

# Richard II

## 3.2

*[Flourish.] Enter King Richard, the Duke of Aumerle, the Bishop of Carlisle, and [soldiers, with drum and colours]*

**KING RICHARD**

Harlechly Castle call they this at hand?

**AUMERLE**

Yea, my lord. How brooks your grace the air  
After your late tossing on the breaking seas?

**KING RICHARD**

Needs must I like it well. I weep for joy  
To stand upon my kingdom once again. 5

*He touches the ground*

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.  
As a long-parted mother with her child  
Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting,  
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee my earth, 10  
And do thee favours with my royal hands.

Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,  
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;  
But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom  
And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way, 15  
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet  
Which with usurping steps do trample thee.  
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies,

And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower  
Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder, 20  
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch  
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.±±  
Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords.

This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones  
Prove armeÁd soldiers, ere her native king 25  
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.

**BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

Fear not, my lord. That power that made you king  
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.

**AUMERLE**

He means, my lord, that we are too remiss,  
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security, 30  
Grows strong and great in substance and in friends.

**KING RICHARD**

Discomfortable cousin, know'st thou not  
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid  
Behind the globe, that lights the lower world,  
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen 35  
In murders and in outrage bloody here;  
But when from under this terrestrial ball  
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,  
And darts his light through every guilty hole,  
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins, 40  
The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,  
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?  
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,  
Who all this while hath revelled in the night  
Whilst we were wand'ring with the Antipodes, 45  
Shall see us rising in our throne, the east,  
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,  
Not able to endure the sight of day,  
But, self-affrighted, tremble at his sin.  
Not all the water in the rough rude sea 50  
Can wash the balm from an anointed king.  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord.  
For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed  
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown, 55  
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay  
A glorious angel. Then if angels fight,  
Weak men must fall; for heaven still guards the right.

*Enter the Earl of Salisbury*

Welcome, my lord. How far off lies your power?

**SALISBURY**

Nor nea'er nor farther off, my gracious lord, 60  
Than this weak arm. Discomfort guides my tongue,  
And bids me speak of nothing but despair.  
One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,  
Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth.

O, call back yesterday, bid time return, 65  
And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men.  
Today, today, unhappy day too late,  
Overthrows thy joys, friends, fortune, and thy state;  
For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,  
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled. 70

**AUMERLE**

Comfort, my liege. Why looks your grace so pale?

**KING RICHARD**

But now the blood of twenty thousand men  
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;  
And till so much blood thither come again  
Have I not reason to look pale and dead? 75  
All souls that will be safe fly from my side,  
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

**AUMERLE**

Comfort, my liege. Remember who you are.

**KING RICHARD**

I had forgot myself. Am I not King?  
Awake, thou sluggard majesty, thou sleep'st! 80  
Is not the King's name forty thousand names?  
Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes  
At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,  
Ye favourites of a king: are we not high?  
High be our thoughts. I know my uncle York 85  
Hath power enough to serve our turn.

*Enter Scrope*

But who comes here?

**SCROPE**

More health and happiness betide my liege  
Than can my care-tuned tongue deliver him.

**KING RICHARD**

Mine ear is open and my heart prepared.  
The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold. 90  
Say, is my kingdom lost? Why 'twas my care,  
And what loss is it to be rid of care?  
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?  
Greater he shall not be. If he serve God  
We'll serve Him too, and be his fellow so. 95  
Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend.

They break their faith to God as well as us.  
Cry woe, destruction, ruin, loss, decay:  
The worst is death, and death will have his day.

**SCROPE**

Glad am I that your highness is so armed 100  
To bear the tidings of calamity.  
Like an unseasonable stormy day,  
Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores  
As if the world were all dissolved to tears,  
So high above his limits swells the rage 105  
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land  
With hard bright steel, and hearts harder than steel.  
Whitebeards have armed their thin and hairless scalps  
Against thy majesty. Boys with women's voices  
Strive to speak big, and clap their female joints 110  
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown.  
Thy very beadsmen learn to bend their bows  
Of double-fatal yew against thy state.  
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills  
Against thy seat. Both young and old rebel, 115  
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

**KING RICHARD**

Too well, too well thou tell'st a tale so ill.  
Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? Where is Bagot?  
What is become of Bushy, where is Green,  
That they have let the dangerous enemy 120  
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?  
If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it.  
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

**SCROPE**

Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.

**KING RICHARD**

O villains, vipers damned without redemption! 125  
Dogs easily won to fawn on any man!  
Snakes in my heart-blood warmed, that sting my  
heart!  
Three Judases, each one thrice-worse than Judas!  
Would they make peace? Terrible hell make war  
Upon their spotted souls for this offence! 130

**SCROPE**

Sweet love, I see, changing his property,  
Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate.  
Again uncurse their souls. Their peace is made  
With heads, and not with hands. Those whom you  
curse

Have felt the worst of death's destroying wound, 135  
And lie full low, graved in the hollow ground.

**AUMERLE**

Is Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?

**SCROPE**

Ay, all of them at Bristol lost their heads.

**AUMERLE**

Where is the Duke my father, with his power?

**KING RICHARD**

No matter where. Of comfort no man speak. 140

Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs,  
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

Let's choose executors and talk of wills±±  
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath 145  
Save our deposeÁd bodies to the ground?

Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's;  
And nothing can we call our own but death,  
And that small model of the barren earth  
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones. 150

*[Sitting]* For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings±±

How some have been deposed, some slain in war,  
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,  
Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed, 155  
All murdered. For within the hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,  
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene, 160

To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,  
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,  
As if this flesh which walls about our life  
Were brass impregnable; and humoured thus,  
Comes at the last, and with a little pin 165

Bores through his castle wall; and farewell, king.  
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood  
With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,  
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,  
For you have but mistook me all this while. 170  
I live with bread, like you; feel want,  
Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,  
How can you say to me I am a king?

**BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

My lord, wise men ne'er wail their present woes,  
But presently prevent the ways to wail. 175  
To fear the foe, since fear oppresses strength,  
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe;  
And so your follies fight against yourself.  
Fear, and be slain. No worse can come to fight;  
And fight and die is death destroying death, 180  
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

**AUMERLE**

My father hath a power. Enquire of him,  
And learn to make a body of a limb.

**KING RICHARD** *[standing]*

Thou chid'st me well. Proud Bolingbroke, I come  
To change blows with thee for our day of doom. 185  
This ague-fit of fear is overblown.  
An easy task it is to win our own.  
Say, Scrope, where lies our uncle with his power?  
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

**SCROPE**

Men judge by the complexion of the sky 190  
The state and inclination of the day.  
So may you by my dull and heavy eye  
My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.  
I play the torturer by small and small  
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken. 195  
Your uncle York is joined with Bolingbroke,  
And all your northern castles yielded up,  
And all your southern gentlemen in arms  
Upon his faction.

**KING RICHARD** Thou hast said enough.  
(*To Aumerle*) Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead

me forth

200

Of that sweet way I was in to despair.  
What say you now? What comfort have we now?  
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly  
That bids me be of comfort any more.  
Go to Flint Castle; there I'll pine away. 205  
A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey.  
That power I have, discharge, and let them go  
To ear the land that hath some hope to grow;  
For I have none. Let no man speak again  
To alter this, for counsel is but vain. 210

**AUMERLE**

My liege, one word.

**KING RICHARD** He does me double wrong  
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.  
Discharge my followers. Let them hence away  
From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day.  
*Exeunt*