

# The First Part of the Contention

## 5.1

*Enter the Duke of York and his army of Irish with a drummer and soldiers bearing colours*

**YORK**

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right,  
And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head.  
Ring, bells, aloud; burn, bonfires, clear and bright,  
To entertain great England's lawful king.  
Ah, *sancta maiestas*! Who would not buy thee dear? 5  
Let them obey that knows not how to rule;  
This hand was made to handle naught but gold.  
I cannot give due action to my words,  
Except a sword or sceptre balance it.  
A sceptre shall it have, have I a sword, 10  
On which I'll toss the fleur-de-lis of France.

*Enter the Duke of Buckingham*

(*Aside*) Whom have we here? Buckingham to disturb  
me?

The King hath sent him surety; I must dissemble.

**BUCKINGHAM**

York, if thou meanest well, I greet thee well.

**YORK**

Humphrey of Buckingham, I accept thy greeting. 15  
Art thou a messenger, or come of pleasure?

**BUCKINGHAM**

A messenger from Henry, our dread liege,  
To know the reason of these arms in peace;  
Or why thou, being a subject as I am,  
Against thy oath and true allegiance sworn, 20  
Should raise so great a power without his leave,  
Or dare to bring thy force so near the court?

**YORK** (*aside*)

Scarce can I speak, my choler is so great.  
O, I could hew up rocks and fight with flint,  
I am so angry at these abject terms; 25  
And now, like Ajax Telamonius,  
On sheep or oxen could I spend my fury.

I am far better born than is the King,  
More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts;  
But I must make fair weather yet a while, 30  
Till Henry be more weak and I more strong.

*(Aloud)* Buckingham, I prithee pardon me,  
That I have given no answer all this while;  
My mind was troubled with deep melancholy.  
The cause why I have brought this army hither 35  
Is to remove proud Somerset from the King,  
Seditious to his grace and to the state.

**BUCKINGHAM**

That is too much presumption on thy part;  
But if thy arms be to no other end,  
The King hath yielded unto thy demand: 40  
The Duke of Somerset is in the Tower.

**YORK**

Upon thine honour, is he prisoner?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Upon mine honour, he is prisoner.

**YORK**

Then, Buckingham, I do dismiss my powers.  
Soldiers, I thank you all; disperse yourselves; 45  
Meet me tomorrow in Saint George's field.  
You shall have pay and everything you wish.

*Exeunt soldiers*

*(To Buckingham)* And let my sovereign, virtuous  
Henry,

Command my eldest son±±nay, all my sons±±  
As pledges of my fealty and love. 50

I'll send them all as willing as I live.

Lands, goods, horse, armour, anything I have  
Is his to use, so Somerset may die.

**BUCKINGHAM**

York, I commend this kind submission.  
We twain will go into his highness' tent. 55

*Enter King Henry and attendants*

**KING HENRY**

Buckingham, doth York intend no harm to us,  
That thus he marcheth with thee arm in arm?

**YORK**

In all submission and humility

York doth present himself unto your highness.

**KING HENRY**

Then what intends these forces thou dost bring?

60

**YORK**

To heave the traitor Somerset from hence,  
And fight against that monstrous rebel Cade,  
Who since I heard to be discomfited.

*Enter Iden with Cade's head*

**IDEN**

If one so rude and of so mean condition  
May pass into the presence of a king, 65  
*[Kneeling]* Lo, I present your grace a traitor's head,  
The head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.

**KING HENRY**

The head of Cade? Great God, how just art thou!  
O let me view his visage, being dead,  
That living wrought me such exceeding trouble. 70  
Tell me, my friend, art thou the man that slew him?

**IDEN** *[rising]*

Iwis, an't like your majesty.

**KING HENRY**

How art thou called? And what is thy degree?

**IDEN**

Alexander Iden, that's my name;  
A poor esquire of Kent that loves his king. 75

**BUCKINGHAM** *(to King Henry)*

So please it you, my lord, 'twere not amiss  
He were created knight for his good service.

**KING HENRY**

Iden, kneel down.

*Iden kneels and King Henry knights him*

Rise up a knight.

*Iden rises*

We give thee for reward a thousand marks,  
And will that thou henceforth attend on us. 80

**IDEN**

May Iden live to merit such a bounty,  
And never live but true unto his liege.

*[Exit]*

*Enter Queen Margaret and the Duke of Somerset*

**KING HENRY**

See, Buckingham, Somerset comes wi'th' Queen.  
Go bid her hide him quickly from the Duke.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

For thousand Yorks he shall not hide his head, 85  
But boldly stand and front him to his face.

**YORK**

How now? Is Somerset at liberty?  
Then, York, unloose thy long imprisoned thoughts,  
And let thy tongue be equal with thy heart.  
Shall I endure the sight of Somerset? 90  
False King, why hast thou broken faith with me,  
Knowing how hardly I can brook abuse?  
'King' did I call thee? No, thou art not king;  
Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,  
Which dar'st not±±no, nor canst not±±rule a traitor. 95  
That head of thine doth not become a crown;  
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,  
And not to grace an awful princely sceptre.  
That gold must round engird these brows of mine,  
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear, 100  
Is able with the change to kill and cure.  
Here is a hand to hold a sceptre up,  
And with the same to act controlling laws.  
Give place! By heaven, thou shalt rule no more  
O'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler. 105

**SOMERSET**

O monstrous traitor! I arrest thee, York,  
Of capital treason 'gainst the King and crown.  
Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace.

**YORK** *(to an attendant)*

Sirrah, call in my sons to be my bail.

*Exit attendant*

I know, ere they will have me go to ward, 110  
They'll pawn their swords for my enfranchisement.

**QUEEN MARGARET** *[to Buckingham]*

Call hither Clifford; bid him come amain,  
To say if that the bastard boys of York  
Shall be the surety for their traitor father.

*Exit [Buckingham]*

**YORK**

O blood-bespotted Neapolitan, 115  
Outcast of Naples, England's bloody scourge!  
The sons of York, thy betters in their birth,  
Shall be their father's bail, and bane to those  
That for my surety will refuse the boys.

*Enter [at one door] York's sons Edward and  
crookback Richard [with a drummer and soldiers]*  
See where they come. I'll warrant they'll make it good. 120

*Enter [at the other door] Clifford [and his son, with  
a drummer and soldiers]*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

And here comes Clifford to deny their bail.

**CLIFFORD** *(kneeling before King Henry)*

Health and all happiness to my lord the King.

*He rises*

**YORK**

I thank thee, Clifford. Say, what news with thee?

Nay, do not fright us with an angry look±±

We are thy sovereign, Clifford; kneel again. 125

For thy mistaking so, we pardon thee.

**CLIFFORD**

This is my king, York; I do not mistake.

But thou mistakes me much to think I do.

*(To King Henry)*

To Bedlam with him! Is the man grown mad?

**KING HENRY**

Ay, Clifford, a bedlam and ambitious humour 130

Makes him oppose himself against his king.

**CLIFFORD**

He is a traitor; let him to the Tower,

And chop away that factious pate of his.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

He is arrested, but will not obey.

His sons, he says, shall give their words for him. 135

**YORK** *(to Edward and Richard)* Will you not, sons?

**EDWARD**

Ay, noble father, if our words will serve.

**RICHARD**

And if words will not, then our weapons shall.

**CLIFFORD**

Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!

**YORK**

Look in a glass, and call thy image so. 140

I am thy king, and thou a false-heart traitor.

Call hither to the stake my two brave bears,

That with the very shaking of their chains,

They may astonish these fell-lurking curs.

*(To an attendant)*

Bid Salisbury and Warwick come to me. 145

*Exit attendant*

*Enter the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury [with a drummer and soldiers]*

**CLIFFORD**

Are these thy bears? We'll bait thy bears to death,

And manacle the bearherd in their chains,

If thou dar'st bring them to the baiting place.

**RICHARD**

Oft have I seen a hot o'erweening cur

Run back and bite, because he was withheld; 150

Who, being suffered with the bear's fell paw,

Hath clapped his tail between his legs and cried;

And such a piece of service will you do,

If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick.

**CLIFFORD**

Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump, 155

As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!

**YORK**

Nay, we shall heat you thoroughly anon.

**CLIFFORD**

Take heed, lest by your heat you burn yourselves.

**KING HENRY**

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?

Old Salisbury, shame to thy silver hair, 160

Thou mad misleader of thy brainsick son!

What, wilt thou on thy deathbed play the ruffian,

And seek for sorrow with thy spectacles?

O, where is faith? O, where is loyalty?

If it be banished from the frosty head, 165

Where shall it find a harbour in the earth?

Wilt thou go dig a grave to find out war,

And shame thine honourable age with blood?

Why, art thou old and want'st experience?

Or wherefore dost abuse it if thou hast it? 170  
 For shame in duty bend thy knee to me,  
 That bows unto the grave with mickle age.

**SALISBURY**  
 My lord, I have considered with myself  
 The title of this most renowneÁd Duke,  
 And in my conscience do repute his grace 175  
 The rightful heir to England's royal seat.

**KING HENRY**  
 Hast thou not sworn allegiance unto me?

**SALISBURY** I have.

**KING HENRY**  
 Canst thou dispense with heaven for such an oath?

**SALISBURY**  
 It is great sin to swear unto a sin, 180  
 But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.  
 Who can be bound by any solemn vow  
 To do a murd'rous deed, to rob a man,  
 To force a spotless virgin's chastity,  
 To reave the orphan of his patrimony, 185  
 To wring the widow from her custom'd right,  
 And have no other reason for this wrong  
 But that he was bound by a solemn oath?

**QUEEN MARGARET**  
 A subtle traitor needs no sophister.

**KING HENRY** *(to an attendant)*  
 Call Buckingham, and bid him arm himself. 190  
*Exit attendant*

**YORK** *(to King Henry)*  
 Call Buckingham and all the friends thou hast,  
 I am resolved for death or dignity.

**CLIFFORD**  
 The first, I warrant thee, if dreams prove true.

**WARWICK**  
 You were best to go to bed and dream again,  
 To keep you from the tempest of the field. 195

**CLIFFORD**  
 I am resolved to bear a greater storm  
 Than any thou canst conjure up today±±  
 And that I'll write upon thy burgonet  
 Might I but know thee by thy household badge.

**WARWICK**

Now by my father's badge, old Neville's crest, 200  
The rampant bear chained to the ragged staff,  
This day I'll wear aloft my burgonet,  
As on a mountain top the cedar shows  
That keeps his leaves in spite of any storm,  
Even to affright thee with the view thereof. 205

**CLIFFORD**

And from thy burgonet I'll rend thy bear,  
And tread it under foot with all contempt,  
Despite the bearherd that protects the bear.

**YOUNG CLIFFORD**

And so to arms, victorious father,  
To quell the rebels and their complices. 210

**RICHARD**

Fie, charity, for shame! Speak not in spite±±  
For you shall sup with Jesu Christ tonight.

**YOUNG CLIFFORD**

Foul stigmatic, that's more than thou canst tell.

**RICHARD**

If not in heaven, you'll surely sup in hell.  
*Exeunt severally*