

Richard Duke of York

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*Enter Richard, Edward Earl of March, and the
Marquis of Montague*

RICHARD

Brother, though I be youngest give me leave.

EDWARD

No, I can better play the orator.

MONTAGUE

But I have reasons strong and forcible.

Enter the Duke of York

YORK

Why, how now, sons and brother±±at a strife?

What is your quarrel? How began it first?

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EDWARD

No quarrel, but a slight contention.

YORK About what?

RICHARD

About that which concerns your grace and us±±

The crown of England, father, which is yours.

YORK

Mine, boy? Not till King Henry be dead.

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RICHARD

Your right depends not on his life or death.

EDWARD

Now you are heir±±therefore enjoy it now.

By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,

It will outrun you, father, in the end.

YORK

I took an oath that he should quietly reign.

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EDWARD

But for a kingdom any oath may be broken.

I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.

RICHARD *(to York)*

No±±God forbid your grace should be forsworn.

YORK

I shall be if I claim by open war.

RICHARD

I'll prove the contrary, if you'll hear me speak. 20

YORK

Thou canst not, son±±it is impossible.

RICHARD

An oath is of no moment being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate
That hath authority over him that swears.
Henry had none, but did usurp the place. 25
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore to arms±±and, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown,
Within whose circuit is Elysium 30
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.
Why do we linger thus? I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed
Even in the luke-warm blood of Henry's heart.

YORK

Richard, enough! I will be king or die. 35
(*To Montague*) Brother, thou shalt to London presently
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk
And tell him privily of our intent.
You, Edward, shall to Edmund Brook, Lord Cobham, 40
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise.
In them I trust, for they are soldiers
Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.
While you are thus employed, what resteth more
But that I seek occasion how to rise, 45
And yet the King not privy to my drift,
Nor any of the house of Lancaster.

Enter a Messenger

But stay, what news? Why com'st thou in such post?

MESSENGER

The Queen, with all the northern earls and lords,
Intend here to besiege you in your castle. 50
She is hard by with twenty thousand men,
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK

Ay, with my sword. What±±think'st thou that we fear
them?
Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;

My brother Montague shall post to London. 55
Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,
Whom we have left protectors of the King,
With powerful policy strengthen themselves,
And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.

MONTAGUE

Brother, I go±±I'll win them, fear it not. 60
And thus most humbly I do take my leave.

Exit

Enter Sir John Mortimer and his brother Sir Hugh

YORK

Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles,
You are come to Sandal in a happy hour.
The army of the Queen mean to besiege us.

SIR JOHN

She shall not need, we'll meet her in the field. 65

YORK What, with five thousand men?

RICHARD

Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need.
A woman's general±±what should we fear?

A march sounds afar off

EDWARD

I hear their drums. Let's set our men in order,
And issue forth and bid them battle straight. 70

YORK *[to Sir John and Sir Hugh]*

Five men to twenty±±though the odds be great,
I doubt not, uncles, of our victory.

Many a battle have I won in France

Whenas the enemy hath been ten to one±±

Why should I not now have the like success? 75

Exeunt