—

**THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND: 2.1**

Come on, our queen. Tomorrow must we part.
Be merry, for our time of stay is short.
[Flourish.] Execute King and Queen [with attendants].
Manet Northumberland [with Willoughby and Ross].

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

**ROSS**

And living too, for now his son is duke.

**WILLOUGHBY**

Barely in title, not in revenues.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Richly in both, if justice had her right.

**ROSS**

My heart is great, but it must break with silence,
Ere’t be disburdened with a liberal tongue.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Nay, speak thy mind; and let him ne’er speak more
That speaks thy words again to do thee harm!

**WILLOUGHBY**

Tends that thou wouldst speak to the Duke of
Hereford?

**ROSS**

If it be so, out with it boldly, man.
Quick is mine ear to hear of good towards him.

**ROSS**

No good at all that I can do for him,
Unless you call it good to pity him,
Bereft and gelded of his patrimony.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Now, afore God, ‘tis shame such wrongs are borne
In him, a royal prince, and many more
Of noble blood in this declining land.
The King is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers; and what they will inform
The King is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers; and what they will inform
Merely in hate ‘gainst any of us all,
That will the King severely prosecute
‘Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

**ROSS**

The commons hath he pilled with grievous taxes,
And quite lost their hearts; the nobles hath he fined
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.

**WILLOUGHBY**

And daily new exactions are devised,
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.
But what i’ God’s name doth become of this?

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Wars hath not wasted it, for warred he hath not,
But basely yielded upon compromise
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows.
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.

**ROSS**

The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.
THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND: 2.1

ROSS
He hath not money for these Irish wars,
His burdensome taxations notwithstanding,
But by the robbing of the banished Duke.

NORTHUMBERLAND
His noble kinsman. Most degenerate king!
But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,
Yet seek no shelter to avoid the storm;
We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,
And yet we strike not, but securely perish.

ROSS
We see the very wrack that we must suffer,
And unavowed is the danger now
For suffering so the causes of our wrack.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Not so. Even through the hollow eyes of death
I spy life peering; but I dare not say
How near the tidings of our comfort is.

ROSS
Be confident to speak, Northumberland.
We three are but thyself, and speaking so
Thy words are but as thoughts, as thou dost ours.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Then thus: I have from Port le Blanc,
A bay in Brittany, received intelligence
That Harry Duke of Hereford, Rainold Lord Cobham,
. . . . . . . . . . . . . .
That late broke from the Duke of Exeter,
His brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury,
Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir John Ramston,
Sir John Norbery, Sir Robert Waterton, and Francis
Coint,
All these well furnished by the Duke of Brittany
With eight tall ships, three thousand men of war,
Are making hither with all due expedience
And shortly mean to touch our northern shore.
Perhaps they had ere this, but that they stay
The first departing of the King for Ireland.
If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,
More than your lord’s departure weep not. More is not seen,
Or if it be, ‘tis with false sorrow’s eye,
Which for true weeps things imaginary.

**QUEEN**

It may be so, but yet my inward soul
Persuades me it is otherwise. How’er it be,
I cannot but be sad—so heavy sad
As, though on thinking on no thought I think,
Makes me with heavy nothing faint and shrink.

**BUSHY**

’Tis nothing but conceit, my gracious lady.

**QUEEN**

’Tis nothing less. Conceit is still derived
From some forefather grief. Mine is not so,
For nothing hath begot my something grief,
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve.
’Tis in reversion that I possess;
But what it is, that is not yet known what,
I cannot name. ’Tis nameless woe, I wot.

[Enter Green.]

**GREEN**

God save Your Majesty! And well met, gentlemen.
I hope the King is not yet shipped for Ireland.

**QUEEN**

Why hopest thou so? ’Tis better hope he is,
For his designs crave haste, his haste good hope.
Then wherefore dost thou hope he is not shipped?

**GREEN**

That he, our hope, might have retired his power,
And driven into despair an enemy’s hope,
Who strongly hath set footing in this land.
The banished Bolingbroke repeals himself
And with uplifted arms is safe arrived
At Ravenspurgh.

**QUEEN**

Now God in heaven forbid!

**GREEN**

Ah, madam, ’tis too true; and that is worse,
The lord Northumberland, his son young Harry Percy,
The lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby,
With all their powerful friends, are fled to him.

**BUSHY**

Why have you not proclaimed Northumberland
And all the rest revoluted faction traitors?

GREEN

We have, whereupon the Earl of Worcester
Hath broken his staff, resigned his stewardship,
And all the household servants fled with him
To Bolingbroke.

**QUEEN**

So, Green, thou art the midwife to my woe,
And Bolingbroke my sorrow’s dismal heir.
Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigy,
And I, a gasping new-delivered mother,
Have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow joined.

**BUSHY**

Despair not, madam.

**QUEEN**

Who shall hinder me?

I will despair, and be at enmity
With cozening hope. He is a flatterer,
A parasite, a keeper-back of death
Who gently would dissolve the bonds of life
Which false hope lingers in extremity.

[Enter York.]

**GREEN**

Here comes the Duke of York.

**QUEEN**

With signs of war about his aged neck.
Oh, full of careful business are his looks!
Uncle, for God’s sake, speak comfortable words.

**YORK**

Should I do so, I should belie my thoughts.
Comfort’s in heaven, and we are on the earth,
Where nothing lives but crosses, cares, and grief.
Your husband, he is gone to save far off,
Whilst others come to make him lose at home.
Here am I left to underprop his land,
Who, weak with age, cannot support myself.
Now comes the sick hour that his surfeit made;
Now shall he try his friends that flattered him.

[Enter a Servingman.]

**SERVINGMAN**

My lord, your son was gone before I came.

**YORK**

He was? Why, so. Go all which way it will!
The nobles they are fled, the commons they are cold,
And will, I fear, revolt on Hereford’s side.
Sisrah, get thee to Pleshey, to my sister Gloucester;
Bid her send me presently a thousand pound.
Hold, take my ring.

---

59 broken his staff broken his badge of office (in token of resignation as Lord High Steward. Worcester is brother of the Earl of Northumberland.) 63 dismal heir ill-omened offspring. 64 prodigy monstrous birth 69 cozening cheating. He i.e., False hope 71 Who i.e., death 72 lingers causes to linger 74 signs of war i.e., a piece of armor called the gorget, an iron collar that could be worn with ordinary clothes 75 careful business worried preoccupation 76 comfortable affording comfort 79 crosses obstacles, obstructions 80 save far off i.e., defend his rule in Ireland 82 underprop prop up, support 89 sirs ring (By which the Duchess will know that the request is sent by York himself.)
The Necessary Shakespeare

1085–1121

10 In

115

119 Berkeley

i.e., That depends upon York's efforts

my kinship to him bids that I right his wrong.

Green.

11 protest

101 So my untruth

by.

They remain onstage

make

always

cousin

tedious

i.e., If the power to pass judgment is given to the waver-

hilly district in Gloucestershire

121 at six and

seven i.e., in confusion.

121.2 Manent They remain onstage

127 Is

... King makes us enemies of those who oppose the King.

6 knave i.e., fellow. 101 So my untruth provided that some disloy-
alty on my part 102 brother's i.e., the Duke of Gloucester's. 115 my ... right my kinship to him bids that I right his wrong. 116 somewhat something. cousin i.e., the Queen 117 dispose of make arrangements for 119 Berkeley a castle near Bristol. 121 at six and seven i.e., in confusion. 121.2 Manent They remain onstage 127 Is ... King makes us enemies of those who oppose the King.

96 Well, I will for refuge straight to Bristol Castle.

The Earl of Wiltshire is already there.

136 office service 137 hateful full of hate, angry 141 vain in vain 143 That's... thrives i.e., That depends upon York's efforts and success

2.3. Location: In Gloucestershire, near Berkeley Castle.

9 Cotswold hilly district in Gloucestershire

10 In by wanting lacking 11 protest declare 12 tediousness and process tedious process 15-16 And hope... enjoyed and the hope of future happiness is only slightly less joyous than happiness already enjoyed.

16 this this expectation
Shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done
By sight of what I have: your noble company.

Bolingbroke
Of much less value is my company
Than your good words. But who comes here?

Enter Harry Percy.

Northumberland
It is my son, young Harry Percy,
Sent from my brother Worcester whencesoever.—
Harry, how fares your uncle?

Percy
I had thought, my lord, to have learned his health of you.

Northumberland
Why, is he not with the Queen?

Percy
No, my good lord. He hath forsook the court,
Broken his staff of office, and dispersed
The household of the King.

Northumberland
What was his reason?
He was not so resolved when last we spake together.

Percy
Because Your Lordship was proclaimed traitor.
But he, my lord, is gone to Ravenspurgh
To offer service to the Duke of Hereford,
And sent me over by Berkeley to discover
What power the Duke of York had levied there,
With then directions to repair to Ravenspurgh.

Northumberland
Have you forgot the Duke of Hereford, boy?

Percy
No, my good lord, for that is not forgot
Which ne'er I did remember. To my knowledge
I never in my life did look on him.

Northumberland
Then learn to know him now. This is the Duke.

Percy
My gracious lord, I tender you my service,
Such as it is, being tender, raw, and young,
Which elder days shall ripen and confirm
To more approvèd service and desert.

Bolingbroke
I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure
I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends;
And as my fortune ripens with thy love,
It shall be still thy true love's recompense.

My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.

[He offers Percy his hand.]
BOLINGBROKE
I shall not need transport my words by you;
Here comes His Grace in person.—My noble uncle!
[He kneels.]

YORK
Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee,
Whose duty is deceivable and false.

BOLINGBROKE My gracious uncle—
YORK Tut, tut!
Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle.
I am no traitor’s uncle; and that word “grace”
In ungracious mouth is but profane.
Why have those banished and forbidden legs
Dared once to touch a dust of England’s ground?
But then more “why?” Why have they dared to march
So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,
Frighting her pale-faced villages with war
And ostentation of despised arms?
Com’st thou because the anointed King is hence?
Why, foolish boy, the King is left behind,
And in my loyal bosom lies his power.
Were I but now the lord of such hot youth
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself
Rescued the Black Prince, that young Mars of men,
From forth the ranks of many thousand French,
Oh, then how quickly should this arm of mine,
Now prisoner to the palsy, chastise thee
And minister correction to thy fault!

BOLINGBROKE
My gracious uncle, let me know my fault.
On what condition stands it and wherein?

YORK
Even in condition of the worst degree:
In gross rebellion and detested treason.
Thou art a banished man, and here art come
Before the expiration of thy time
In braving arms against thy sovereign.

BOLINGBROKE [standing]
As I was banished, I was banished Hereford;
But as I come, I come for Lancaster.
And, noble uncle, I beseech Your Grace
Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye.
You are my father, for methinks in you
I see old Gaunt alive. Oh, then, my father,
Will you permit that I shall stand condemned
A wandering vagabond, my rights and royalties
Plucked from my arms perforce and given away
To upstart untruths? Wherefore was I born?
If that my cousin king be King in England,
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.
You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin;
Had you first died, and he been thus trod down,
He should have found his uncle Gaunt a father
To rouse his wrongs and chase them to the bay.
I am denied to sue my livery here,
And yet my letters patents give me leave.
My father’s goods are all distrained and sold,
And these, and all, are all amiss employed.
What would you have me do? I am a subject,
And I challenge law. Attorneys are denied me,
And therefore personally I lay my claim
To my inheritance of free descent.

NORTHUMBERLAND
The noble Duke hath been too much abused.

ROSS
It stands Your Grace upon to do him right.

WILLOUGHBY
Base men by his endowments are made great.

York
My lords of England, let me tell you this:
I have had feeling of my cousin’s wrongs
And labored all I could to do him right;
But in this kind to come, in braving arms,
Be his own carver, and cut out his way
To find out right with wrong,—it may not be;
And you that do abet him in this kind
Cherish rebellion and are rebels all.

NORTHUMBERLAND
The noble Duke hath sworn his coming is
But for his own, and for the right of that
We all have strongly sworn to give him aid;
And let him never see joy that breaks that oath!

M. G. H. E.
Well, well, I see the issue of these arms.
I cannot mend it, I must needs confess,
Because my power is weak and all ill-left;
But if I could, by Him that gave me life,
I would attach you all and make you stoop
Unto the sovereign mercy of the King.
But since I cannot, be it known unto you
I do remain as neuter. So fare you well—
Unless you please to enter in the castle
And there repose you for this night.

BOLINGBROKE
An offer, uncle, that we will accept.

ROSS
To Bristol Castle, which they say is held
By Bushy, Bagot, and their complices,

BOLINGBROKE [126 first] i.e., before Gaunt 128 rouse chase from cover, expose. the bay the extremity where the hunted animal turns on its pursuers.

129 I am . . . here I am denied the right to sue for possession of hereditary rights in England. (See 2.1.202–4 and note.) 130 letters patents i.e., letters from the King indicating a subject’s legal rights 131 distrained seized officially 134 challenge law claim my legal rights. 136 of free descent by legal succession. 138 stands . . . upon is incumbent upon Your Grace 139 his endowments i.e., the properties that rightly belong to Bolingbroke 141 cousin’s nephew’s 143 kind fashion 144 Be . . . carver i.e., act on his own authority, help himself 151 joy i.e., the joy of heaven 152 issue outcome 154 power army. ill-left left in dismay and with inadequate means 156 attach arrest 159 as neuter neutral. 163 win persuade 165 Bagot (According to 2.2.140, Bagot had gone to Ireland.)
The caterpillars of the commonwealth, 
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

YORK
It may be I will go with you; but yet I’ll pause, 
For I am loath to break our country’s laws. 
Nor friends nor foes, to me welcome you are. 
Things past redress are now with me past care. 

Exit.

[2.4]

Enter Earl of Salisbury and a Welsh Captain.

WELSH CAPTAIN
My lord of Salisbury, we have stayed ten days 
And hardly kept our countrymen together, 
And yet we hear no tidings from the King. 
Therefore we will disperse ourselves. Farewell.

SALISBURY
Stay yet another day, thou trusty Welshman. 
The King reposeth all his confidence in thee.

WELSH CAPTAIN
Tis thought the King is dead. We will not stay. 
The bay trees in our country are all withered, 
And lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change; 
Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap, 
The one in fear to lose what they enjoy, 
The other to enjoy by rage and war. 
These signs forerun the death or fall of kings. 
Farewell. Our countrymen are gone and fled, 
As well assured Richard their king is dead. [Exit.]

SALISBURY
Ah, Richard! With the eyes of heavy mind 
I see thy glory like a shooting star 
As well assured Richard their king is dead. 

[3.1]

Enter [Bolingbroke.] Duke of Hereford, York, Northumberland, [with] Bushy and Green, prisoners.

BOLINGBROKE
Bring forth these men. 
Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls— 
Since presently your souls must part your bodies— 
With too much urging your perrnicious lives,

170 Location: A camp in Wales. 
1 stayed waited 2 hardly with difficulty 3 yet still 11 lean-looked lean-looking 14 to . . . rage in hopes of possessing by violence 15 forerun anticipate 17 As as being 22 Witnessing betokening 23 wait upon attend, offer allegiance to 24 crossly adversely 
1277–1316 • 1317–1357

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND: 3.1

For ’twere no charity; yet, to wash your blood 
From off my hands, here in the view of men 
I will unfold some causes of your deaths. 
You have misled a prince, a royal king, 
A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments, 
By you unhapplied and disfigured clean. 
You have in manner with your sinful hours 
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him, 
Broke the possession of a royal bed, 
And stained the beauty of a fair queen’s cheeks 
With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs. 
Myself—a prince by fortune of my birth, 
Near to the King in blood, and near in love 
Till you did make him misinterpret me— 
Have stooped my neck under your injuries 
And sighed my English breath in foreign clouds, 
Eating the bitter bread of banishment, 
Whilst you have fed upon my seigniories, 
Disparked my parks and felled my forest woods, 
From my own windows torn my household coat, 
Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign, 
Save men’s opinions and my living blood, 
To show the world I am a gentleman. 
This and much more, much more than twice all this, 
Condemns you to the death,—See them delivered over 
To execution and the hand of death.

BUSHY
More welcome is the stroke of death to me 
Than Bolingbroke to England. Lords, farewell.

GREEN
My comfort is that heaven will take our souls 
And plague injustice with the pains of hell.

BOLINGBROKE
My lord Northumberland, see them dispatched. 
[Exeunt Northumberland with the prisoners, guarded.]

UNCLE
Uncle, you say the Queen is at your house. 
For God’s sake, fairly let her be entreated. 
Tell her I send to her my kind commends. 
Take special care my greetings be delivered.

YORK
A gentleman of mine I have dispatched 
With letters of your love to her at large.

7 unfold reveal 9 happy fortunate 10 blood and lineaments birth and natural characteristics 19 By . . . clean by you made wretched and wholly marred in reputation. 20 in manner as it were 22 foreign clouds i.e., the air of foreign lands (and adding to the clouds with sights) 22 seigniories estates 23 Disparked thrown open to uses other than hunting and forestry 24 household coat coat of arms (frequently emblazoned on stained or painted windows) 25 Razed scraped (or perhaps raised, “erased”). imprese heraldic device, emblenatic design 27 entreated treated. 37 commends regards, compliments. 41 at large conveyed in full. 43 Glendower (Owen Glendower was not, according to Holinshed’s Chronicles, at this time in arms against Bolingbroke. Possibly he is to be identified here with the Welsh captain of the preceding scene.) 44 after afterwards

[3.2]

[Drams. Flourish and colors.] Enter the King, Aumerle, [the Bishop of] Carlisle, etc. [with soldiers].

KING RICHARD

Barkloughly Castle call they this at hand?

AUMERLE

Yea, my lord. How brooks Your Grace the air
After your late tossing on the breaking seas?

KING RICHARD

Needs must I like it well. I weep for joy
To stand upon my kingdom once again.
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
[He bends and touches the ground.]

Though rebels wound thee with their horses’ hoofs.
As a long-parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favors with my royal hands.
Feed not thy sovereign’s foe, my gentle earth,
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense,
But let thy spiders, that suck up thy venom,
And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way,
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet
Which with usurping steps do trample thee.

Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies;
And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,
Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder,
Throw death upon thy senseless conjuration, lords.
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellion’s arms.

CARLISLE

Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you king
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.
The means that heavens yield must be embraced
And not neglected; else heaven would,
And we will not. Heaven’s offer we refuse,
The proffered means of succor and redress.

AUMERLE

He means, my lord, that we are too remiss,
Whilst Bolingbroke through our security
Grows strong and great in substance and in power.

KING RICHARD

Discomfortable cousin, know’st thou not
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe that lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen
In murders and in outrage boldly here;
But when from under this terrestrial ball
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?

So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
Who all this while hath revel'd in the night
Whilst we were wand’ring with the Antipodes,
Shall we see rising in our throne, the east,
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
Not able to endure the sight of day,
But, self-affrighted, tremble at his sin.

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.
For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel. Then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.

Enter Salisbury.

SALISBURY

Welcome, my lord. How far off lies your power?

MELHORN

Nor near nor farther off, my gracious lord,
Than this weak arm. Discomfort guides my tongue
And bids me speak of nothing but despair.
One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,
Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth.
Oh, call back yesterday, bid time return,
And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
Today, today, unhappy day too late,
O’erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune, and thy state;
For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled.

AUMERLE

Comfort, my liege. Why looks Your Grace so pale?

KING RICHARD

But now the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;
And till so much blood thither come again,
Have I not reason to look pale and dead?

3.2. Location: The coast of Wales, near Harlech Castle.

Barkloughly i.e., Harlech 2 brooks enjoys 3 late recent 4 Needs must 5 necessary 8 a long-parted mother with a mother long parted from 13 sweets i.e., bounty sense appetite 14 suck ... venom Alludes to the belief that spiders drew their poison from the earth. 15 heavy-gaited lumbering clumsy 21 double forked. mortal deadly 23 senseless conjuration solemn entreaty of senseless things; or, one that makes no sense to you, being so fanciful 25 native entitled (to the crown) by birth, rightful. (Richard was born at Bordeaux.) 30-1 else ... not i.e., otherwise, we spurn heaven’s will. 32 succor and redress help and remedy. 34 security overconfidence 36 Discomfortable Disheartening, discouraging

1393–1436

All souls that will be safe, fly from my side,
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

KING RICHARD
I had forgot myself. Am I not king?
Awake, thou coward majesty, thou sleepest!
Is not the king’s name twenty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes
At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,
Ye favorites of a king. Are we not high?
High be our thoughts. I know my uncle York
Hath power enough to serve our turn. But who comes
here?

Enter Scroop.

SCROOP
More health and happiness betide my liege
Than can my care-tuned tongue deliver him!

KING RICHARD
Mine ear is open and my heart prepared.
The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold.
Say, is my kingdom lost? Why, ‘twas my care,
And what loss is it to be rid of care?
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?
Greater be not shall be; if he serve God,
We’ll serve Him too, and be his fellow so.
Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend;
They break their faith to God as well as us.
Cry woe, destruction, ruin, and decay;
The worst is death, and death will have his day.

SCROOP
Glad am I that Your Highness is so armed
To bear the tidings of calamity.
Like an unseasonable stormy day,
Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores
As if the world were all dissolved to tears,
So high above his limits swells the rage
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land
With hard bright steel and hearts harder than steel.
Whitebeards have armed their thin and hairless scalps
Against Thy Majesty; boys with women’s voices
Strive to speak big, and clap their female joints
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown.
Thy very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
Of double-fatal yew against thy state;

For time hath set a blot upon my pride.
All souls that will be safe, fly from my side,
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills
Against thy seat. Both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

Too well, too well thou tell’st a tale so ill.
Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? Where is Bagot?
What is become of Bushy? Where is Green,
That they have let the dangerous enemy
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?
If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it.
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.
Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.

Oh, villains, vipers, damned without redemption!
Dogs easily won to fawn on any man!
Snakes in my heart-blood warmed, that sting my heart!
Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!
Would they make peace? Terrible hell
Make war upon their spotted souls for this!

Sweet love, I see, changing his property,
Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate.
Again uncurse their souls. Their peace is made
With heads and not with hands. Those whom you
curse
Have felt the worst of death’s destroying wound
And lie full low, graved in the hollow ground.

Is Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?

Ay, all of them at Bristol lost their heads.

Where is the Duke my father with his power?

No matter where. Of comfort no man speak!
Let’s talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let’s choose executors and talk of wills.
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
Save our deposèd bodies to the ground?
Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke’s,
And nothing can we call our own but death
And that small model of the barren earth
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings—
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,
Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed,
All murdered. For within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,
Scorning his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To mock himself, be feared, and kill with looks,
Infusing him with self and vain conceit;
As if this flesh which walks about our life
Were brass impregnable; and humored thus,
Comes at the last and with a little pin
Bones through his castle wall, and—farewell, king!
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while.
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king?

CARLISLE

My lord, wise men ne’er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.
To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength,
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,
And so your follies fight against yourself.
Fear, and be slain. No worse can come to fight;
And fight and die is death destroying death,
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

AUMERLE

My father hath a power. Inquire of him,
And learn to make a body of a limb.

KING RICHARD

Thou chid’st me well. Proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague fit of fear is overblown;
An easy task it is to win our own.

Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

SCRooP

Men judge by the complexion of the sky
The state and inclination of the day.
So may you by my dull and heavy eye;
My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.
I play the torturer, by small and small
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken:
Your uncle York is joined with Bolingbroke,
And all your southern castles yielded up.
And all your southern gentlemen in arms
Upon his party.

KING RICHARD

Thou hast said enough.
To AUMERLE [Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth]
Of that sweet way I was in to despair.
What say you now? What comfort have we now?
By heaven, I’ll hate him everlastingly
That bids me be of comfort any more.
Go to Flint Castle. There I’ll pine away;
A king, who’s slave, shall kingly woo obey.
That power I have, discharge, and let them go
To ear the land that hath some hope to grow;
For I have none. Let no man speak again
To alter this, for counsel is but vain.

AUMERLE

My liege, one word.

KING RICHARD

He does me double wrong
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.
Discharge my followers. Let them hence away,
From Richard’s night to Bolingbroke’s fair day.

[Exeunt.]
THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND: 3.3

BOLINGBROKE
Mistake not, uncle, further than you should.

YORK
Take not, good cousin, further than you should, Lest you mistake the heavens are over our heads.

BOLINGBROKE
I know it, uncle, and oppose not myself Against their will. But who comes here?

Enter Percy.

PERCY
Welcome, Harry. What, will not this castle yield?

BOLINGBROKE
The castle royally is manned, my lord, Against thy entrance.

Eerily? Why, it contains no king?

PERCY
Yes, my good lord, It doth contain a king. King Richard lies Within the limits of yon lime and stone, And with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman Of holy reverence—who, I cannot learn.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Oh, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle.

BOLINGBROKE
[to Northumberland] Noble lord, Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle; Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley Into his ruined ears, and thus deliver: Henry Bolingbroke On both his knees doth kiss King Richard’s hand And sends allegiance and true faith of heart To his most royal person, hither come Even at his feet to lay my arms and power, Provided that my banishment repealed And lands restored again be freely granted. If not, I’ll use the advantage of my power, And lay the summer’s dust with showers of blood Rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen— The which how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke It is such crimson tempest should bedrench The fresh green lap of fair King Richard’s land, My stooping duty tenderly shall show.

Scroop, and Salisbury
on the walls [with the Bishop of Carlisle, Aumerle, Scroop, and Salisbury].

MELHORN
See, see, King Richard doth himself appear, As doth the blushing discontented sun From out the fiery portal of the east When he perceives the envious clouds are bent To dim his glory and to stain the track Of his bright passage to the occident.

YORK
Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye, As bright as is the eagle’s, lightens forth Controlling majesty. Alack, alack, for woe, That any harm should stain so fair a show!

KING RICHARD [to Northumberland]
We are amazed; and thus long have we stood To watch the fearful bending of thy knee, Because we thought ourselves thy lawful king. And if we be, how dare thy joints forget To pay their awful duty to our presence? If we be not, show us the hand of God That hath dismissed us from our stewardship; For well we know, no hand of blood and bone Can grip the sacred handle of our scepter, Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp. And though you think that all, as you have done, Have torn their souls by turning traitor to me, And we are barren and bereft of friends, Yet know, my master, God omnipotent, Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf

52 tottered in tottering condition, or dilapidated 53 fair appointments handsome show of military preparedness 56 fire and water i.e., lightning and rain 59–60 whilst ... waters while I moisten the earth with my tears 61.2 parley trumpet summons to a negotiation 61.4 on the walls i.e., in the gallery of the tiring-house, above, to the rear of the stage 63 blushing i.e., turning red with anger 65 he i.e., the sun. envious hostile 67 occident west. 68 Yet Still, or nevertheless. he i.e., King Richard 69 lightens forth flashes out, like lightning. 73 watch wait for 76 awful reverential, full of awe 77 hand signature 79 no ... hand no human hand 81 Unless he do profane without committing sacrilege 82 Have ... us have imperiled their souls by turning traitor to me 84 And and that 85 know know that

Go, signify as much while here we march Upon the grassy carpet of this plain.

[Northumberland and attendants advance to the castle.] Let’s march without the noise of threat’ning drum, That from this castle’s tottered battlements Our fair appointments may be well perused. Methinks King Richard and myself should meet With no less terror than the elements Of fire and water, when their thund’ring shock At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven. Be he the fire, I’ll be the yielding water; The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain My waters—on the earth, and not on him. March on, and mark King Richard how he looks.

[Bolingbroke’s forces march about the stage.] The trumpets sound [a parley without and answer within, then a flourish. King] Richard appeareth on the walls [with the Bishop of Carlisle, Aumerle, Scroop, and Salisbury].

52 to as to 14 taking so the head i.e., (1) presumptuously omitting thus his title (2) being headstrong 17 mistake fail to perceive that. (Plays on Bolingbroke’s use of mistake, just as York has punned on brief and head.) 25 lies resides 30 belike probably 32 rude ribs i.e., rugged walls 33 brazen (1) brass (2) bold. breath of parley i.e., call for a conference 34 his ruined ears i.e., its (the castle’s) ancient and battered loopholes 40 my banishment repealed the revocation of my banishment 41 lands restored again the restoration of my lands 42 advantage of my power superiority of my army 46 is is that 48 stooping duty submissive kneeling

Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my head
And threat the glory of my precious crown.
Tell Bolingbroke—for you methinks he stands—
That every stride he makes upon my land
Is dangerous treason. He is come to open
The purple testament of bleeding war;
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers’ sons
Shall ill become the flower of England’s face,
Change the complection of her maid-pale peace
To scarlet indignation, and bedew
Her pastures’ grass with faithful English blood.

NORTHERN

The King of heaven forbid our lord the King
Should so with civil and uncivil arms
Be rushed upon! Thy thrice-noble cousin
Harry Bolingbroke doth humbly kiss thy hand;
And by the honorable tomb he swears
That stands upon your royal grandsire’s bones,
And by the royalties of both your bloods,
Currents that spring from one most gracious head,
And by the buried hand of warlike Gaunt,
And by the worth and honor of himself,
Comprising all that may be sworn or said,
His coming hither hath no further scope
Than for his linear royalties, and to beg
Enfranchisement immediate on his knees;
Which on thy royal party granted once,
His glittering arms he will commend to rust,
Which on thy royal party granted once,
His barbèd steeds to stables, and his heart
To faithful service of Your Majesty.
This swears he, as he is a prince and just,
And as I am a gentleman I credit him.

KING RICHARD

Northumberland, say thus the King returns:
His noble cousin is right welcome hither,
With all the gracious utterance thou hast
And all the number of his fair demands
Shall be accomplished without contradiction.
With all the gracious utterance thou hast
Speak to his gentle hearing kind commends.

To Aumerle

We do debase ourself, cousin, do we not,
To look so poorly and to speak so fair?
Shall we call back Northumberland, and send
Defiance to the traitor, and so die?

AUMERLE

No, good my lord. Let’s fight with gentle words
Till time lend friends, and friends their helpful swords.

KING RICHARD

Oh, God, oh, God, that t’er this tongue of mine,
That laid the sentence of dread banishment
On you proud man, should take it off again
With words of sooth! Oh, that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than mine heart!
Or that I could forget what I have been,
Or not remember what I must be now!

Swell’s thy proud heart? I’ll give thee scope to beat,
Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me.

[Northumberland returns to the castle walls.]

AUMERLE

Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD

What must the King do now? Must he submit?
The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?
The King shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of king? I’ God’s name, let it go.
I will give my jewels for a set of beads, My gay apparel for an almsman’s gown,
My figured goblets for a dish of wood,
My scepter for a palmer’s walking-staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little, little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I’ll be buried in the King’s highway,
Some way of common trade, where subjects’ feet
May hourly trample on their sovereign’s head;
For on my heart they tread now whilst I live,
And, buried once, why not upon my head?
Aumerle, thou weep’t, my tenderhearted cousin.
We’ll make foul weather with despised tears;
Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn
And make a dearth in this revolting land,
Or shall we play the wantons with our woes
And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
As thus, to drop them still upon one place,
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
Within the earth; and, therein laid, there lies
Two kinsmen digged their graves with weeping eyes.
Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see
Till time lend friends, and friends their helpful swords.

Oh, God, oh, God, that e’re this tongue of mine,
Till time lend friends, and friends their helpful swords.

I talk but idly, and you laugh at me.—
Most mighty prince, my lord Northumberland,
What says King Bolingbroke? Will His Majesty
Give Richard leave to live till Richard die?
You make a leg, and Bolingbroke says ay.

89 That of you that. vassal subject 90 threat threaten 93–4 open . . . testament initiate a bloodstained legacy. (Blood was often said to be purple.) 96–7 Ten . . . face the bloody heads of 10,000 young men (the flower of England) will disfigure the blossoming face of our country 98 maid-pale i.e., pale like the complexion of a young English maid 102 civil used in civil strife. uncivil barbarous, violent 108 head source 112 scope purpose, aim 113 linial royalties hereditary rights as one of royal blood 114 Enfranchisement freedom (from banishment) 115 party part 116 commend give over 117 barbèd armored 121 returns answers 124 accomplished ful-filled 126 commends regards. 128 poorly abject. fair courteously.

136 sooth cajolery, flattery. 140 scope freedom, space 141 scope capacity, opportunity 147 set of beads rosary 149 almsman’s gown plain attire of one who lives on alms or charity 150 figured ornamented, embossed 151 palmer’s pilgrim’s 156 trade passage 159 buried once once I am buried 162 Our . . . corn our sighs and tears will beat down the summer grain fields 163 revolting rebelling 164 play the wantons sport, frolic 165 match game, contest 166 still continually 167 fretted us eaten away for us, worn. (With a play on “complained.”) 169 digged who dug 175 a leg an obei scare
Though you are old enough to be my heir.
What you will have, I’ll give, and willing too,
For do we must what force will have us do.
Set on towards London, cousin, is it so?

BOLINGBROKE
Ye, my good lord.

KING RICHARD
Then I must not say no.

[Flourish. Exeunt.]

3.4. Location: The Duke of York’s garden.

Enter the Queen with [two Ladies,] her attendants.

QUEEN
What sport shall we devise here in this garden,
To drive away the heavy thought of care?

LADY
Madam, we’ll play at bowls.

QUEEN
Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,
And that my fortune runs against the bias.

LADY
Madam, we’ll dance.

QUEEN
My legs can keep no measure in delight
When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief.

Therefore, no dancing, girl; some other sport.

LADY
Madam, we’ll tell tales.

QUEEN
Of sorrow or of joy?

LADY
Of either, madam.

QUEEN
Of neither, girl;
For if of joy, being altogether wanting,
It doth remember me the more of sorrow;
Or if of grief, being altogether had,
It adds more sorrow to my want of joy.
For what I have I need not to repeat,
And what I want it boots not to complain.

LADY
Madam, I’ll sing.

QUEEN
’Tis well that thou hast cause,
But thou shouldst please me better wouldst thou weep.

LADY
I could weep, madam, would it do you good.

QUEEN
And I could sing, would weeping do me good,
And never borrow any tear of thee.

Enter Gardeners [a Master and two Men].

But stay, here come the gardeners.
Let’s step into the shadow of these trees.

[Enter from above.]

BOLINGBROKE
[raising]
What says His Majesty?
NORTHUMBERLAND
Sorrow and grief of heart
Makes him speak fondly, like a frantic man.
Yet he is come.

[Enter King Richard and his attendants below.]

BOLINGBROKE
Stand all apart,
And show fair duty to His Majesty. He kneels down. He kneels down.

KING RICHARD
Fair cousin, you debase your princely knee
To make the base earth proud with kissing it.
Me rather had my heart might feel your love
Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up. Your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least [touching his crown], although your knee be low.

BOLINGBROKE
My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.

KING RICHARD
Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all.

BOLINGBROKE
So far be mine, my most redoubted lord,
As my true service shall deserve your love.

KING RICHARD
Well you deserve. They well deserve to have
That know the strongest and surest way to get.
[To York, who weeps] Uncle, give me your hands. Nay, dry your eyes;
Tears show their love, but want their remedies.
[To Bolingbroke] Cousin, I am too young to be your father.

176 base court outer or lower court of a castle
177 may it please you if you please
178 glistening glistening, glittering
179 Phaethon son of the sun-god, whose chariot he attempted to steer across the sky;
179 Wanting . . . jades lacking the skill in horsemanship
180 impeding (in the game of bowls)
181 do them grace (1) bow to them (2) treat them graciously
182 apart aside
183 fair duty respect
184 debase . . . base (Continuous the wordplay on base in line 180.)
185 fondly foolishly
186 mad
187 apart aside
188 fair duty respect
189–1 debase . . . base
190 1 Me rather had I had rather
191 mine i.e., my loved lord (changing Richard’s meaning of yours in the previous line)
192 redoubled dread
193 want their remedies lack remedies for what caused them
194 too young
195–196 what they will have us do (Historically, Richard and Bolingbroke were both thirty-three.)
197 against the bias i.e., contrary, athwart. (Literally, not following the naturally curved path of a bowl, which was weighted on one side.)
198 measure a stately slow dance
199 moderation lacking
200 never borrow
My wretchedness unto a row of pins,  
They will talk of state, for everyone doth so  
Against a change; woe is forerun with woe.  

[The Queen and Ladies stand apart.]  

GARDENER [to one Man]  
Go bind thou up young dangling apricots  
Which, like unruly children, make their sire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.  
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.  
[To the other] Go thou, and like an executioner  
Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth.  
All must be even in our government.  
You thus employed, I will go root away  
The noisome weeds which without profit suck  
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.  

MAN  
Why should we in the compass of a pale  
Keep law and form and due proportion,  
Showing as in a model our firm estate,  
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,  
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,  
Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined,  
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs  
Swarming with caterpillars?  

GARDENER  
Hold thy peace.  
He that hath suffered this disordered spring  
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf.  
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,  
That seemed in eating him to hold him up,  
Are plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke:  
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.  

MAN  
What, are they dead?  

GARDENER  
They are; and Bolingbroke  
Hath seized the wasteful King. Oh, what pity is it  
That he had not so trimmed and dressed his land  
As we this garden! We at time of year  
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,  
Lest being overpruned in sap and blood  
With too much riches it confound itself;  
Had he done so to great and growing men,  
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did  
That seemed in eating him to hold him up,  
Are plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke:  
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.  

MAN  
What, are they dead?  

GARDENER  
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Hath seized the wasteful King. Oh, what pity is it  
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The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did  
That seemed in eating him to hold him up,  
Are plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke:  
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.  

MAN  
What, think you the King shall be deposed?
Enter Bolingbroke with the Lords [Aumerle, Northumberland, Harry Percy, Fitzwater, Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, officers] to Parliament. [The throne is provided on stage.]

BOLINGBROKE
Call forth Bagot.

Enter [officers with] Bagot.

Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind, What thou dost know of noble Gloucester’s death, Who wrought it with the King, and who performed The bloody office of his timelesse end.

BAGOT
Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

BOLINGBROKE [to Aumerle]
Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man. [Aumerle comes forward.]

BAGOT
My lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue Scorns to unsay what once it hath delivered. In that dead time when Gloucester’s death was plotted, I heard you say, “Is not my arm of length, That reacheth from the restful English court As far as Calais, to mine uncle’s head?” Amongst much other talk that very time I heard you say that you had rather refuse The offer of an hundred thousand crowns Than Bolingbroke’s return to England— Adding withal how blest this land would be In this your cousin’s death.

AUMERLE
Princes and noble lords, What answer shall I make to this base man? Shall I so much dishonor my fair stars On equal terms to give him chastisement? Either I must, or have mine honor soiled With the attendant of his slanderous lips. [He throws down his gage.]

There is my gage, the manual seal of death, That marks thee out for hell. I say thou liest, And will maintain what thou hast said is false In thy heart-blood, though being all too base To stain the temper of my knightly sword.

BOLINGBROKE
Bagot, forbear. Thou shalt not take it up.

[4.1]

Enter Bolingbroke with the Lords [Aumerle, Northumberland, Harry Percy, Fitzwater, Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, officers] to Parliament. [The throne is provided on stage.]

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BAGOT
Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

BOLINGBROKE [to Aumerle]
Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man. [Aumerle comes forward.]

BAGOT
My lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue Scorns to unsay what once it hath delivered. In that dead time when Gloucester’s death was plotted, I heard you say, “Is not my arm of length, That reacheth from the restful English court As far as Calais, to mine uncle’s head?” Amongst much other talk that very time I heard you say that you had rather refuse The offer of an hundred thousand crowns Than Bolingbroke’s return to England— Adding withal how blest this land would be In this your cousin’s death.

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BOLINGBROKE
Bagot, forbear. Thou shalt not take it up.

4.1. Location: Westminster Hall.

4 Who . . . King who prevailed upon the King to have the murder performed 5 office function 8 timeless unfriendly 9 unsay deny, take back 10 dead (1) deadly (2) dark, silent 11 of length long 12 restful i.e., untroubled by Gloucester 14 that very time (An inconsistency: Gloucester’s death occurred before Bolingbroke left England.) 17 Than . . . return than have Bolingbroke return 18 withal in addition 22 stars i.e., fortune, rank 23 On . . . chastisement as to challenge him as my equal. 25 attendant dishonoring accusation 25.1 gage usually a glove or a gauntlet (a mailed or armored glove), as at 1.1.69 ff. 26 manual . . . death warrant sealed by my hand

AUMERLE
Excepting one, I would he were the best In all this presence that hath moved me so.

FITZWATER [throwing down a gage]
If that thy valor stand on sympathy, There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine. By that fair sun which shows me where thou stand’st, I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak’t it, That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester’s death. If thou deny’st it twenty times, thou liest. And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart, Where it was forged, with my rapier’s point.

AUMERLE [taking up the gage]
Thou dar’st not, coward, live to see that day.

FITZWATER
Now, by my soul, I would it were this hour.

AUMERLE
Fitzwater, thou art damned to hell for this.

PERCY
Aumerle, thou liest. His honor is as true In this appeal as thou art all unjust; And that thou art so, there I throw my gage [throwing down a gage] To prove it on thee to the extremest point Of mortal breathing, Seize it if thou dar’st.

AUMERLE [taking up the gage]
An if I do not, may my hands rot off And never brandish more revengeful steel Over the glittering helmet of my foe!

ANOTHER LORD [throwing down a gage]
I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle, And spurn thee on with full as many lies As may be holloed in thy treacherous ear From sun to sun. There is my honor’s pawn; Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

AUMERLE [taking up the gage]
Who sets me else? By heaven, I’ll throw at all! I have a thousand spirits in one breast To answer twenty thousand such as you.

FITZWATER
’Tis very true. You were in presence then, And you can witness with me this is true.

SURREY
As false, by heaven, as heaven itself is true.

FITZWATER
Surrey, thou liest.

SURREY
Dishonorable boy! That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword

32 one i.e., Bolingbroke. best highest in rank 34 stand on sympathy i.e., insists on correspondence of rank in your opponent 35 in gage engaged 37 vauntingly boastfully 40 turn turn back 46 appeal accusation. (As also in line 80.) all unjust totally false 48-9 to . . . breathing to the point of death. 50 An if f 51 more any more, ever again 53 . . . like I burden the ground in the same way 54 lies accusations of lying 56 sun to sun sunrise to sunset honor’s pawn pledge of honor. (Also in line 71.) 57 Engage . . . trial take it up as a pledge to combat 58 Who . . . else? Who else puts up stakes against me or challenges me to a game? throw (1) throw dice (2) throw down gages 63 in presence present
That it shall render vengeance and revenge, Till thou the lie-giver and that lie do lie In earth as quiet as thy father's skull. In proof whereof, there is my honor's pawn. [He throws down a gage.] Engage it to the trial if thou dar'st.

FITZWATER  [taking up the gage]
How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!
If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live, I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness And spit upon him whilst I say he lies, And lies, and lies. There is my bond of faith, To tie thee to my strong correction.

[He throws down a gage.]
As I intend to thrive in this new world, Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal. Besides, I heard the banished Norfolk say That thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men To execute the noble Duke at Calais.

AUMERLE  Some honest Christian trust me with a gage.  [He borrows a gage and throws it down.]
That Norfolk lies, here do I throw down this, If he may be repealed, to try his honor.

BOLINGBROKE  These differences shall all rest under gage
Till Norfolk be repealed. Repealed he shall be, And, though mine enemy, restored again To all his lands and seigniories. When he is returned, Against Aumerle we will enforce his trial.

CARLISLE  That honorable day shall never be seen. Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field, Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens; And, toiled with works of war, retired himself To Italy, and there at Venice gave His body to that pleasant country's earth And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ, Under whose colors he had fought so long.

BOLINGBROKE  Why, Bishop, is Norfolk dead? CARLISLE  As surely as I live, my lord.

BOLINGBROKE  Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom Of good old Abraham! Lords appellants, Your differences shall all rest under gage Till we assign you to your days of trial.

Enter York.

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68 it i.e., my sword 73 fondly foolishly  forward willing 75 in a wilderness i.e., where fighting might go on uninterrupted to the death 79 in . . . world i.e., under the new king 80 appeal accusation. 86 repealed recalled from exile. 87 under gage as challenges 95 Streaming flying 97 boiled weared 104-5 bosom . . . Abraham i.e., heaven. (See Luke 16:22.) 105 Lords appellants Lords who appear as formal accusers. 107.1 Enter York (Probably Richard's scepter, etc., are brought in at line 162, but York here invites Bolingbroke to ascend the throne with the surrendered scepter, and so perhaps the regalia are brought on here.) 116 Worst least in rank 117 best beseeeming me i.e., most befitting to me as a clergyman 120 noblesse nobleness 121 Learn him forbearance teach him to forbear 124 judged . . . by condemned unless they are present 125 apparent manifest 126 figure image 130 undo forbid 131 souls refined civilized people 132 obscene odious, repulsive 133 My . . . Hereford (Carlisle refuses to refer to Bolingbroke as king or even as Duke of Lancaster, since he lost the latter title at the time of his banishment.) 142 Shall . . . confound will destroy kinsmen by means of kinsmen and fellow countrymen by means of fellow countrymen 145 Golgotha Calvary, the hill outside of Jerusalem called "the place of dead men's skulls" (see Mark 15:22 and John 19:17) where Jesus was crucified 146 this house . . . this house i.e., Lancaster against York. (See Mark 3:25.) 152 Cf on a charge of
My lord of Westminster, be it your charge
To keep him safely till his day of trial.

[Carlisle is taken into custody.]

May it please you, lords, to grant the commons’ suit? 155

Bolingbroke

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view
He may surrender; so we shall proceed
Without suspicion.

York

I will be his conduct. 158

Exit.

Bolingbroke

Lords, you that here are under our arrest,
Procure your sureties for your days of answer.
Little are we beholding to your love,
And little looked for at your helping hands.

Enter Richard and York [with Officers bearing the crown and regalia].

King Richard

Alack, why am I sent for to a king,
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts
Wherewith I reigned? I hardly yet have learned
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my knee.
Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me
To this submission. Yet I well remember
The favors of these men. Were they not mine?
Did they not sometime cry, “All hail!” to me?
So Judas did to Christ. But he, in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.
God save the King! Will no man say amen?
Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, amen.
God save the King! Will no man say amen?
Do what service am I sent for hither?

York

To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer:
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke.

King Richard

Give me the crown. [He takes the crown.] Here, cousin,
seize the crown.

Here, cousin,
On this side my hand, and on that side thine.
Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen, and full of water.

That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

Bolingbroke

I thought you had been willing to resign.

King Richard

My crown I am, but still my griefs are mine.
You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs; still am I king of those.

Bolingbroke

Part of your cares you give me with your crown.

King Richard

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.
My care is loss of care, by old care done;
Your care is gain of care, by new care won.
The cares I give I have, though given away;
They ‘tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

Bolingbroke

Are you contented to resign the crown?

King Richard

Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;
Therefore no, no, for I resign to thee.
Now mark me how I will undo myself:

[He yields his crown and scepter.]

I give this heavy weight from off my head
And this unwieldy scepter from my hand,
The pride of kindly sway from out my heart;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.
All pomp and majesty I do forswear;
My manors, rents, revenues I forgo;
My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny.
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!
God keep all vows unbroke are made to thee!
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing grieved,
And thou with all pleased, that hast all achieved!
Long mayst thou live in Richard’s seat to sit,
And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit!

God save King Henry, unkinged Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days!—
What more remains?

Northumberland [presenting a paper]

No more but that you read

These accusations and these grievous crimes
Committed by your person and your followers
Against the state and profit of this land;

155 the commons’ suit request of the commons (i.e., that Richard be formally tried and the causes of his deposition made public. This line begins the abdication passage omitted in early quartos of the play.)
157 surrender i.e., surrender the crown, abdicate 158 conduct escort. 160 sureties persons who will guarantee your appearance.
your days of answer the time when you must appear to stand trial.
161 beholding beholden, indebted 162 little . . . hands i.e., I did not expect this from you, thinking you were on our side. 169 favors (1) faces (2) support, good will 174 priest and clerk (In religious services, the clerk or assistant would say “Amen” to the priest’s prayers.) 186 owes owns, has. filling one another (The raising of the full bucket lowers the other to be filled in turn.)

That, by confessing them, the souls of men
May deem that you are worthy depose.

**KING RICHARD**

Must I do so? And must I ravel out
My weaved-up follies? Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offenses were upon record,
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldst,
There shouldst thou find one heinous article
Containing the deposing of a king.

And cracking the strong warrant of an oath,
Marked with a blot, damned in the book of heaven.

Nay, all of you that stand and look upon me,
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,

Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,

Showing an outward pity, yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

My lord—dispatch. Read o'er these articles.

**KING RICHARD**

Mine eyes are full of tears; I cannot see.

And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.

Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;

For I have given here my soul's consent
T'undeck the pompous body of a king,

Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,

For I have given here my soul's consent
I find myself a traitor with the rest;

But 'tis usurped. Alack the heavy day,

No, not that name was given me at the font,

Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title,
No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man,

Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

**BOLINGBROKE**

Go some of you and fetch a looking glass.

Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

That it may show me what a face I have,

Let it command a mirror hither straight,

An if my word be sterling yet in England,

Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,

To melt myself away in water drops!

Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,

And know not now what name to call myself!

That I have worn so many winters out

But 'tis usurped. Alack the heavy day,

No, not that name was given me at the font,

Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title,
No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man,

Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

**KING RICHARD**

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Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title,

No, not that name was given me at the font,

But 'tis usurped. Alack the heavy day,

That I have worn so many winters out

And know not now what name to call myself!

Oh, that I were a mockery king of snow,

Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,

To melt myself away in water drops!

Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,

An if my word be sterling yet in England,

Let it command a mirror hither straight,

That it may show me what a face I have,

Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

**BOLINGBROKE**

Go some of you and fetch a looking glass.

[Exit an Attendant.]

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

**KING RICHARD**

Fiend, thou torment me ere I come to hell!

**BOLINGBROKE**

Urge it no more, my lord Northumberland.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

The commons will not then be satisfied.

**KING RICHARD**

They shall be satisfied. I'll read enough

When I do see the very book indeed

Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

*Enter one with a glass.*

Give me that glass, and therein will I read.

[He takes the mirror.]

No deeper wrinkles yet! Hath sorrow struck

So many blows upon this face of mine,

And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,

Like to my followers in prosperity,

Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face

That every day under his household roof

Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face

That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?

Is this the face which faced so many follies,

That was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke?

A brittle glory shineth in this face—

As brittle as the glory is the face.

[He throws down the mirror.]

For there it is, cracked in an hundred shivers.

Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport:

How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.

**BOLINGBROKE**

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed

The shadow of your face.

**KING RICHARD**

Say that again.

The shadow of my sorrow? Ha! Let's see.

'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;

And these external manners of laments

Are merely shadows to the unseen grief

And these external manners of laments

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And these external manners of laments

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'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;
I have a king here to my flatterer.  
Being so great, I have no need to beg,

BOLINGBROKE  Yet ask.

KING RICHARD  And shall I have?

BOLINGBROKE  You shall.

KING RICHARD  Then give me leave to go.

BOLINGBROKE  Whither?

KING RICHARD  Whither you will, so I were from your sights.

BOLINGBROKE  Go some of you, convey him to the Tower.

KING RICHARD  Oh, good! “Convey”? Conveyers are you all,  
That rise thus nimly by a true king’s fall.  
[Exeunt King Richard, some lords, and a guard.]

BOLINGBROKE  On Wednesday next we solemnly set down  
Our coronation. Lords, prepare yourselves.  

ABBOT  A woeful pageant have we here beheld.

CARLISLE  The woe’s to come, the children yet unborn  
Shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn.

AUMERLE  You holy clergymen, is there no plot  
To rid the realm of this pernicious blot?

ABBOT  My lord,  
Before I freely speak my mind herein,  
You shall not only take the Sacrament  
To bury mine intents, but also to effect  
Whatever I shall happen to devise.

I see your brows are full of discontent,  
Your hearts of sorrow, and your eyes of tears.  
Come home with me to supper; I’ll lay  
A plot shall show us all a merry day.  
Exeunt.  

[5.1]

Enter the Queen with [Ladies,] her attendants.

QUEEN  This way the King will come. This is the way  
To Julius Caesar’s ill-erected tower,  
To whose flint bosom my condemnèd lord  
Is doomed a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke.  
Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth  
Have any resting for her true king’s queen.  
Enter Richard [and guard.]

But soft, but see, or rather do not see  
My fair rose wither. Yet look up, behold,  
That you in pity may dissolve to dew,  
And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.—
Ah, thou, the model where old Troy did stand,  
Thou map of honor, thou King Richard’s tomb,  
And not King Richard! Thou most beauteous inn,  
Why should hard-favored grief be lodged in thee  
When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

KING RICHARD  Join not with grief, fair woman, do not so,  
To make my end too sudden. Learn, good soul,  
To think our former state a happy dream,  
From which awakened, the truth of what we are  
Shows us but this. I am sworn brother, sweet,  
To grim Necessity, and he and I  
Will keep a league till death. Hie thee to France,  
And cloister thee in some religious house.  
Our holy lives must win a new world’s crown,  
Which our profane hours here have thrown down.

QUEEN  What, is my Richard both in shape and mind  
Transformed and weakened? Hath Bolingbroke  
Deposed thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?  
The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw  
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage  
To be o’erpowered; and wilt thou, pupil-like,  
To take the correction, mildly kiss the rod,

A plot shall show us all a merry day.  
Exeunt.  

309 to as 317 convey escort 318 Convey Steal. 321.1 Manent  
They remain onstage 324 Shall who will 330 To . . . intents to conceal my plans 335 shall that shall
5.1. Location: London. A street leading to the Tower.
2 Julius . . . tower (The Tower of London, ascribed by tradition to Julius Caesar, was built by William the Conqueror to hold the city in subordination.) ill-erected erected for evil ends or with evil results
NORTHERN MAN
My lord, the mind of Bolingbroke is changed;
You must to Pomfret, not unto the Tower.
And, madam, there is order ta’en for you;
With all swift speed you must away to France.

KING RICHARD
Nortumberland, thou ladder wherewithal
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,
The time shall not be many hours of age
More than it is ere foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption. Thou shalt think,
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
He shall think that thou, which knowest the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne’er so little urged another way,
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
The love of wicked men converts to fear,
That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both
To worthy danger and deserved death.

NORTHERN MAN
My guilt be on my head, and there an end.
Take leave and part, for you must part forthwith.

KING RICHARD
Doubly divorced! Bad men, you violate
A twofold marriage, twixt my crown and me,
And then betwixt me and my married wife.
[To Queen] Let me unkiss the oath twist thee and me;
And yet not so, for with a kiss ‘twas made.—
Part us, Nortumberland: I towards the north,
Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime;
My wife to France, from whence, set forth in pomp,
She came adorned higher like sweet May,
Sent back like Hallowmas or short’st of day.

QUEEN
And must we be divided? Must we part?

KING RICHARD
Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

QUEEN [to Nortumberland]
Banish us both and send the King with me.

NORTHERN MAN
That were some love, but little policy.

QUEEN
Then whither he goes, thither let me go.

KING RICHARD
So two, together weeping, make one woe.
Weep thou for me in France, I for thee here;
So two, together weeping, make one woe.
Then whither he goes, thither let me go.

QUEEN
[They kiss.]

QUEEN
Give me mine own again. ‘Twere no good part
To take on me to keep and kill thy heart. [They kiss.]
So, now I have mine own again, begone,
That I may strive to kill it with a groan.

KING RICHARD
We make woe wanton with this fond delay.
Once more, adieu! The rest let sorrow say.
Exeunt [in two separate groups].

[5.2]

Enter Duke of York and the Duchess.

DUCHESS
My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
When weeping made you break the story off,
Of our two cousins coming into London.

YORK
Where did I leave?

DUCHESS
At that sad stop, my lord,
Where rude misgoverned hands from windows’ tops
Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard’s head.

YORK
Then, as I said, the Duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed
Which his aspiring rider seemed to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,
Whilst all tongues cried, “God save thee, Bolingbroke!”
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage, and that all the walls
With painted imagery had said at once,
“Jesu preserve thee! Welcome, Bolingbroke!”

KING RICHARD
So longest way shall have the longest moans.

QUEEN
Twice for one step I’ll groan, the way being short,
And piece the way out with a heavy heart.

KING RICHARD
Come, come, in wooing sorrow let’s be brief,
Since, wedding it, there is such length in grief.
One kiss shall stop our mouths, and dumbly part;
Thus give I mine, and thus take I thy heart.

[Exeunt]

52 Pomfret Pontefract Castle in Yorkshire 53 order ta’en arrangement made 58 gathering head gathering to a head 59 corruption putrid matter, pus 61 helping since you helped 64 Being . . . way though scarcely urged at all 65 To how to 66 converts changes 67 That fear i.e., that fear changes. one or both i.e., the new king or his partner, or both 68 worthy well-merited 69 and . . . end and let the topic be closed on that note. 70 part . . . separate . . . depart 74 unkiss annul with a kiss (regarded as the seal of a ceremonial bond) 77 pines the clime afflicts the climate 80 Hallowmas All Saints’ Day (November 1), regarded as the beginning of winter. 84 policy political practicality. 88 Better . . . the near i.e., better to be far apart than near and yet unable to meet. (The second near means “nearer.”) 90 So . . . moans i.e., Then I will have to sigh and groan all the more, since my journey is longer. 92 piece . . . out make the journey seem longer 94 Since . . . grief i.e., since wedding ourselves to grief, we embark on a sadness that is only beginning. (A wry joke on the commonplace that a brief and romantic courtship is often the prelude to an interminable marriage.) 95 and dumbly part and then let us part in silence 97–8 ‘Twere . . . me make the journey seem 99 piece . . . out it would not be wise of me to take it upon myself 101 We . . . wanton We sport with our grief. 103 loving (2) pointless, foolish 104. Location: The Duke of York’s house. 116 With painted imagery i.e., showing crowds of people, as on a tapestry or painted cloth, depicting a procession. at once all together
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning, 
Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed’s neck, 
Bespake them thus: “I thank you, countrymen.”
And thus still doing, thus he passed along.

DUCHESS

Alack, poor Richard! Where rode he the whilst?

YORK

As in a theater the eyes of men, 
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage, 
Are idly bent on him that enters next, 
Thinking his prattle to be tedious, 
Even so, or with much more contempt, men’s eyes 
Did scowl on gentle Richard. No man cried, “God save him!”
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home, 
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head— 
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off, 
His face still combing with tears and smiles, 
The badges of his grief and patience, 
That had not God for some strong purpose steeled 
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted, 
And barbarism itself had pitied him. 
But heaven hath a hand in these events, 
To whose high will we bound our calm contents. 
To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now, 
Whose state and honor I for aye allow.

[Enter Aumerle.]

DUCHESS

Here comes my son Aumerle.

YORK

Aumerle that was; 
But that is lost for being Richard’s friend, 
And, madam, you must call him Rutland now. 
I am in Parliament pledge for his truth 
And lasting fealty to the new-made king.

DUCHESS

Welcome, my son. Who are the violets now 
That strew the green lap of the new-come spring?

AUMERLE

Madam, I know not, nor I greatly care not. 
God knows I had as lief be none as one.

YORK

Well, bear you well in this new spring of time, 
Lest you be cropped before you come to prime. 
What news from Oxford? Do these jousts and triumphs hold?

AUERLE

For aught I know, my lord, they do.

YORK

You will be there, I know.

AUERLE

If God prevent not, I purpose so.

YORK

What seal is that, that hangs without thy bosom? 
Yea, look’st thou pale? Let me see the writing.

AUERLE

My lord, ’tis nothing.

YORK

No matter, then, who see it. 
I will be satisfied. Let me see the writing.

AUERLE

I do beseech Your Grace to pardon me.

YORK

It is a matter of small consequence, 
Which for some reasons I would not have seen.

AUERLE

Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see.

DUCHESS

What should you fear?

AUERLE

’Tis nothing but some bond that he is entered into 
For gay apparel ’gainst the triumph day.

YORK

Bound to himself? What doth he with a bond 
That he is bound to? Wife, thou art a fool.—
Boy, let me see the writing.

AUERLE

I do beseech you, pardon me. I may not show it.

YORK

I will be satisfied. Let me see it, I say.

AUERLE

He plucks it out of his bosom and reads it.

DUCHESS

What is the matter, my lord?

YORK [calling offstage]

Ho! Who is within there?

[Enter a Servingman.]

Saddle my horse!—

DUCHESS

God for his mercy, what treachery is here?

YORK

Why, what is it, my lord?

YORK [to the Servingman]

Give me my boots, I say! Saddle my horse!—

[Exit Servingman.]

Now, by mine honor, by my life, my troth, 
I will appeach the villain.

DUCHESS

What is the matter?

YORK

Peace, foolish woman.

DUCHESS

I will not peace. What is the matter, Aumerle?

AUERLE

Good mother, be content. It is no more 
Than my poor life must answer.

DUCHESS

Thy life answer?
YORK [calling]
Bring me my boots! I will unto the King.

            His [Serving]man enters with his boots.

DUCHESS
Strike him, Aumerle. Poor boy, thou art amazed.
[To the Servingman] Hence, villain! Never more come in my sight.

YORK
Give me my boots, I say.

DUCHESS
Why, York, what wilt thou do?
Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?
Have we more sons? Or are we like to have?
Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?
And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age
And rob me of a happy mother’s name?
Is he not like thee? Is he not thine own?

YORK
Thou fond mad woman,
Wilt thou conceal this dark conspiracy?
A dozen of them here have ta’en the Sacrament,
And interchangeably set down their hands,
To kill the King at Oxford.

DUCHESS
He shall be none;
We’ll keep him here. Then what is that to him?

YORK
Away, fond woman! Were he twenty times my son
I would appeach him.

DUCHESS
Hast thou groaned for him as I have done, thou wouldst be more pitiful.
But now I know thy mind. Thou dost suspect
That I have been disloyal to thy bed,
And that he is a bastard, not thy son.
Sweet York, sweet husband, be not of that mind!
He is as like thee as a man may be,
Not like to me, or any of my kin,
And yet I love him.

YORK
Make way, unruly woman! Exit.

DUCHESS
After, Aumerle! Mount thee upon his horse,
Spur post, and get before him to the King,
And beg thy pardon ere he do accuse thee.
I’ll not be long behind. Though I be old,
I doubt not but to ride as fast as York.
And never will I rise up from the ground
Till Bolingbroke have pardoned thee. Away, begone!

[Exeunt separately.]

85 Strike him i.e., Strike the servant. amazed confused, bewildered.
90 Have we more sons? (Historically, this Duchess of York was the Duke’s second wife and was not Aumerle’s mother; she was, however, the mother of another son, Richard, subsequently Earl of Cambridge.)
91 teeming date period of childbearing
97–9 A dozen . . . Oxford (Hereupon was an indertune sextipartite made, sealed with their seals and signed with their hands, in the which each stood bound to other, to do their whole endeavor for the accomplishing of their purposed exploit.)
100 that i.e., the plot 102 groaned for i.e., given birth to. (But see note, line 90.) 103 pitiful pitying. 111 After Go after him. his horse i.e., one of York’s horses 112 Spur post ride as fast as possible.
To win thy after-love I pardon thee.

AUMERLE [raising]
Then give me leave that I may turn the key,
That no man enter till my tale be done.

KING HENRY Have thy desire.

[Aumerle locks the door. The Duke of York knocks at the door and crieth.]

YORK [within]
My liege, beware! Look to thyself.
Thou hast a traitor in thy presence there.

KING HENRY [drawing] Villain, I'll make thee safe.

AUMERLE Stay thy revengeful hand. Thou hast no cause to fear.

YORK [within]
Open the door, secure, foolhardy King!
Shall I for love speak treason to thy face?
Open the door, or I will break it open.

[King Henry opens the door.]

KING HENRY What is the matter, uncle? Speak.
Recover breath; tell us how near is danger,
That we may arm us to encounter it.

YORK Peruse this writing here, and thou shalt know
The treason that my haste forbids me show.

AUMERLE Remember, as thou read'st, thy promise passed.
I do repent me. Read not my name there;
My heart is not confederate with my hand.

YORK It was, villain, ere thy hand did set it down.
I tore it from the traitor's bosom, King;
Fear, and not love, beget his penitence.
Forget to pity him, lest thy pity prove
A serpent that will sting thee to the heart.

KING HENRY Oh, heinous, strong, and bold conspiracy!
O loyal father of a treacherous son,
Thou sheer, immaculate, and silver fountain,
From whence this stream through muddy passages
Hath held his current and defiled himself,
Thy overflow of good converts to bad,
And thy abundant goodness shall excuse
This deadly blot in thy digressing son.

YORK So shall my virtue be his vice's bawd,
And he shall spend mine honor with his shame,
As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold.

Mine honor lives when his dishonor dies,
Or my shamed life in his dishonor lies.
Thou kill'st me in his life; giving him breath,
The traitor lives, the true man's put to death.

DUCHESS [within]
What ho, my liege! For God's sake, let me in.

KING HENRY What shrill-voiced suppliant makes this eager cry?

DUCHESS [within]
A woman, and thy aunt, great King. 'Tis I. Speak with me, pity me, open the door!
A beggar begs that never begged before.

KING HENRY Our scene is altered from a serious thing,
And now changed to "The Beggar and the King."

DUCHESS [within]
My dangerous cousin, let your mother in.
I know she is come to pray for your foul sin.

[Enter York.]

KING HENRY If thou do pardon whosoever pray,
More sins for this forgiveness prosper may.
This festered joint cut off, the rest rest sound;
This let alone will all the rest confound.

DUCHESS O King, believe not this hardhearted man.
Love loving not itself, none other can.

YORK Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?
Shall thy old dugs once more a traitor rear?

DUCHESS Shall thy old dugs once more a traitor rear?

YORK Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?

DUCHESS Sweet York, be patient.—Hear me, gentle liege.

KING HENRY Rise up, good aunt.

DUCHESS Not yet, I thee beseech.
Forever will I walk upon my knees,
And never see day that the happy sees,
Till thou give joy, until thou bid me joy.
By pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy.

AUMERLE [kneeling]
Unto my mother's prayers I bend my knee.

YORK [kneeling]
Against them both my true joints bended be.
Il] mayst thou thrive, if thou grant any grace!

DUCHESS Plead he in earnest? Look upon his face.
His eyes do drop no tears, his prayers are in jest;
His words come from his mouth, ours from our breast.
He prays but faintly and would be denied;

71 in ... lies will be hostage to his dishonorable conduct. 72 in his life if you permit him to live 80 "The Beggar ... King." (Probably one of Shakespeare's many allusions to the ballad of King Cophtua and the Beggar Maid.) 83 whosoever pray anyone who presents a petition 84 for because of 86 alone untreated. confound ruin. 88 Love can i.e., He who does not love himself in his own son can love no one else, not even the King. 89 make do 90 once ... rear i.e., give life again to a traitor by now redeeming Aumerle from death. 94 And ... sees and never enjoy the happiness that those who are happy experience. 97 Unto In support of
We pray with heart and soul and all beside.
His weary joints would gladly rise, I know;
Our knees still kneel till to the ground they grow.
His prayers are full of false hypocrisy,
Ours of true zeal and deep integrity.
Our prayers do outpray his; then let them have
That mercy which true prayer ought to have.

KING HENRY
Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS
Nay, do not say “stand up.”
Say “pardon” first, and afterwards “stand up.”
An if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach,
“Pardon” should be the first word of thy speech.
I never longed to hear a word till now;
Say “pardon,” King; let pity teach thee how.
The word is short, but not so short as sweet;
No word like “pardon” for kings’ mouths so meet.

YORK
Speak it in French, King; say “pardonne moy.”

DUCHESS
Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?
Ah, my sour husband, my hardhearted lord,
That sets the word itself against the word!
Speak “pardon” as ‘tis current in our land;
The chopping French we do not understand.
Thine eye begins to speak; set thy tongue there,
Or in thy piteous heart plant thou thine ear,
That hearing how our plaints and prayers do pierce,
Pity may move thee “pardon” to rehearse.

KING HENRY
Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS
I do not sue to stand.
Pardon is all the suit I have in hand.

KING HENRY
I pardon him, as God shall pardon me.

DUCHESS
Oh, happy vantage of a kneeling knee!
Yet am I sick for fear. Speak it again;
Twice saying “pardon” doth not pardon twain
But makes one pardon strong.

KING HENRY
With all my heart
I pardon him. [All rise.]

DUCHESS
A god on earth thou art.

KING HENRY
But for our trusty brother-in-law and the Abbot,
With all the rest of that consorted crew,
 Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels.
Good uncle, help to order several powers
To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are.
They shall not live within this world, I swear,
But I will have them, if I once know where.
Uncle, farewell, and, cousin, adieu.

Your mother well hath prayed; and prove you true.
Come, my old son. I pray God make thee new.

Exeunt [in two groups].

[5.4]

Enter Sir Pierce [of] Exton [and his Men].

EXTON
Didst thou not mark the King, what words he spake,
“Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?”
Was it not so?

These were his very words.

MAN
Have no friend?” quoth he. He spake it twice,
And urged it twice together, did he not?

EXTON
He did.

And speaking it, he wishtly looked on me,
As who should say, “I would thou wert the man
That would divorce this terror from my heart”—
Meaning the King at Pomfret. Come, let's go.

I am the King's friend, and will rid his foe.

[Exeunt.]

[5.5]

Enter Richard alone.

KING RICHARD
I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world;
And, for because the world is populous,
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out.

My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
But makes one pardon strong.

And speaking it, he wishtly looked on me,
As who should say, “I would thou wert the man
That would divorce this terror from my heart”—
Meaning the King at Pomfret. Come, let's go.

I am the King’s friend, and will rid his foe.

[Exeunt.]
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
Unlikely wonders—how these vain weak nails
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.
Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
That they are not the first of fortune’s slaves,
Nor shall not be the last—like seely beggars
Who, sitting in the stocks, refuse their shame
That many have and others must sit there;
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
Of such as have before endured the like.
Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented. Sometimes am I king;
Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am. Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I kinged again, and by and by
Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing. But what’er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
With being nothing. (The music plays.) Music do I hear?
Ha, ha, keep time! How sour sweet music is
When time is broke and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men’s lives.
And here have I the daintiness of ear
To check time broke in a disordered string,
But for the concord of my state and time
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
For now hath Time made me his numb’ring clock.
My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch
Whereo my finger, like a dial’s point,
Is pointing still in cleansing them from tears.
Now sit, the sounds that tell what hour it is
Are clamorous groans that strike upon my heart,
Which is the bell. So sighs and tears and groans
Show minutes, hours, and times. But my time
Runs posting on in Bolingbroke’s proud joy,
While I stand fooling here, his jack of the clock.
This music mads me. Let it sound no more,
For though it have holp madmen to their wits,
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.
[The music ceases.]
Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!
For ‘tis a sign of love; and love to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

Enter a Groom of the stable.

GROOM

Hail, royal prince!

KING RICHARD

Thanks, noble peer.

The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.
What art thou, and how comest thou hither,
Where no man never comes but that sad dog
That brings me food to make misfortune live?

GROOM

I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,
When thou wert king; who, traveling towards York,
With much ado at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes royal master’s face.
Oh, how it earned my heart when I beheld
In London streets, that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse that I so carefully have dressed!

KING RICHARD

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?

GROOM

So proudly as if he disclaimed the ground.

KING RICHARD

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!

That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?
Forgiveness, horse! Why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be awed by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse,
And yet I bear a burden like an ass,
Spurred, galled, and tired by jauncing Bolingbroke.

Enter one [a Keeper] to Richard with meat.

KEEPER [to Groom]

Fellow, give place. Here is no longer stay.

KING RICHARD [to Groom]

If thou love me, ‘tis time thou wert away.

GROOM

What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

Exit Groom.
The Necessary Shakespeare

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND: 5.5

Carlisle, this is your doom:
Help, help, help!

[He beats the Keeper.]

The devil take Henry of Lancaster and thee!
Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

[He gives a paper.]

Enter Lord Fitzwater.

My lord, I have from Oxford sent to London
The heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely,
Two of the dangerous consorted traitors
That sought at Oxford thy dire overthrow.

KING HENRY

Thy pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgot;
Right noble is thy merit, well I wot.

Enter Henry Percy [with the Bishop of Carlisle, guarded].

PERCY

The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,
With clog of conscience and sour melancholy
Hath yielded up his body to the grave;
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life.

KING HENRY

Carlisle, this is your doom:
Choose out some secret place, some reverent room,
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life.

KING HENRY

So as thou liv'st in peace, die free from strife;
For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
High sparks of honor in thee have I seen.

Enter Exton, with [attendants bearing] the coffin.

EXTON

Great King, within this coffín I present
Thy buried fear. Herein all breathless lies
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought.

KING HENRY

Exton, I thank thee not, for thou hast wrought
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand
Upon my head and all this famous land.

EXTON

From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.

KING HENRY

They love not poison that do poison need,
Nor do I thee. Though I did wish him dead,
I hate the murderer, love him murderèd.
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labor,
But neither my good word nor princely favor.
With Cain go wander through the shades of night,
And never show thy head by day nor light.

[Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.]

[Exeunt Exton and attendants.]

Come mourn with me for what I do lament,
And put on sullen black incontinent.
I’ll make a voyage to the Holy Land
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.

March sadly after. Grace my mourning here
In weeping after this untimely bier.

[Exeunt in procession, following the coffin.]

43 Cain murderer of his brother Abel; see 1.1.104

48 incontinent immediately.

51 Grace Dignify