

Richard III

5.6

Enter King Richard, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, Sir William Catesby, and others

KING RICHARD

What said Northumberland, as touching Richmond?

RATCLIFFE

That he was never traineÁd up in arms.

KING RICHARD

He said the truth. And what said Surrey then?

RATCLIFFE

He smiled and said, `The better for our purpose.'

KING RICHARD

He was in the right, and so indeed it is. 5

Clock strikes

Tell the clock there. Give me a calendar.

Who saw the sun today?

[A book is brought]

RATCLIFFE

Not I, my lord.

KING RICHARD

Then he disdains to shine, for by the book

He should have braved the east an hour ago.

A black day will it be to somebody. 10

Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE

My lord?

KING RICHARD The sun will not be seen today.

The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.

I would these dewy tears were from the ground.

Not shine today±±why, what is that to me 15

More than to Richmond? For the selfsame heaven

That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

Enter the Duke of Norfolk

NORFOLK

Arm, arm, my lord! The foe vaunts in the field.

KING RICHARD

Come, bustle, bustle! Caparison my horse.

[Richard arms]

Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power. 20

Exit one

I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,
And thus my battle shall be orderèd.
My forward shall be drawn out all in length,
Consisting equally of horse and foot,
Our archers placed strongly in the midst. 25
John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,
Shall have the leading of this multitude.
They thus directed, we ourselves will follow
In the main battle, whose puissance on both sides
Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse. 30
This, and Saint George to boot! What think'st thou,
Norfolk?

NORFOLK

A good direction, warlike sovereign.
He showeth him a paper
This paper found I on my tent this morning.
(*He reads*)
`Jackie of Norfolk be not too bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.' 35

KING RICHARD

A thing devised by the enemy.±±
Go, gentlemen, each man unto his charge.
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls.
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe. 40
Our strong arms be our conscience; swords, our law.
March on, join bravely! Let us to't, pell mell±±
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

His oration to his army

What shall I say, more than I have inferred?
Remember whom you are to cope withal: 45
A sort of vagabonds, rascals and runaways,
A scum of Bretons and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest; 50
You having lands and blessed with beautiful wives,
They would distraint the one, distain the other.
And who doth lead them, but a paltry fellow?

Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost;
A milksop; one that never in his life 55
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow.
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again,
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,
These famished beggars, weary of their lives,
Who±±but for dreaming on this fond exploit±± 60
For want of means, poor rats, had hanged themselves.
If we be conquered, let *men* conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobbed, and thumped,
And in record left them the heirs of shame. 65
Shall these enjoy our lands? Lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?

Drum afar off

Hark, I hear their drum.

Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood! 70
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!

Enter a Messenger

What says Lord Stanley? Will he bring his power?

MESSENGER

My lord, he doth deny to come.

KING RICHARD Off with young George's head!

NORFOLK

My lord, the enemy is past the marsh. 75
After the battle let George Stanley die.

KING RICHARD

A thousand hearts are great within my bosom.
Advance our standards! Set upon our foes!
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons. 80
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms!

Exeunt