

The Life and Death of Richard the Second

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SCENE III. Wilds in Gloucestershire.

Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE and NORTHUMBERLAND, with Forces

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Believe me, noble lord,
I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire:
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draws out our miles, and makes them wearisome,
And yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar,
Making the hard way sweet and delectable.
But I bethink me what a weary way
From Ravenspurgh to Cotswold will be found
In Ross and Willoughby, wanting your company,
Which, I protest, hath very much beguiled
The tediousness and process of my travel:
But theirs is sweetened with the hope to have
The present benefit which I possess;
And hope to joy is little less in joy
Than hope enjoy'd: by this the weary lords
Shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done
By sight of what I have, your noble company.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

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

Enter HENRY PERCY

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

HENRY PERCY

I had thought, my lord, to have learn'd his health of you.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Why, is he not with the queen?

HENRY 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.

HENRY 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;
Then with directions to repair to Ravenspurgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Have you forgot the Duke of Hereford, boy?

HENRY 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.

HENRY 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 approved service and desert.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I thank thee, gentle Percy; and be sure
I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering 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.

NORTHUMBERLAND

How far is it to Berkeley? and what stir
Keeps good old York there with his men of war?

HENRY PERCY

There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees,
Mann'd with three hundred men, as I have heard;
And in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour;
None else of name and noble estimate.

Enter LORD ROSS and LORD WILLOUGHBY

NORTHUMBERLAND

Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby,
Bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, my lords. I wot your love pursues
A banish'd traitor: all my treasury
Is yet but unfelt thanks, which more enrich'd
Shall be your love and labour's recompense.

LORD ROSS

Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

And far surmounts our labour to attain it.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor;
Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,
Stands for my bounty. But who comes here?

Enter LORD BERKELEY

NORTHUMBERLAND

It is my Lord of Berkeley, as I guess.

LORD BERKELEY

My Lord of Hereford, my message is to you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My lord, my answer is--to Lancaster;
And I am come to seek that name in England;
And I must find that title in your tongue,

Before I make reply to aught you say.

LORD BERKELEY

Mistake me not, my lord; 'tis not my meaning
To raze one title of your honour out:
To you, my lord, I come, what lord you will,
From the most gracious regent of this land,
The Duke of York, to know what pricks you on
To take advantage of the absent time
And fright our native peace with self-born arms.

Enter DUKE OF YORK attended

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I shall not need transport my words by you;
Here comes his grace in person. My noble uncle!

Kneels

DUKE OF YORK

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

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious uncle--

DUKE OF YORK

Tut, tut!
Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle:
I am no traitor's uncle; and that word 'grace.'
In an ungracious mouth is but profane.
Why have those banish'd 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?
Comest 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,
O, then how quickly should this arm of mine.
Now prisoner to the palsy, chastise thee
And minister correction to thy fault!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

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

DUKE OF YORK

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

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

As I was banish'd, I was banish'd 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; O, then, my father,
Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd
A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties
Pluck'd from my arms perforce and given away
To upstart unthrifths? Wherefore was I born?
If that my cousin king be King of 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 distrain'd and sold,
And these and all are all amiss employ'd.
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.

LORD ROSS

It stands your grace upon to do him right.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Base men by his endowments are made great.

DUKE OF YORK

My lords of England, let me tell you this:
I have had feeling of my cousin's wrongs
And laboured 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 ne'er see joy that breaks that oath!

DUKE OF YORK

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 to 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.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

An offer, uncle, that we will accept:
But we must win your grace to go with us
To Bristol castle, which they say is held
By Bushy, Bagot and their complices,
The caterpillars of the commonwealth,
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

DUKE OF 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.

Exeunt