

Richard Duke of York

3.1

Enter two Gamekeepers, with crossbows in their hands

FIRST GAMEKEEPER

Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves,
For through this laund anon the deer will come,
And in this covert will we make our stand,
Culling the principal of all the deer.

SECOND GAMEKEEPER

I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot. 5

FIRST GAMEKEEPER

That cannot be±±the noise of thy crossbow
Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best.
And, for the time shall not seem tedious,
I'll tell thee what befell me on a day 10
In this self place where now we mean to stand.

FIRST GAMEKEEPER

Here comes a man±±let's stay till he be past.
They stand apart.

Enter King Henry, disguised, carrying a prayer-book

KING HENRY

From Scotland am I stolen, even of pure love,
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.
No, Harry, Harry±±'tis no land of thine. 15
Thy place is filled, thy sceptre wrung from thee,
Thy balm washed off wherewith thou wast anointed.
No bending knee will call thee Caesar now,
No humble suitors press to speak for right,
No, not a man comes for redress of thee±± 20
For how can I help them and not myself?

FIRST GAMEKEEPER (to the Second Gamekeeper)

Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee:
This is the quondam king±±let's seize upon him.

KING HENRY

Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,
For wise men say it is the wisest course. 25

SECOND GAMEKEEPER (to the First Gamekeeper)

Why linger we? Let us lay hands upon him.

FIRST GAMEKEEPER *(to the Second Gamekeeper)*

Forbear awhile±±we'll hear a little more.

KING HENRY

My queen and son are gone to France for aid,
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone to crave the French King's sister 30
To wife for Edward. If this news be true,

Poor Queen and son, your labour is but lost±±
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Louis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account, then, Margaret may win him±± 35
For she's a woman to be pitied much.

Her sighs will make a batt'ry in his breast,
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart,
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn,
And Nero will be tainted with remorse 40
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.

Ay, but she's come to beg; Warwick to give.
She on his left side, craving aid for Henry;
He on his right, asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps and says her Henry is deposed, 45
He smiles and says his Edward is installed;

That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more,
While Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,
And in conclusion wins the King from her 50
With promise of his sister and what else

To strengthen and support King Edward's place.

O, Margaret, thus 'twill be; and thou, poor soul,
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn.

SECOND GAMEKEEPER *(coming forward)*

Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens? 55

KING HENRY

More than I seem, and less than I was born to:
A man at least, for less I should not be;
And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

SECOND GAMEKEEPER

Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

KING HENRY

Why, so I am, in mind±±and that's enough.	60
SECOND GAMEKEEPER	
But if thou be a king, where is thy crown?	
KING HENRY	
My crown is in my heart, not on my head;	
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,	
Nor to be seen. My crown is called content±±	
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.	65
SECOND GAMEKEEPER	
Well, if you be a king crowned with content,	
Your crown content and you must be contented	
To go along with us±±for, as we think,	
You are the king King Edward hath deposed,	
And we his subjects sworn in all allegiance	70
Will apprehend you as his enemy.	
KING HENRY	
But did you never swear and break an oath?	
SECOND GAMEKEEPER	
No±±never such an oath, nor will not now.	
KING HENRY	
Where did you dwell when I was King of England?	
SECOND GAMEKEEPER	
Here in this country, where we now remain.	75
KING HENRY	
I was anointed king at nine months old,	
My father and my grandfather were kings,	
And you were sworn true subjects unto me±±	
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?	
FIRST GAMEKEEPER	
No, for we were subjects but while you were king.	80
KING HENRY	
Why, am I dead? Do I not breathe a man?	
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear.	
Look as I blow this feather from my face,	
And as the air blows it to me again,	
Obeysing with my wind when I do blow,	85
And yielding to another when it blows,	
Commanded always by the greater gust±±	
Such is the lightness of you common men.	
But do not break your oaths, for of that sin	
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.	90

Go where you will, the King shall be commanded;
And be you kings, command, and I'll obey.

FIRST GAMEKEEPER

We are true subjects to the King, King Edward.

KING HENRY

So would you be again to Henry,
If he were seated as King Edward is.

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FIRST GAMEKEEPER

We charge you, in God's name and in the King's,
To go with us unto the officers.

KING HENRY

In God's name, lead; your king's name be obeyed;
And what God will, that let your king perform;
And what he will I humbly yield unto.

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Exeunt