

Richard II

5.5

Enter Richard, alone

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. 5
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father, and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts;
And these same thoughts people this little world
In humours like the people of this world. 10
For no thought is contented. The better sort,
As thoughts of things divine, are intermixed
With scruples, and do set the faith itself
Against the faith, as thus: 'Come, little ones',
And then again, 15
'It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
Unlikely wonders: how these vain weak nails
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs 20
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, 25
Who, sitting in the stocks, refuge their shame
That many have, and others must, set 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. 30
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. 35
Then am I kinged again, and by and by
Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased 40
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 45
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. 50
My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still in cleansing them from tears.
Now, sir, the sounds that tell what hour it is 55
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. 60
This music mads me. Let it sound no more,
For though it have help 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 65
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

Enter a Groom of the stable

GROOM

Hail, royal Prince!

RICHARD

Thanks, noble peer.

The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.

What art thou, and how com'st thou hither,
Where no man never comes but that sad dog 70
That brings me food to make misfortune live?

GROOM

I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,
With much ado at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes royal master's face. 75
O, how it erned 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! 80

RICHARD

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

GROOM

So proudly as if he disdained the ground.

RICHARD

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back.
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand; 85
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, 90
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,
Spur-galled and tired by jauncing Bolingbroke.

Enter Keeper to Richard, with meat

KEEPER *(to Groom)*

Fellow, give place. Here is no longer stay. 95

RICHARD *(to Groom)*

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

GROOM

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

Exit

KEEPER

My lord, will't please you to fall to?

RICHARD

Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do.

KEEPER

My lord, I dare not. Sir Piers of Exton, 100
Who lately came from the King, commands the
contrary.

RICHARD (*striking the Keeper*)

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

KEEPER Help, help, help!

Exton and his men rush in

RICHARD

How now! What means death in this rude assault? 105

He seizes a weapon from a man, and kills him

Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's instrument.

He kills another

Go thou, and fill another room in hell.

Here Exton strikes him down

RICHARD

That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire

That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand

Hath with the King's blood stained the King's own

land. 110

Mount, mount, my soul; thy seat is up on high,

Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.

He dies

EXTON

As full of valour as of royal blood.

Both have I spilt. O, would the deed were good!

For now the devil that told me I did well 115

Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.

This dead King to the living King I'll bear.

Take hence the rest, and give them burial here.

*Exeunt [Exton with Richard's body at one door,
and his men with the other bodies at another
door]*