

Richard II

5.2

Enter the Duke and Duchess of York

DUCHESS OF YORK

My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
When weeping made you break the story off,
Of our two cousins' coming into London.

YORK

Where did I leave?

DUCHESS OF YORK At that sad stop, my lord,
Where rude misgoverned hands from windows' tops
Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard's head.

5

YORK

Then, as I said, the Duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
Which his aspiring rider seemed to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course, 10
Whilst all tongues cried `God save thee, Bolingbroke!'
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage, and that all the walls 15
With painted imagery had said at once,
`Jesu preserve thee! Welcome, Bolingbroke!'
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,
Bare-headed, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus: `I thank you, countrymen', 20
And thus still doing, thus he passed along.

20

DUCHESS OF YORK

Alack, poor Richard! Where rode he the whilst?

YORK

As in a theatre the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next, 25
Thinking his prattle to be tedious,
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard. No man cried `God save
him!'

No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head, 30
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,
That had not God for some strong purpose steeled
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted, 35
And barbarism itself have pitied him.
But heaven hath a hand in these events,
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.
To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,
Whose state and honour I for aye allow. 40

Enter the Duke of Aumerle

DUCHESS OF YORK

Here comes my son Aumerle.

YORK Aumerle that was;

But that is lost for being Richard's friend,
And, madam, you must call him 'Rutland' now.
I am in Parliament pledge for his truth
And lasting fealty to the new-made King. 45

DUCHESS OF YORK

Welcome, my son. Who are the violets now
That strew the green lap of the new-come spring?

AUMERLE

Madam, I know not, nor I greatly care not.
God knows I had as lief be none as one.

YORK

Well, bear you well in this new spring of time, 50
Lest you be cropped before you come to prime.
What news from Oxford? Hold these jousts and
triumphs?

AUMERLE

For aught I know, my lord, they do.

YORK You will be there, I know.

AUMERLE

If God prevent it not, I purpose so. 55

YORK

What seal is that that hangs without thy bosom?
Yea, look'st thou pale? Let me see the writing.

AUMERLE

My lord, 'tis nothing.

YORK No matter, then, who see it.
I will be satisfied. Let me see the writing.

AUMERLE
I do beseech your grace to pardon me. 60
It is a matter of small consequence,
Which for some reasons I would not have seen.

YORK
Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see.
I fear, I fear!

DUCHESS OF YORK What should you fear?
'Tis nothing but some bond that he is entered into 65
For gay apparel 'gainst the triumph day.

YORK
Bound to himself? What doth he with a bond
That he is bound to? Wife, thou art a fool.
Boy, let me see the writing.

AUMERLE
I do beseech you, pardon me. I may not show it. 70

YORK
I will be satisfied. Let me see it, I say.
He plucks it out of Aumerle's bosom, and reads it
Treason, foul treason! Villain, traitor, slave!

DUCHESS OF YORK What is the matter, my lord?

YORK
Ho, who is within there? Saddle my horse.±±
God for his mercy, what treachery is here! 75

DUCHESS OF YORK Why, what is it, my lord?

YORK
Give me my boots, I say. Saddle my horse.±±
Now by mine honour, by my life, my troth,
I will appeach the villain.

DUCHESS OF YORK What is the matter? 80

YORK Peace, foolish woman.

DUCHESS OF YORK
I will not peace. What is the matter, son?

AUMERLE
Good mother, be content. It is no more
Than my poor life must answer.

DUCHESS OF YORK Thy life answer?

YORK
Bring me my boots. I will unto the King. 85

His man enters with his boots

DUCHESS OF YORK

Strike him, Aumerle! Poor boy, thou art amazed.
(*To York's man*) Hence, villain! Never more come in
my sight.

YORK

Give me my boots, I say.

DUCHESS OF YORK Why, York, what wilt thou do?

Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?
Have we more sons? Or are we like to have? 90
Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?
And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age,
And rob me of a happy mother's name?
Is he not like thee? Is he not thine own?

YORK Thou fond, mad woman, 95
Wilt thou conceal this dark conspiracy?
A dozen of them here have ta'en the sacrament,
And interchangeably set down their hands
To kill the King at Oxford.

DUCHESS OF YORK He shall be none.
We'll keep him here, then what is that to him? 100

YORK

Away, fond woman! Were he twenty times my son
I would appeach him.

DUCHESS OF YORK Hadst thou groaned for him
As I have done thou wouldst be more pitiful.
But now I know thy mind: thou dost suspect
That I have been disloyal to thy bed, 105
And that he is a bastard, not thy son.
Sweet York, sweet husband, be not of that mind.
He is as like thee as a man may be,
Not like to me or any of my kin,
And yet I love him.

YORK Make way, unruly woman. 110

Exit [with his man]

DUCHESS OF YORK

After, Aumerle! Mount thee upon his horse.
Spur, post, and get before him to the King,
And beg thy pardon ere he do accuse thee.
I'll not be long behind though I be old,

I doubt not but to ride as fast as York±± 115
And never will I rise up from the ground
Till Bolingbroke have pardoned thee. Away, be gone!
Exeunt [severally]