

Richard II

1.3

Enter Lord Marshal [with officers setting out chairs], and the Duke of Aumerle

LORD MARSHAL

My lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford armed?

AUMERLE

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

LORD 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.

5

The trumpets sound, and King Richard enters, with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, [Bushy, Bagot, Green,] and other nobles. When they are set, enter Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, defendant, in arms, [and a Herald]

KING RICHARD

Marshal, demand of yonder champion
The cause of his arrival here in arms.
Ask him his name, and orderly proceed
To swear him in the justice of his cause.

10

LORD MARSHAL *(to Mowbray)*

In God's name and the King's, say who thou art,
And why thou com'st thus knightly clad in arms,
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 valour!

15

MOWBRAY

My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
Who hither come engageÁd 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 the Duke of Hereford that appeals me;
And by the grace of God and this mine arm

20

To prove him, in defending of myself,
A traitor to my God, my king, and me.
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven! 25

[He sits.]

*The trumpets sound. Enter Bolingbroke Duke of
Hereford, appellant, in armour, [and a Herald]*

KING RICHARD

Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms
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. 30

LORD 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 35
Am I, who ready here do stand in arms
To prove by God's grace and my body's valour
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. 40
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

[He sits]

LORD 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. 45

BOLINGBROKE *[standing]*

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 50
And loving farewell of our several friends.

LORD MARSHAL *(to King Richard)*

The appellant in all duty greets your highness,

And craves to kiss your hand and take his leave.

KING RICHARD

We will descend and fold him in our arms.

He descends from his seat and embraces Bolingbroke

Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause is just, 55

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

O, let no noble eye profane a tear

For me if I be gored with Mowbray's spear. 60

As confident as is the falcon's flight

Against a bird do I with Mowbray fight.

(To the Lord Marshal) 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, 65

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, [kneeling]) O thou, the earthly author of my
blood,

Whose youthful spirit in me regenerate 70

Doth with a two-fold vigour lift me up

To reach at victory above my head,

Add proof unto mine armour with thy prayers,

And with thy blessings steel my lance's point,

That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat 75

And furbish new the name of John a Gaunt

Even in the lusty haviour of his son.

JOHN OF GAUNT

God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!

Be swift like lightning in the execution,

And let thy blows, doubly redoubleÁd, 80

Fall like amazing thunder on the casque

Of thy adverse pernicious enemy.

Rouse up thy youthful blood, be valiant, and live.

BOLINGBROKE *[standing]*

Mine innocence and Saint George to thrive!

MOWBRAY *[standing]*

However God or fortune cast my lot, 85
There lives or dies, true to King Richard's throne,
A loyal, just, and upright gentleman.
Never did captive with a freer heart
Cast off his chains of bondage and embrace
His golden uncontrolled enfranchisement 90
More than my dancing soul doth celebrate
This feast of battle with mine adversary.
Most mighty liege, and my companion peers,
Take from my mouth the wish of happy years.
As gentle and as jocund as to jest 95
Go I to fight. Truth hath a quiet breast.

KING RICHARD

Farewell, my lord. Securely I espy
Virtue with valour couched in thine eye.±±
Order the trial, Marshal, and begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby, 100
Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!
[An officer bears a lance to Bolingbroke]

BOLINGBROKE

Strong as a tower in hope, I cry `Amen!'

LORD MARSHAL *(to an officer)*

Go bear this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.
[An officer bears a lance to Mowbray]

FIRST HERALD

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby
Stands here for God, his sovereign, and himself, 105
On pain to be found false and recreant,
To prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray,
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, 110
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 115
Attending but the signal to begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Sound trumpets, and set forward combatants!

[A charge is sounded.]

King Richard throws down his warder

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. 120

[Bolingbroke and Mowbray disarm and sit]

(To the nobles) Withdraw with us, and let the trumpets
sound

While we return these dukes what we decree.

*A long flourish, during which King Richard and his
nobles withdraw and hold council, [then come
forward]. King Richard addresses Bolingbroke and
Mowbray*

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 fostered, 125

And for our eyes do hate the dire aspect

Of civil wounds ploughed up with neighbours' swords,

Which, so roused up with boisterous untuned drums,

With harsh-resounding trumpets' dreadful bray,

And grating shock of wrathful iron arms, 130

Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace

And make us wade even in our kindred's blood,

Therefore we banish you our territories.

You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of life,

Till twice five summers have enriched our fields 135

Shall not regret our fair dominions,

But tread the stranger paths of banishment.

BOLINGBROKE

Your will be done. This must my comfort be:

That sun that warms you here shall shine on me,

And those his golden beams to you here lent 140

Shall point on me and gild my banishment.

KING RICHARD

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,

Which I with some unwillingness pronounce.

The sly slow hours shall not determinate

The dateless limit of thy dear exile. 145
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 150
As to be cast forth in the common air,
Have I deserveÁd at your highness' hands.
The language I have learnt these forty years,
My native English, now I must forgo,
And now my tongue's use is to me no more 155
Than an unstringeÁd viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument cased up,
Or, being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.
Within my mouth you have enjailed my tongue, 160
Doubly portcullised 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. 165
What is thy sentence then but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

KING RICHARD

It boots thee not to be compassionate.
After our sentence, plaining comes too late.

MOWBRAY

Then thus I turn me from my country's light, 170
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD

Return again, and take an oath with thee.
(*To both*) Lay on our royal sword your banished hands.
Swear by the duty that you owe to God±±
Our part therein we banish with yourselves±± 175
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, regreet, nor reconcile 180

This low'ring tempest of your home-bred hate,
Nor never by adviseÁd purpose meet
To plot, contrive, or complot any ill
'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

BOLINGBROKE

I swear.

MOWBRAY And I, to keep all this.

185

BOLINGBROKE

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. 190
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, 195
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. 200

Exit

KING RICHARD

Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes
I see thy grieveÁd 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. 205

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.

JOHN OF GAUNT

I thank my liege that in regard of me
He shortens four years of my son's exile. 210
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. 215
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.

JOHN OF GAUNT

But not a minute, King, that thou canst give.
Shorten my days thou canst with sudden sorrow, 220
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 dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath. 225

KING RICHARD

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

JOHN OF GAUNT

Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
You urged me as a judge, but I had rather 230
You would have bid me argue like a father.
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. 235

KING RICHARD

Cousin, farewell; and uncle, bid him so.
Six years we banish him, and he shall go.
*[Flourish.] Exeunt all but Aumerle, the Lord
Marshal, John of Gaunt, and Bolingbroke*

AUMERLE *(to Bolingbroke)*

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

LORD MARSHAL *(to Bolingbroke)*

My lord, no leave take I, for I will ride 240
As far as land will let me by your side.

JOHN OF GAUNT *(to Bolingbroke)*

O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,
That thou return'st no greeting to thy friends?

BOLINGBROKE
I have too few to take my leave of you,
When the tongue's office should be prodigal 245
To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart.

JOHN OF GAUNT
Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

BOLINGBROKE
Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

JOHN OF GAUNT
What is six winters? They are quickly gone.

BOLINGBROKE
To men in joy, but grief makes one hour ten. 250

JOHN OF 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 enforceÁd pilgrimage.

JOHN OF GAUNT
The sullen passage of thy weary steps
Esteem as foil wherein thou art to set 255
The precious jewel of thy home return.

BOLINGBROKE
O, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus,
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast, 260
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
O no, the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more 265
Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.

JOHN OF GAUNT
Come, come, my son, I'll bring thee on thy way.
Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

BOLINGBROKE
Then England's ground, farewell. Sweet soil, adieu,
My mother and my nurse that bears me yet! 270
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can:

Though banished, yet a trueborn Englishman.
Exeunt