

Richard Duke of York

2.5

Alarum. Enter King Henry

KING HENRY

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Now sways it this way like a mighty sea 5
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind,
Now sways it that way like the selfsame sea
Forced to retire by fury of the wind.
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
Now one the better, then another best±± 10
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
Yet neither conqueror nor conquereÁd.
So is the equal poise of this fell war.
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory. 15
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford, too,
Have chid me from the battle, swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead, if God's good will were so±±
For what is in this world but grief and woe? 20
O God! Methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain.
To sit upon a hill, as I do now;
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run: 25
How many makes the hour full complete,
How many hours brings about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times: 30
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself,

So many days my ewes have been with young, 35
 So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean,
 So many years ere I shall shear the fleece.
 So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,
 Passed over to the end they were created,
 Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave. 40
 Ah, what a life were this! How sweet! How lovely!
 Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
 To shepherds looking on their seely sheep
 Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
 To kings that fear their subjects' treachery? 45
 O yes, it doth±±a thousandfold it doth.
 And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
 His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
 His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
 All which secure and sweetly he enjoys, 50
 Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
 His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
 His body coucheÁd in a curious bed,
 When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

*Alarum. Enter [at one door] a Soldier with a dead
 man in his arms. King Henry stands apart*

SOLDIER

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody. 55
 This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight,
 May be possesseÁd with some store of crowns;
 And I, that haply take them from him now,
 May yet ere night yield both my life and them
 To some man else, as this dead man doth me. 60

[He removes the dead man's helmet]

Who's this? O God! It is my father's face
 Whom in this conflict I, unwares, have killed.
 O, heavy times, begetting such events!
 From London by the King was I pressed forth;
 My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man, 65
 Came on the part of York, pressed by his master;
 And I, who at his hands received my life,
 Have by my hands of life bereaveÁd him.
 Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did;
 And pardon, father, for I knew not thee. 70

My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks,
And no more words till they have flowed their fill.

He weeps

KING HENRY

O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity. 75
Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
Be blind with tears, and break, o'ercharged with grief.
*Enter [at another door] another Soldier with a dead
man [in his arms]*

SECOND SOLDIER

Thou that so stoutly hath resisted me,
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold±± 80
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.
[He removes the dead man's helmet]
But let me see: is this our foeman's face?
Ah, no, no, no±±it is mine only son!
Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,
Throw up thine eye! *(Weeping)* See, see, what showers
arise, 85
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart,
Upon thy wounds, that kills mine eye and heart!
O, pity, God, this miserable age!
What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural, 90
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

KING HENRY

Woe above woe! Grief more than common grief!
O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds! 95
O, pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses;
The one his purple blood right well resembles,
The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth. 100
Wither one rose, and let the other flourish±±
If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.

FIRST SOLDIER

How will my mother for a father's death
Take on with me, and ne'er be satisfied!

SECOND SOLDIER

How will my wife for slaughter of my son 105
Shed seas of tears, and ne'er be satisfied!

KING HENRY

How will the country for these woeful chances
Misthink the King, and not be satisfied!

FIRST SOLDIER

Was ever son so rued a father's death?

SECOND SOLDIER

Was ever father so bemoaned his son? 110

KING HENRY

Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?
Much is your sorrow, mine ten times so much.

FIRST SOLDIER *(to his father's body)*

I'll bear thee hence where I may weep my fill.

Exit [at one door] with the body of his father

SECOND SOLDIER *(to his son's body)*

These arms of mine shall be thy winding sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre, 115
For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go.

My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell,
And so obsequious will thy father be,
E'en for the loss of thee, having no more,
As Priam was for all his valiant sons. 120

I'll bear thee hence, and let them fight that will±±
For I have murdered where I should not kill.

Exit [at another door] with the body of his son

KING HENRY

Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,
Here sits a king more woeful than you are.

Alarums. Excursions. Enter Prince Edward

PRINCE EDWARD

Fly, father, fly±±for all your friends are fled, 125
And Warwick rages like a chafed bull!
Away±±for death doth hold us in pursuit!

[Enter Queen Margaret]

QUEEN MARGARET

Mount you, my lord±±towards Berwick post amain.

Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds
Having the fearful flying hare in sight, 130
With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,
And bloody steel grasped in their ireful hands,
Are at our backs±±and therefore hence amain.

[Enter Exeter]

EXETER

Away±±for vengeance comes along with them!
Nay±±stay not to expostulate±±make speed±± 135
Or else come after. I'll away before.

KING HENRY

Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter.
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go
Whither the Queen intends. Forward, away.

Exeunt