

# The First Part of the Contention

## 2.2

*Enter the Duke of York and the Earls of Salisbury  
and Warwick*

**YORK**

Now, my good lords of Salisbury and Warwick,  
Our simple supper ended, give me leave  
In this close walk to satisfy myself  
In craving your opinion of my title,  
Which is infallible, to England's crown.

5

**SALISBURY**

My lord, I long to hear it out at full.

**WARWICK**

Sweet York, begin, and if thy claim be good,  
The Nevilles are thy subjects to command.

**YORK** Then thus:

Edward the Third, my lords, had seven sons: 10  
The first, Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales;  
The second, William of Hatfield; and the third,  
Lionel Duke of Clarence; next to whom  
Was John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster;  
The fifth was Edmund Langley, Duke of York; 15  
The sixth was Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of  
Gloucester;

William of Windsor was the seventh and last.  
Edward the Black Prince died before his father  
And left behind him Richard, his only son,  
Who, after Edward the Third's death, reigned as king 20  
Till Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster,  
The eldest son and heir of John of Gaunt,  
Crowned by the name of Henry the Fourth,  
Seized on the realm, deposed the rightful king,  
Sent his poor queen to France from whence she came, 25  
And him to Pomfret; where, as well you know,  
Harmless Richard was murdered traitorously.

**WARWICK** *(to Salisbury)*

Father, the Duke of York hath told the truth;  
Thus got the house of Lancaster the crown.

**YORK**

Which now they hold by force and not by right; 30  
For Richard, the first son's heir, being dead,  
The issue of the next son should have reigned.

**SALISBURY**

But William of Hatfield died without an heir.

**YORK**

The third son, Duke of Clarence, from whose line  
I claim the crown, had issue Phillipe, a daughter, 35  
Who married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March;  
Edmund had issue, Roger, Earl of March;  
Roger had issue, Edmund, Anne and Eleanor.

**SALISBURY**

This Edmund, in the reign of Bolingbroke,  
As I have read, laid claim unto the crown, 40  
And, but for Owain Glyndwŷr, had been king,  
Who kept him in captivity till he died.  
But to the rest.

**YORK**

His eldest sister, Anne,  
My mother, being heir unto the crown,  
Married Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who was son 45  
To Edmund Langley, Edward the Third's fifth son.  
By her I claim the kingdom: she was heir  
To Roger, Earl of March, who was the son  
Of Edmund Mortimer, who married Phillipe,  
Sole daughter unto Lionel, Duke of Clarence. 50  
So if the issue of the elder son  
Succeed before the younger, I am king.

**WARWICK**

What plain proceedings is more plain than this?  
Henry doth claim the crown from John of Gaunt,  
The fourth son; York claims it from the third: 55  
Till Lionel's issue fails, John's should not reign.  
It fails not yet, but flourishes in thee  
And in thy sons, fair slips of such a stock.  
Then, father Salisbury, kneel we together,  
And in this private plot be we the first 60  
That shall salute our rightful sovereign  
With honour of his birthright to the crown.

**SALISBURY AND WARWICK** (*kneeling*)

Long live our sovereign Richard, England's king!

**YORK**

We thank you, lords;

*[Salisbury and Warwick rise]*

but I am not your king

Till I be crowned, and that my sword be stained

65

With heart-blood of the house of Lancaster±±

And that's not suddenly to be performed,

But with advice and silent secrecy.

Do you, as I do, in these dangerous days,

Wink at the Duke of Suffolk's insolence,

70

At Beaufort's pride, at Somerset's ambition,

At Buckingham, and all the crew of them,

Till they have snared the shepherd of the flock,

That virtuous prince, the good Duke Humphrey.

'Tis that they seek, and they, in seeking that,

75

Shall find their deaths, if York can prophesy.

**SALISBURY**

My lord, break off±±we know your mind at full.

**WARWICK**

My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick

Shall one day make the Duke of York a king.

**YORK**

And Neville, this I do assure myself±±

80

Richard shall live to make the Earl of Warwick

The greatest man in England but the King.

*Exeunt*