

The First Part of the Contention

4.1

Alarums within, and the chambers be discharged like as it were a fight at sea. And then enter the Captain of the ship, the Master, the Master's Mate, Walter Whitmore, [and others]. With them, as their prisoners, the Duke of Suffolk, disguised, and two Gentlemen

CAPTAIN

The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea;
And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
That drag the tragic melancholy night;
Who, with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings 5
Clip dead men's graves, and from their misty jaws
Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.
Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize,
For whilst our pinnace anchors in the downs, 10
Here shall they make their ransom on the sand,
Or with their blood stain this discoloured shore.
Master, (*pointing to the First Gentleman*) this prisoner
 freely give I thee,
(*To the Mate*)
And thou, that art his mate, make boot of this.
 He points to the Second Gentleman
 (*To Walter Whitmore*)
The other (*pointing to Suffolk*) , Walter Whitmore, is
 thy share.

FIRST GENTLEMAN (*to the Master*)

What is my ransom, Master, let me know. 15

MASTER

A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.

MATE (*to the Second Gentleman*)

And so much shall you give, or off goes yours.

CAPTAIN (*to both the Gentlemen*)

What, think you much to pay two thousand crowns,
And bear the name and port of gentlemen?

[WHITMORE]

Cut both the villains' throats! *[To Suffolk]* For die you
 shall. 20
 The lives of those which we have lost in fight
 □
 Be counterpoised with such a petty sum.
FIRST GENTLEMAN *(to the Master)*
 I'll give it, sir, and therefore spare my life.
SECOND GENTLEMAN *(to the Mate)*
 And so will I, and write home for it straight. 25
WHITMORE *(to Suffolk)*
 I lost mine eye in laying the prize aboard,
 And therefore to revenge it, shalt thou die±±
 And so should these, if I might have my will.
CAPTAIN
 Be not so rash; take ransom; let him live.
SUFFOLK
 Look on my George±±I am a gentleman. 30
 Rate me at what thou wilt, thou shalt be paid.
WHITMORE
 And so am I; my name is Walter Whitmore.
Suffolk starteth
 How now±±why starts thou? What doth thee affright?
SUFFOLK
 Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.
 A cunning man did calculate my birth, 35
 And told me that by 'water' I should die.
 Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded;
 Thy name is Gualtier, being rightly sounded.
WHITMORE
 Gualtier or Walter±±which it is I care not.
 Never yet did base dishonour blur our name 40
 But with our sword we wiped away the blot.
 Therefore, when merchant-like I sell revenge,
 Broke be my sword, my arms torn and defaced,
 And I proclaimed a coward through the world.
SUFFOLK
 Stay, Whitmore; for thy prisoner is a prince, 45
 The Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole.
WHITMORE
 The Duke of Suffolk muffled up in rags?
SUFFOLK

Ay, but these rags are no part of the Duke.
Jove sometime went disguised, and why not I?

CAPTAIN

But Jove was never slain as thou shalt be. 50

SUFFOLK

Obscure and lousy swain, King Henry's blood,
The honourable blood of Lancaster,
Must not be shed by such a jady groom.
Hast thou not kissed thy hand and held my stirrup?
Bare-headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule 55
And thought thee happy when I shook my head?
How often hast thou waited at my cup,
Fed from my trencher, kneeled down at the board
When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?
Remember it, and let it make thee crestfall'n, 60
Ay, and allay this thy abortive pride,
How in our voiding lobby hast thou stood
And duly waited for my coming forth?
This hand of mine hath writ in thy behalf,
And therefore shall it charm thy riotous tongue. 65

WHITMORE

Speak, Captain±±shall I stab the forlorn swain?

CAPTAIN

First let my words stab him as he hath me.

SUFFOLK

Base slave, thy words are blunt and so art thou.

CAPTAIN

Convey him hence and, on our longboat's side,
Strike off his head.

SUFFOLK Thou dar'st not for thy own. 70

CAPTAIN

Pole±±

[SUFFOLK] Pole?

CAPTAIN

Ay, kennel, puddle, sink, whose filth and dirt
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks,
Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth
For swallowing the treasure of the realm.
Thy lips that kissed the Queen shall sweep the ground, 75
And thou that smiledst at good Duke Humphrey's
death
Against the senseless winds shalt grin in vain,

Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again.
 And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
 For daring to affy a mighty lord 80
 Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
 Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem.
 By devilish policy art thou grown great,
 And like ambitious Sylla, overgorged
 With gobbets of thy mother's bleeding heart. 85
 By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France,
 The false revolting Normans, thorough thee,
 Disdain to call us lord, and Picardy
 Hath slain their governors, surprised our forts,
 And sent the ragged soldiers, wounded, home. 90
 The princely Warwick, and the Nevilles all,
 Whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain,
 As hating thee, are rising up in arms;
 And now the house of York, thrust from the crown,
 By shameful murder of a guiltless king 95
 And lofty, proud, encroaching tyranny,
 Burns with revenging fire, whose hopeful colours
 Advance our half-faced sun, striving to shine,
 Under the which is writ, '*Invitis nubibus*'.
 The commons here in Kent are up in arms, 100
 And, to conclude, reproach and beggary
 Is crept into the palace of our King,
 And all by thee. (*To Whitmore*) Away, convey him
 hence.

SUFFOLK

O that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder
 Upon these paltry, servile, abject drudges. 105
 Small things make base men proud. This villain here,
 Being captain of a pinnace, threatens more
 Than Bargulus, the strong Illyrian pirate.
 Drones suck not eagles' blood, but rob beehives.
 It is impossible that I should die 110
 By such a lowly vassal as thyself.
 Thy words move rage, and not remorse in me.

[CAPTAIN]

But my deeds, Suffolk, soon shall stay thy rage.

SUFFOLK

I go of message from the Queen to France±±
I charge thee, waft me safely cross the Channel! 115

CAPTAIN Walter±±

WHITMORE
Come, Suffolk, I must waft thee to thy death.

SUFFOLK
Paene gelidus timor occupat artus±±
It is thee I fear.

WHITMORE
Thou shalt have cause to fear before I leave thee. 120
What, are ye daunted now? Now will ye stoop?

FIRST GENTLEMAN *(to Suffolk)*
My gracious lord, entreat him±±speak him fair.

SUFFOLK
Suffolk's imperial tongue is stern and rough,
Used to command, untaught to plead for favour.
Far be it we should honour such as these 125
With humble suit. No, rather let my head
Stoop to the block than these knees bow to any
Save to the God of heaven and to my king;
And sooner dance upon a bloody pole
Than stand uncovered to the vulgar groom. 130
True nobility is exempt from fear;
More can I bear than you dare execute.

CAPTAIN
Hale him away, and let him talk no more.

SUFFOLK
Come, 'soldiers', show what cruelty ye can,
That this my death may never be forgot. 135
Great men oft die by vile Besonians;
A Roman sworder and banditto slave
Murdered sweet Tully; Brutus' bastard hand
Stabbed Julius Caesar; savage islanders
Pompey the Great; and Suffolk dies by pirates. 140
Exit Whitmore with Suffolk

CAPTAIN
And as for these whose ransom we have set,
It is our pleasure one of them depart.
(To the Second Gentleman)
Therefore, come you with us and *(to his men, pointing to the First Gentleman)* let him go.

Exeunt all but the First Gentleman
Enter Whitmore with Suffolk's head and body

WHITMORE

There let his head and lifeless body lie,
Until the Queen his mistress bury it.

145

Exit

FIRST GENTLEMAN

O barbarous and bloody spectacle!
His body will I bear unto the King.
If he revenge it not, yet will his friends;
So will the Queen, that living held him dear.

Exit with Suffolk's head and body