

RICHARD II*A line-by-line translation***Act 1, Scene 1****Shakespeare**

Enter KING RICHARD II, JOHN OF GAUNT, with other Nobles and Attendants

KING RICHARD II

Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,
Brought hither Henry Hereford thy bold son,
Here to make good the boisterous late appeal,
5 Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

JOHN OF GAUNT

I have, my liege.

KING RICHARD II

Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him,
If he appeal the duke on ancient malice;
10 Or worthily, as a good subject should,
On some known ground of treachery in him?

JOHN OF GAUNT

As near as I could sift him on that argument,
On some apparent danger seen in him
Aim'd at your highness, no inveterate malice.

KING RICHARD II

15 Then call them to our presence; face to face,
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
The accuser and the accused freely speak:
High-stomach'd are they both, and full of ire,
In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE and THOMAS MOWBRAY

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

20 Many years of happy days befall
My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Each day still better other's happiness;
Until the heavens, envying earth's good hap,
Add an immortal title to your crown!

KING RICHARD II

25 We thank you both: yet one but flatters us,
As well appeareth by the cause you come;
Namely to appeal each other of high treason.
Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

30 First, heaven be the record to my speech!
In the devotion of a subject's love,
Tendering the precious safety of my prince,
And free from other misbegotten hate,
Come I appellant to this princely presence.
35 Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee,

Shakescleare Translation

KING RICHARD II and JOHN OF GAUNT enter, with other nobles and servants.

KING RICHARD II

Old John of Gaunt, well-respected Lancaster 1: have you, according to your promise and duty, brought here your presumptuous son Henry Hereford to explain his case against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray, which at the time we didn't have time to hear?

1 The House of Lancaster was one of the branches of the royal House of Plantagenet. John of Gaunt is Richard's uncle. He was the third son of King Edward Third and the younger brother of Richard's father, Edward the Black Prince.

JOHN OF GAUNT

I have, my liege 2.

2 A "liege" is a feudal term for a subject, such as a king, who is worthy of loyalty and respect.

KING RICHARD II

Tell me, furthermore: have you asked him whether he accuses the duke because he has a grudge against him, or because—like a good subject—he has reason to suspect him of disloyalty?

JOHN OF GAUNT

As much as I could gather, he accuses the duke because he thinks he poses a threat to your highness, not for personal reasons.

KING RICHARD II

Then bring them before us 3: we will hear the accuser and the accused make their case, face to face. They're both proud men, full of anger, and their rage makes them too hasty and quick to take offense.

3 Richard frequently moves between the personal pronoun and the royal "we."

HENRY BOLINGBROKE and THOMAS MOWBRAY enter

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

May you reign many years in happiness, my gracious King,
my most loving lord!

THOMAS MOWBRAY

May each day be happier than the one that came before,
until heaven, jealous of earth's good fortune in having such a king, gives you an immortal crown after death.

KING RICHARD II

We thank you both: yet one merely flatters us, since you come to accuse one another of high treason 4. Cousin of Hereford, what is your accusation against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

4 In medieval England, it was high treason to plot against the king--Richard says that Mowbray or Bolingbroke cannot both wish him well, because by definition one of them wants him dead.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

First, let heaven witness my speech! I swear that I make this accusation as a devoted subject, concerned for the precious safety of my prince, and free from any other grudge or personal motive. Now, Thomas Mowbray, I turn to you, and listen closely; for what I speak, I'll prove true while I live, or my soul will answer for it in heaven. You are a traitor and a

And mark my greeting well; for what I speak
My body shall make good upon this earth,
Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
40 Too good to be so and too bad to live,
Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,
The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.
Once more, the more to aggravate the note,
With a foul traitor's name stuff I thy throat;
45 And wish, so please my sovereign, ere I move,
What my tongue speaks my right drawn sword may prove.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal:
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,
The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,
50 Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain;
The blood is hot that must be cool'd for this:
Yet can I not of such tame patience boast
As to be hush'd and nought at all to say:
First, the fair reverence of your highness curbs me
55 From giving reins and spurs to my free speech;
Which else would post until it had return'd
These terms of treason doubled down his throat.
Setting aside his high blood's royalty,
And let him be no kinsman to my liege,
60 I do defy him, and I spit at him;
Call him a slanderous coward and a villain:
Which to maintain I would allow him odds,
And meet him, were I tied to run afoot
Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,
65 Or any other ground inhabitable,
Where ever Englishman durst set his foot.
Mean time let this defend my loyalty,
By all my hopes, most falsely doth he lie.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage,
70 Disclaiming here the kindred of the king,
And lay aside my high blood's royalty,
Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except.
If guilty dread have left thee so much strength
As to take up mine honour's pawn, then stoop:
75 By that and all the rites of knighthood else,
Will I make good against thee, arm to arm,
What I have spoke, or thou canst worse devise.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

I take it up; and by that sword I swear
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,
80 I'll answer thee in any fair degree,
Or chivalrous design of knightly trial:
And when I mount, alive may I not light,
If I be traitor or unjustly fight!

KING RICHARD II

What doth our cousin lay to Mowbray's charge?
It must be great that can inherit us
85 So much as of a thought of ill in him.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Look, what I speak, my life shall prove it true;
That Mowbray hath received eight thousand nobles
In name of lendings for your highness' soldiers,
90 The which he hath detain'd for lewd employments,
Like a false traitor and injurious villain.
Besides I say and will in battle prove,
Or here or elsewhere to the furthest verge
That ever was survey'd by English eye,
95 That all the treasons for these eighteen years
Complotted and contrived in this land
Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.
Further I say and further will maintain
Upon his bad life to make all this good,
100 That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,

villain, too good to be so and too bad to live, since the brighter and clearer the sky, the uglier it looks when clouds fill it. Once more (the more to make my point), I throw the name of "foul traitor" back down your throat; and wish—if it pleased my sovereign—that before I go, I might prove what I say with my sword.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Don't let my cool response make me seem less passionate. A war of words, like the chatter of two gossipy women, won't resolve this dispute; blood must be spilled before this is over. But I am not so patient that I can listen to these insults and say nothing in return. First, respect for your highness stops me from speaking freely—if I could, I wouldn't stop until I'd shoved those terms of treason back down his throat. Leaving aside his royal blood and pretending he's not your [cousin](#)⁵, I defy him, spit at him, and call him a lying coward and a villain: which to prove I would give him time to run, and then follow him even to the frozen mountains of the Alps, or any other inhabitable ground where an Englishman has ever set foot. In the meantime, let this prove my loyalty: by everything I hold dear, he's a false liar.

⁵ Bolingbroke is the oldest son of John of Gaunt, Richard's uncle, which makes him and Richard cousins.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage⁶ [*throws glove on the ground*], abandoning here my royal blood—it's fear, not respect, that makes you refuse to challenge me because I'm the king's cousin. If guilty fear has left you enough strength, pick it up: by that and all the code of knighthood, I'll take up arms to prove that you're guilty of all I've accused you of, or worse.

⁶ A gage—or glove—was thrown on the ground as a challenge to armed combat.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

I take it up; and by the sword that knighted me, I'll answer you in any fair fight: and when I mount my horse, may I not get down again alive, if I'm a traitor or fight unjustly!

KING RICHARD II

What crime do you accuse Mowbray of, cousin? It must be very bad, if it can cause us to think any ill of him.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Whatever I speak, I'll risk my life to prove it true. Mowbray has received eight thousand gold coins as a loan to pay your highness' soldiers, which he's embezzled for his own ill ends, like a false traitor and a con man. Besides I say and will in battle prove—either here or elsewhere, in the farthest place that an Englishman ever saw—that Mowbray is responsible for all the treasonous plots devised in this land for the past eighteen years. Furthermore, I say (and further will prove by challenging him in combat) that he plotted the Duke of Gloucester's death by putting his easily-persuaded enemies up to it, and consequently, like a traitorous coward, parted the innocent soul from its resting place as the blood flowed out of his body. His blood, like Abel's⁷, cries out to me for justice and vengeance even

⁷ In the biblical story, Abel—son of Adam and Eve—was murdered by his brother Cain, and his blood "cries out"

Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,
And consequently, like a traitor coward,
Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of blood:
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
105 Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To me for justice and rough chastisement;
And, by the glorious worth of my descent,
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

KING RICHARD II

How high a pitch his resolution soars!
110 Thomas of Norfolk, what say'st thou to this?

THOMAS MOWBRAY

O, let my sovereign turn away his face
And bid his ears a little while be deaf,
Till I have told this slander of his blood,
How God and good men hate so foul a liar.

KING RICHARD II

115 Mowbray, impartial are our eyes and ears:
Were he my brother, nay, my kingdom's heir,
As he is but my father's brother's son,
Now, by my sceptre's awe, I make a vow,
Such neighbour nearness to our sacred blood
120 Should nothing privilege him, nor partialize
The unstooping firmness of my upright soul:
He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou:
Free speech and fearless I to thee allow.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,
125 Through the false passage of thy throat, thou liest.
Three parts of that receipt I had for Calais
Disbursed I duly to his highness' soldiers;
The other part reserved I by consent,
For that my sovereign liege was in my debt
130 Upon remainder of a dear account,
Since last I went to France to fetch his queen:
Now swallow down that lie. For Gloucester's death,
I slew him not; but to my own disgrace
Neglected my sworn duty in that case.
135 For you, my noble Lord of Lancaster,
The honourable father to my foe
Once did I lay an ambush for your life,
A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul
But ere I last received the sacrament
140 I did confess it, and exactly begg'd
Your grace's pardon, and I hope I had it.
This is my fault: as for the rest appeal'd,
It issues from the rancour of a villain,
A recreant and most degenerate traitor
145 Which in myself I boldly will defend;
And interchangeably hurl down my gage
Upon this overweening traitor's foot,
To prove myself a loyal gentleman
Even in the best blood chamber'd in his bosom.
150 In haste whereof, most heartily I pray
Your highness to assign our trial day.

KING RICHARD II

Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me;
Let's purge this choler without letting blood:
This we prescribe, though no physician;
155 Deep malice makes too deep incision;
Forget, forgive; conclude and be agreed;
Our doctors say this is no month to bleed.
Good uncle, let this end where it began;
We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you son.

from the silent depths of the earth; and, by all my
ancestors, I'll do it with my two hands, or I'll die instead.

from the soil." Cain and Abel is an archetype of betrayal.

KING RICHARD II

His determination soars to such heights! Thomas of
Norfolk, how do you respond to this?

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Oh, I wish that my sovereign might turn away his face and
be deaf for a little while, until I have told this villain how
God and good men hate foul liars like him.

KING RICHARD II

Mowbray, our eyes and ears are impartial. If he were my
brother—no, even my son and my kingdom's heir—rather
than merely my father's brother's son, I vow by the power
of my sword █ that such nearness to our sacred family's
blood would not make me more likely to favor him, or
compromise my judgment. He is our subject, Mowbray, and
so are you. So I allow you to speak freely and fearlessly as
well.

8 The word "scepter" in the original
refers to the king's sword, which
served as a symbol of his royal
authority and strength.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Then, Bolingbroke, I say that you lie from your heart
through your throat. I paid three-fourths of the money I had
for Calais to his highness' soldiers; the rest was given to me
by prior agreement, since the king owed me money for my
expenses when I last went to France to fetch his queen: so
take back that lie. As for Gloucester's death, I didn't kill him;
although I admit I let down my sworn duty in that case. 9
As for you, my noble Lord of Lancaster, the honorable
father to my enemy, I once tried to kill you, an offense that
now grieves my soul greatly. But before I last received the
sacrament, I confessed it and begged your grace's pardon,
and I hope I had it. These are my crimes: as for the rest
accused against me, it comes from the malice of a villain, a
cowardly and violent traitor—which I'll prove with my own
strength, and throw down my gage upon this proud traitor's
foot, to prove myself a loyal gentleman, even in the
chamber of his body 10 where all his "noble" blood flows.
So I eagerly beg your highness to set a day for our duel.

9 This is a very ambiguous
statement—is Mowbray saying that he
should have done more to help
Gloucester, or that he made a mistake
in delaying too long in killing him?
Historically, Mowbray murdered
Gloucester on Richard's orders: by
equivocating here, he might be
attempting to defend himself while
avoiding falling out of the king's favor.

10 i.e. his heart

KING RICHARD II

Angry gentlemen, obey my commands: let's purge this
anger from your bodies without letting blood █. This we
prescribe, though we're no doctor; your deep rage will cut
too deeply. Forget, forgive, find a way to get along. Our
doctors say this is no time to bleed.

11 A pun on blood-letting—a
common medical practice in
medieval/early modern England—and
bloodshed in battle.

[To John of Gaunt] Good uncle, let this end where it began;
we'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, and you will calm your son.

JOHN OF GAUNT

160 To be a make-peace shall become my age:
Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk's gage.

KING RICHARD II

And, Norfolk, throw down his.

JOHN OF GAUNT

When, Harry, when?
Obedience bids I should not bid again.

KING RICHARD II

165 Norfolk, throw down, we bid; there is no boot.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at thy foot.
My life thou shalt command, but not my shame:
The one my duty owes; but my fair name,
Despite of death that lives upon my grave,
170 To dark dishonour's use thou shalt not have.
I am disgraced, impeach'd and baffled here,
Pierced to the soul with slander's venom'd spear,
The which no balm can cure but his heart-blood
Which breathed this poison.

KING RICHARD II

175 Rage must be withheld:
Give me his gage: lions make leopards tame.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Yea, but not change his spots: take but my shame.
And I resign my gage. My dear dear lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford
180 Is spotless reputation: that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times-barr'd-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honour is my life; both grow in one:
185 Take honour from me, and my life is done:
Then, dear my liege, mine honour let me try;
In that I live and for that will I die.

KING RICHARD II

Cousin, throw up your gage; do you begin.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

O, God defend my soul from such deep sin!
190 Shall I seem crest-fall'n in my father's sight?
Or with pale beggar-fear impeach my height
Before this out-dared dastard? Ere my tongue
Shall wound my honour with such feeble wrong,
Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear
195 The slavish motive of recanting fear,
And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace,
Where shame doth harbour, even in Mowbray's face.

Exit JOHN OF GAUNT

KING RICHARD II

We were not born to sue, but to command;
Which since we cannot do to make you friends,
200 Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,
At Coventry, upon Saint Lambert's day:
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
The swelling difference of your settled hate:
Since we can not atone you, we shall see
205 Justice design the victor's chivalry.
Lord marshal, command our officers at arms
Be ready to direct these home alarms.

Exeunt

JOHN OF GAUNT

To be a peacemaker is a fitting role for me, at my age: my son, throw down the Duke of Norfolk's gage.

KING RICHARD II

And, Norfolk, throw down his.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Harry, when will you do what I command? If you were an obedient son, I wouldn't need to ask again.

KING RICHARD II

Norfolk, throw down, we command you; there's no point refusing.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

My king, I throw myself at your feet. You have power over my life, but not my honor: it's my duty to obey you, but my good name, even if you take my life, will not be dishonored by you in death. I am disgraced, insulted, and slandered here, my soul pierced with the venomous spear of lies, which no medicine can cure except the blood of the man who has poisoned me.

KING RICHARD II

Control your rage; give me his gage. Lions can tame leopards after all.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Yes, but the leopard won't change its spots: to take that gage from me is to take my honor. My dear dear lord, the purest treasure of our lives is spotless reputation: without that, men are just painted clay and gilded dust. A brave spirit in a loyal person is like a jewel in a chest protected by ten locks. My honor is my life; both grow together. If you take my honor from me, my life is done. Then, my dear liege, let me prove my integrity in combat: I live for my honor and will die for it.

KING RICHARD II

Cousin, put down your gage. Don't you start as well—

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Oh god, defend my soul from such deep sin! Shall I seem humbled in my father's sight? Or disgrace my high rank and look like a fearful beggar before this coward? Before I lose my honor by saying those shameful words, I would bite out my tongue and spit it in Mowbray's face.

JOHN OF GAUNT exits

KING RICHARD II

We were not born to beg, but to command: but since we can't force you to make peace, be ready to die for it, at Coventry, upon Saint Lambert's day ¹². There, you can settle this dispute with swords and lances. Since we can't find out who's in the wrong, let the battle determine which one of you is telling the truth ¹³. Lord marshal, command our armed officers to prepare for the duel.

¹² The seventeenth of September

¹³ The code of chivalry holds that armed combat may be used to resolve disputes, since God will reward the innocent with victory and the guilty with defeat.

Exit all

Act 1, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter JOHN OF GAUNT with DUCHESS

JOHN OF GAUNT

Alas, the part I had in Woodstock's blood
Doth more solicit me than your exclaims,
To stir against the butchers of his life!
But since correction lieth in those hands
5 Which made the fault that we cannot correct,
Put we our quarrel to the will of heaven;
Who, when they see the hours ripe on earth,
Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.

DUCHESS

Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?
10 Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root:
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
15 Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt,
20 Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded,
By envy's hand and murder's bloody axe.
Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! that bed, that womb,
That metal, that self-mould, that fashion'd thee
Made him a man; and though thou livest and breathest,
25 Yet art thou slain in him: thou dost consent
In some large measure to thy father's death,
In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,
Who was the model of thy father's life.
Call it not patience, Gaunt; it is despair:
30 In suffering thus thy brother to be slaughter'd,
Thou shovest the naked pathway to thy life,
Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee:
That which in mean men we intitle patience
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.
35 What shall I say? to safeguard thine own life,
The best way is tovenge my Gloucester's death.

JOHN OF GAUNT

God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute,
His deputy anointed in His sight,
Hath caused his death: the which if wrongfully,
40 Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
An angry arm against His minister.

DUCHESS

Where then, alas, may I complain myself?

JOHN OF GAUNT

To God, the widow's champion and defence.

DUCHESS

Why, then, I will. Farewell, old Gaunt.
45 Thou goest to Coventry, there to behold
Our cousin Hereford and fell Mowbray fight:
O, sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,
That it may enter butcher Mowbray's breast!
Or, if misfortune miss the first career,
50 Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom,
They may break his foaming courser's back,
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,
A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford!

Shakescleare Translation

JOHN OF GAUNT enters with DUCHESS.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, the part of me that shared Woodstock's 1 blood makes me long for revenge on his butchers even more than your cries of pain! But since the power to take vengeance lies in the hands of the person who's responsible (and we have no hope of getting revenge on him), we have to take it up with heaven, which, when the time comes, will make everything right again.

 Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester (now deceased, possibly murdered by Mowbray) was brother of John of Gaunt and uncle to Richard II. The Duchess is his widow.

DUCHESS

Don't you have anything more to say? He was your brother--is there any fire left in your old blood? You're one of Edward's 2 seven sons: those sons were like seven vials of his blood or seven branches springing from one root. Some of these seven died naturally, some by fate; but Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester, one vial full of Edward's sacred blood, one fine branch of the royal root, is broken and all the precious liquid spilled, hacked down and his summer leaves all faded by the hand of envy and the bloody ax of murder. Ah, Gaunt, his blood was yours! You were born from the same blood, the same womb; the same metal that molded you made him a man too! And although you live and breathe, you are dead in him. You have allowed your father's death, by seeing your poor brother die, who so strongly resembled his father. Don't fool yourself by saying this is patience, Gaunt: it's despair. In allowing your brother to be slaughtered, you've shown them how to kill you: what in poor men we call patience is just cold cowardice in noblemen. What more can I say? The best way to save yourself is to avenge my Gloucester's death.

2 Edward III was father to John of Gaunt and Thomas of Woodstock and grandfather to Richard II. (Richard inherited the throne when his father, Edward the Black Prince—eldest son and heir of Edward III—died prematurely in battle in France.)

JOHN OF GAUNT

This is God's fight; for God's substitute, His deputy anointed in His sight, has caused his death 3. If it was wrong, let heaven take revenge; for I will never lift an angry arm against His minister, the king.

3 In the medieval/early modern theology of kingship, the king is God's representative on earth, anointed by him (in the coronation ceremony) as his deputy. Gaunt admits that Richard ordered the murder of his brother, and says that they can only have recourse to God, since a king has no higher authority.

DUCHESS

Where then can I go for help, if not to you?

JOHN OF GAUNT

To God, the champion and defender of widows.

DUCHESS

Why, then, I will. Goodbye, old Gaunt. You go to Coventry to see our cousin Hereford and that evil Mowbray fight: oh, may Hereford's spear avenge my husband by stabbing Mowbray! Or, if he's unlucky enough to miss, I hope Mowbray's sins sit so heavy in his heart that his horse's back breaks and throws its rider to the ground, so that he becomes my cousin Hereford's wretched prisoner. Goodbye, old Gaunt: your dead brother's wife must end her life with grief, her only companion.

Farewell, old Gaunt: thy sometimes brother's wife
55 With her companion grief must end her life.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Sister, farewell; I must to Coventry:
As much good stay with thee as go with me!

DUCHESS

Yet one word more: grief boundeth where it falls,
Not with the empty hollowness, but weight:
60 I take my leave before I have begun,
For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done.
Command me to thy brother, Edmund York.
Lo, this is all:--nay, yet depart not so;
Though this be all, do not so quickly go;
65 I shall remember more. Bid him--ah, what?--
With all good speed at Plashy visit me.
Alack, and what shall good old York there see
But empty lodgings and unfurnish'd walls,
Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?
70 And what hear there for welcome but my groans?
Therefore command me; let him not come there,
To seek out sorrow that dwells every where.
Desolate, desolate, will I hence and die:
The last leave of thee takes my weeping eye.

Exeunt

JOHN OF GAUNT

Goodbye, sister; I must go to Coventry: I wish us both good fortune!

DUCHESS

But I have one more thing to say: grief falls heavy from my mouth. I leave you before I've even begun, for sorrow never ends, even when it seems done. Give my good wishes to your brother, Edmund York. This is all. But no, don't go; though that's all, don't leave so quickly; I will remember what I had to say. Tell him--ah, what?--to visit me at Plashy as soon as he can. Oh god, what will good old York see there but empty rooms and bare walls, offices with no one to use them, stones with no one to walk on them? And what can I say to welcome him, but groans of grief? Therefore give him my good regards; tell him not to come there, to look for sorrow when grief is everywhere. I will go there, desolate, desolate, and die: I cry as I leave you for the last time.

Exit all

Act 1, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter the Lord Marshal and the DUKE OF AUMERLE

LORD MARSHAL

My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford arm'd?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Yea, at all points; and longs to enter in.

LORD MARSHAL

The Duke of Norfolk, sprightly and bold,
Stays but the summons of the appellant's trumpet.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

5 Why, then, the champions are prepared, and stay
For nothing but his majesty's approach.

The trumpets sound, and KING RICHARD enters with his nobles, JOHN OF GAUNT, BUSHY, BAGOT, GREEN, and others. When they are set, enter THOMAS MOWBRAY in arms, defendant, with a Herald

KING RICHARD II

Marshal, demand of yonder champion
The cause of his arrival here in arms:
10 Ask him his name and orderly proceed
To swear him in the justice of his cause.

LORD MARSHAL

In God's name and the king's, say who thou art
And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms,
Against what man thou comest, and what thy quarrel:
15 Speak truly, on thy knighthood and thy oath;
As so defend thee heaven and thy valour!

Shakescleare Translation

The Lord Marshal and the DUKE OF AUMERLE enter.

LORD MARSHAL

My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford ready for battle?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Yes, entirely, he's eager to get on the battlefield.

LORD MARSHAL

The Duke of Norfolk, filled with rage, is awaiting the sound of the trumpet to summon him to battle.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Why, then, the champions are prepared, so we're just waiting for his majesty.

The trumpets sound, and KING RICHARD enters with his nobles, JOHN OF GAUNT, BUSHY, BAGOT, GREEN, and others. When they have taken their seats, THOMAS MOWBRAY, the defendant, enters wearing knight's armor, accompanied by a Herald.

KING RICHARD II

Marshal, ask that champion  why he's come here bearing arms: have him state his name and swear that his cause is just.

 The champion here is Thomas Mowbray.

LORD MARSHAL

In the name of God and the king, say who you are and why you come wearing knight's armor, who you're fighting against, and why. Speak truthfully, by your knighthood and your pledge of loyalty. Heaven help you to defend your honor and bravery!

THOMAS MOWBRAY

My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk;
Who hither come engaged by my oath--
Which God defend a knight should violate!--
Both to defend my loyalty and truth
To God, my king and my succeeding issue,
Against the Duke of Hereford that appeals me
And, by the grace of God and this mine arm,
To prove him, in defending of myself,
A traitor to my God, my king, and me:
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

The trumpets sound. Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, appellant, in armour, with a Herald

KING RICHARD II

Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms,
Both who he is and why he cometh hither
Thus plated in habitments of war,
And formally, according to our law,
Depose him in the justice of his cause.

LORD MARSHAL

What is thy name? and wherefore comest thou hither,
Before King Richard in his royal lists?
Against whom comest thou? and what's thy quarrel?

Speak like a true knight, so defend thee heaven!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby
Am I; who ready here do stand in arms,
To prove, by God's grace and my body's valour,
In lists, on Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
That he is a traitor, foul and dangerous,

To God of heaven, King Richard and to me;
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

LORD MARSHAL

On pain of death, no person be so bold
Or daring-hardy as to touch the lists,
Except the marshal and such officers
Appointed to direct these fair designs.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Lord marshal, let me kiss my sovereign's hand,
And bow my knee before his majesty:
For Mowbray and myself are like two men
That vow a long and weary pilgrimage;

Then let us take a ceremonious leave
And loving farewell of our several friends.

LORD MARSHAL

The appellant in all duty greets your highness,
And craves to kiss your hand and take his leave.

KING RICHARD II

We will descend and fold him in our arms.
Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause is right,
So be thy fortune in this royal fight!
Farewell, my blood; which if to-day thou shed,

Lament we may, but not revenge thee dead.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

O let no noble eye profane a tear
For me, if I be gored with Mowbray's spear:
As confident as is the falcon's flight
Against a bird, do I with Mowbray fight.
My loving lord, I take my leave of you;
Of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle;

Not sick, although I have to do with death,
But lusty, young, and cheerly drawing breath.
Lo, as at English feasts, so I regret
The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet:

THOMAS MOWBRAY

My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. I come here because I made a promise--that God forbid a knight should violate!--to defend both my loyalty and truth to God, my king, and my children, against the Duke of Hereford who accuses me. And, by the grace of God and the strength of my own bare hands, I'll prove him (by defending myself) to be a traitor to my God, my king, and to me. And as long as I fight honestly, I call on God in heaven to defend me!

The trumpets sound. HENRY BOLINGBROKE, the accuser, enters wearing knight's armor, accompanied by a Herald.

KING RICHARD II

Marshal, ask that knight in arms both who he is and why he comes here dressed for battle. And formally, according to our law, ask him to explain why he thinks his accusation is justified.

LORD MARSHAL

What is your name? And why do you come here before King Richard in his royal lists? Whom are you here to oppose? And what's your argument? Speak like a true knight, so help you God!

2 The king's "lists" are his battlefields for a tournament, jousting, or other knightly entertainments.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I am Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby. I stand here ready in my armor to prove, by God's grace and my bravery on the field, that Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is a foul and dangerous traitor to God, King Richard, and to me. And as long as I fight honestly, I call on God in heaven to defend me!

LORD MARSHAL

On pain of death, no one should be so bold as to touch the king's lists except the marshal and the officers in charge.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Lord marshal, let me kiss my sovereign's hand and bow my knee before his majesty. Mowbray and I are like two men about to go on a long and tiring pilgrimage, so let us say a loving goodbye to our friends.

LORD MARSHAL

The accuser greets your highness with all loyalty and respect, desiring to kiss your hand and say goodbye.

KING RICHARD II

We will descend and embrace him. Cousin of Hereford, if your cause is just, may you be victorious in this royal fight! Farewell, my blood! if that blood is shed today, we'll lament it, but we won't take revenge.

3 i.e. my kinsman--as cousins, Richard and Henry literally share the same bloodline.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Oh, please let me not cry if Mowbray stabs me. I'll fight with him as confidant as a falcon! against a defenseless little bird. My loving lord, I say goodbye to you and to my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle. I may die, but I'm not sick. No, I'm young, vigorous, and still cheerfully drawing breath. And just as I leave the best for last at the dinner table, so do I turn to you, father, whose youthful spirit lives on in me and gives me strength in the fight to come. With your blessings on my lance, may it defeat Mowbray and add new glory to the name of John of Gaunt by the deeds of his son.

4 A bird of prey. Hunting with falcons was highly popular in medieval England and a symbol of aristocratic wealth and power.

O thou, the earthly author of my blood,
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,
Doth with a twofold vigour lift me up
To reach at victory above my head,
Add proof unto mine armour with thy prayers;
75 And with thy blessings steel my lance's point,
That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat,
And furnish new the name of John a Gaunt,
Even in the lusty havior of his son.

JOHN OF GAUNT

God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!
80 Be swift like lightning in the execution;
And let thy blows, doubly redoubled,
Fall like amazing thunder on the casque
Of thy adverse pernicious enemy:
Rouse up thy youthful blood, be valiant and live.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

85 Mine innocency and Saint George to thrive!

THOMAS MOWBRAY

However God or fortune cast my lot,
There lives or dies, true to King Richard's throne,
A loyal, just and upright gentleman:
Never did captive with a freer heart
90 Cast off his chains of bondage and embrace
His golden uncontrol'd enfranchisement,
More than my dancing soul doth celebrate
This feast of battle with mine adversary.
Most mighty liege, and my companion peers,
95 Take from my mouth the wish of happy years:
As gentle and as jocund as to jest
Go I to fight: truth hath a quiet breast.

KING RICHARD II

Farewell, my lord: securely I espy
Virtue with valour couched in thine eye.
100 Order the trial, marshal, and begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby,
Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Strong as a tower in hope, I cry amen.

LORD MARSHAL

Go bear this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.

FIRST HERALD

105 Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby,
Stands here for God, his sovereign and himself,
On pain to be found false and recreant,
To prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray,
A traitor to his God, his king and him;
110 And dares him to set forward to the fight.

SECOND HERALD

Here standeth Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,
On pain to be found false and recreant,
Both to defend himself and to approve
Henry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,
To God, his sovereign and to him disloyal;
115 Courageously and with a free desire
Attending but the signal to begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Sound, trumpets; and set forward, combatants.

A charge sounded

JOHN OF GAUNT

May God make you prosperous in your good cause! Be swift
like lightning in the fight, and let your blows fall like
thunder on your evil enemy. Use your youthful strength: be
brave and survive.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Let Saint George and my innocence make me successful!

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Whichever way this goes, I live or die a loyal, just, and
honest gentleman true to King Richard's throne. A captive
never escaped slavery with more happiness than my
dancing soul feels at the prospect of doing battle with my
enemy. Most mighty liege, and my fellow nobles, I wish you
all many happy years: I go to fight as peacefully and happily
as if I were just heading out to play a game, for honesty sets
the heart at ease.

KING RICHARD II

Goodbye, my lord: I see bravery and virtue in your eyes.
Order the fight, marshal, and begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby, take your weapons,
and may God defend whichever of you is truly innocent!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Strong as a tower in my hopes, I cry out "amen."

LORD MARSHAL

Go take this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.

FIRST HERALD

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby, stands here for
God, his sovereign and himself, to prove the Duke of
Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray, a traitor to his God, his king and
him, and if not to prove himself a false liar: he challenges
Mowbray to fight.

SECOND HERALD

Here stands Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, both to
defend himself and to prove Henry of Hereford, Lancaster,
and Derby, disloyal to God, his sovereign and to him, and if
not to prove himself a false liar: courageously and eagerly,
he waits for the signal to begin.

LORD MARSHAL

Sound the trumpets, and combatants, come forward.

The trumpets are sounded.

LORD MARSHAL

120 Stay, the king hath thrown his warder down.

KING RICHARD II

Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,
And both return back to their chairs again:
Withdraw with us: and let the trumpets sound
125 While we return these dukes what we decree.

A long flourish

KING RICHARD II

Draw near,
And list what with our council we have done.
For that our kingdom's earth should not be soil'd
With that dear blood which it hath fostered;
130 And for our eyes do hate the dire aspect
Of civil wounds plough'd up with neighbours' sword;
And for we think the eagle-winged pride
Of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts,
With rival-hating envy, set on you
135 To wake our peace, which in our country's cradle
Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep;
Which so roused up with boisterous untuned drums,
With harsh resounding trumpets' dreadful bray,
And grating shock of wrathful iron arms,
140 Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace
And make us wade even in our kindred's blood,
Therefore, we banish you our territories:
You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of life,
Till twice five summers have enrich'd our fields
145 Shall not regreet our fair dominions,
But tread the stranger paths of banishment.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Your will be done: this must my comfort be,
Sun that warms you here shall shine on me;
And those his golden beams to you here lent
150 Shall point on me and gild my banishment.

KING RICHARD II

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,
Which I with some unwillingness pronounce:
The sly slow hours shall not determinate
The dateless limit of thy dear exile;
155 The hopeless word of 'never to return'
Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth:
A dearer merit, not so deep a maim
160 As to be cast forth in the common air,
Have I deserved at your highness' hands.
The language I have learn'd these forty years,
My native English, now I must forego:
And now my tongue's use is to me no more
165 Than an unstrunged viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument cased up,
Or, being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony:
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,
170 Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;
And dull unfeeling barren ignorance
Is made my gaoler to attend on me.
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now:
175 What is thy sentence then but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

LORD MARSHAL

Stop! The king has thrown down his warder 5.

5 The king's staff or scepter.

KING RICHARD II

Let them both set down their helmets and their spears,
return back to their chairs again, and come inside with us.
And sound the trumpets while we tell the dukes what we've
decided.

A long sound from the trumpet is heard.

KING RICHARD II

Come close to me, and hear what we've decided to do after consulting with our advisers. So that our kingdom's ground should not be soiled with the blood of its own people, because our eyes hate the sight of civil war between our subjects, and because we think it was your pride and ambition that made you disturb our country's peace, which had been "sleeping" undisturbed like a baby until you woke it with your trumpets and drums of war, frightening peace away and leaving us to wade through the blood of our own family members. We banish you from our territories. You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of death, shall not come to our fair England again for ten years, and instead will walk the unfamiliar paths of banishment.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I must obey your will. My comfort is that the sun that warms you here shall shine on me, and the golden beams that look down on you here will also make my banishment more bearable 6.

6 Shakespeare uses the word "gild" in the original, which refers to the process of covering something in a thin layer of gold to beautify or embellish it. The implication here is that Bolingbroke's banishment will be durable in part because the sun that shines on the king's kingdom will still shine on him in exile.

KING RICHARD II

Norfolk, there's a worse sentence for you, which I say with some regret: the slow hours will not bring you any closer to ending your banishment, for I order you never to return, upon pain of death.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

A harsh sentence, my most sovereign liege, and unfair from your highness' mouth: I deserved a better reward from you than to be cast out of my home and into the street. I must no longer speak the language I have learned these forty years, my native English, and my tongue is now no more use to me than an unstringed violin, a harp left in a case, or an instrument put in the hands of one who doesn't know how to play it. You have imprisoned my tongue in my mouth, locked it up behind my teeth and lips, and now I can no longer speak. Dull emotionless ignorance is my jailer. I am too old to be a student now: what is your sentence then but silencing me to death by stopping my tongue from speaking its native language?

KING RICHARD II

It boots thee not to be compassionate:
After our sentence plaining comes too late.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Then thus I turn me from my country's light,
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD II

Return again, and take an oath with thee.
Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands;
Swear by the duty that you owe to God--
Our part therein we banish with yourselves--
To keep the oath that we administer:
You never shall, so help you truth and God!
Embrace each other's love in banishment;
Nor never look upon each other's face;
Nor never write, regreet, nor reconcile
This louring tempest of your home-bred hate;
Nor never by advised purpose meet
To plot, contrive, or complot any ill
'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I swear.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

And I, to keep all this.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:--
By this time, had the king permitted us,
One of our souls had wander'd in the air.
Banish'd this frail sepulchre of our flesh,
As now our flesh is banish'd from this land:
Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm;
Since thou hast far to go, bear not along
The clogging burthen of a guilty soul.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

No, Bolingbroke: if ever I were traitor,
My name be blotted from the book of life,
And I from heaven banish'd as from hence!
But what thou art, God, thou, and I do know;
And all too soon, I fear, the king shall rue.
Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray;
Save back to England, all the world's my way.

Exit

KING RICHARD II

Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes
I see thy grieved heart: thy sad aspect
Hath from the number of his banish'd years
Pluck'd four away.

To HENRY BOLINGBROKE

KING RICHARD II

Six frozen winter spent,
Return with welcome home from banishment.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How long a time lies in one little word!
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End in a word: such is the breath of kings.

JOHN OF GAUNT

I thank my liege, that in regard of me
He shortens four years of my son's exile:
But little vantage shall I reap thereby;
For, ere the six years that he hath to spend

KING RICHARD II

It won't help you to try to make us feel sorry for you. After our sentence has been handed down, it's too late to complain.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

Then thus I turn away from my country's light, to live in dark shades of endless night.

KING RICHARD II

Come back and take an oath. Lay your banished hands  on our royal sword. Swear by the duty that you owe to God--your duty to us we banish with you--to keep the promise you make here today: that you never shall--so help you God!--become allies in banishment, nor ever look upon each other's face; nor ever write, see each other in person, or reconcile with each other; nor ever for any reason meet to plot any ill against us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

 *The king here is addressing Thomas Mowbray and Henry Bolingbroke together.*

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I swear.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

And I swear as well to abide by all these conditions.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

[To Mowbray] Norfolk, my enemy until now--by this time, had the king permitted us, one of us would be dead, our souls parted from our bodies as we are now banished from this land. Confess your treason before you leave the realm. Since you have far to go, don't bring along with you the heavy burden of a guilty soul.

THOMAS MOWBRAY

No, Bolingbroke: if I've ever been a traitor, let my name be erased from the book of life, and I banished from heaven as I've been banished from here! But what you are, God and I do know; and all too soon, I fear, the king will regret sparing you. Goodbye, my liege. Now there's no particular way I can go; all roads are open to me, except those leading back to England.

They all exit.

KING RICHARD II

Uncle, even in the mirrors of your eyes, I see the reflection of your grief. Based on your sad expression, I will reduce your son's banishment by four years.

To HENRY BOLINGBROKE

KING RICHARD II

After six frozen winters have passed, come home from banishment--with my welcome.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How long a time lies in one little word! Four long winters and four fresh springs end in a word: such is the power of a king's wishes.

JOHN OF GAUNT

I'm thankful to my liege, that out of kindness to me he shortens four years of my son's exile: but little good it will do me. For before six years have passed, the lamp of my life will have gone out with age; my candle will have burned

Can change their moons and bring their times about
My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;
My inch of taper will be burnt and done,
And blindfold death not let me see my son.

KING RICHARD II

230 Why uncle, thou hast many years to live.

JOHN OF GAUNT

But not a minute, king, that thou canst give:
Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow;
Thou canst help time to furrow me with age,
235 But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage;
Thy word is current with him for my death,
But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

KING RICHARD II

Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,
Whereto thy tongue a party-verdict gave:
240 Why at our justice seem'st thou then to lour?

JOHN OF GAUNT

Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
You urged me as a judge; but I had rather
You would have bid me argue like a father.
O, had it been a stranger, not my child,
245 To smooth his fault I should have been more mild:
A partial slander sought I to avoid,
And in the sentence my own life destroy'd.
Alas, I look'd when some of you should say,
I was too strict to make mine own away;
250 But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue
Against my will to do myself this wrong.

KING RICHARD II

Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, bid him so:
Six years we banish him, and he shall go.

Flourish. Exeunt KING RICHARD II and train

DUKE OF AUMERLE

255 Cousin, farewell: what presence must not know,
From where you do remain let paper show.

LORD MARSHAL

My lord, no leave take I; for I will ride,
As far as land will let me, by your side.

JOHN OF GAUNT

O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,
260 That thou return'st no greeting to thy friends?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I have too few to take my leave of you,
When the tongue's office should be prodigal
To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

265 Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

JOHN OF GAUNT

What is six winters? they are quickly gone.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

down, and death's blindfold will stop me from seeing my son.

KING RICHARD II

Why, uncle, you have many years to live.

JOHN OF GAUNT

But not a minute, king, that you can give: you can shorten my days with sorrow and keep me up at night, but you can't give me a morning: you can help time to age me, but you can't stop wrinkles in their tracks: your word can make me die more quickly; but once I'm dead, all your kingdom couldn't make me breathe again.

KING RICHARD II

I banished your son after taking advice from good counselors, including you. Why do you complain about the justice we have done?

JOHN OF GAUNT

Things that taste sweet are difficult to digest. You asked my opinion as a judge, but I would rather you had asked me to argue as a father. Oh, had it been a stranger, not my child, I would have gone easier on him; I tried to avoid looking prejudiced, but destroyed my own life in the process. I hoped that some of you would say that I was being too harsh to my own son, but you allowed me to wrong myself.

KING RICHARD II

Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, say goodbye: he's banished six years, and he shall go.

The trumpets sound. KING RICHARD II and train exit.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Goodbye, cousin: what you can't tell me now, write to me.

LORD MARSHAL

My lord, I won't leave you now: I'll ride to the sea with you.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, why won't you respond to your friends?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I have too few words of thanks, for I'm not eloquent enough to speak the pain in my heart.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Your grief is only your absence for a time.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Without joy, there is only grief.

JOHN OF GAUNT

What's six years? They'll pass before you know it.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

To happy people, perhaps; but grief makes one hour feel like ten.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Call it a travel that thou takest for pleasure.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,
Which finds it an inforced pilgrimage.

JOHN OF GAUNT

The sullen passage of thy weary steps
Esteem as foil wherein thou art to set
The precious jewel of thy home return.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Nay, rather, every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world
I wander from the jewels that I love.
Must I not serve a long apprenticeship
To foreign passages, and in the end,
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else
But that I was a journeyman to grief?

JOHN OF GAUNT

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus;
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the king did banish thee,
But thou the king. Woe doth the heavier sit,
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour
And not the king exiled thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou comest:
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strew'd,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance;
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

O, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
O, no! the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse:
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Come, come, my son, I'll bring thee on thy way:
Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu;
My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!

JOHN OF GAUNT

Pretend you're taking a trip for pleasure.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My heart will sigh when I try to think of it that way--I know
it's a forced march, not a vacation.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Then think of this hard journey as a jewel box where you
can set the precious stone of your return home.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

No, rather, every tedious step I make will just remind me
how far I'm going from the things I love. But do I have to
serve a long apprenticeship in foreign places, and in the
end, having my freedom, have nothing else to say for
myself but that I was a journeyman  to grief?

 In Elizabethan London,
apprentices/journeymen served their
masters for a period of 7-10 years,
after which they would gain their
freedom.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Everywhere that God can reach is a safe haven to a wise
man. Tell yourself this: there is no virtue like necessity.
Think not that the king banished you, but instead that you
banished the king. Woe sits heavier where it perceives
weakness. Go, say I sent you out to win honor and not that
the king exiled you. Or pretend there's some disease going
around here and you're leaving for a healthier climate.
Whatever your soul holds dear, imagine that it lies where
you're going, not where you came from. Pretend the singing
birds are musicians, the grass the carpet of a royal chamber,
the flowers fair ladies, and your steps no more than a
dance: for snarling sorrow has less power to bite the man
who makes light of it.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand by thinking of the
freezing Caucasus? Or feel full when hungry by imagining a
feast? Or feel warm in December snow by imagining
fantastic summer's heat? Oh, no! Thinking about good
things only makes me feel worse. This kind of sorrow is like
the feeling of biting into a sore on your mouth to puncture
and heal it, but not biting down hard enough to even break
the sore's surface, leaving it there intact to hurt even more.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Come, come, my son, I'll bring you on your way: had I your
youth and cause for anger, I would not stay.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, goodbye; my
mother, and my nurse, that still holds me! Wherever I

Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,
Though banish'd, yet a trueborn Englishman.

Exeunt

wander, even though I am banished, I can always boast that
I am a native Englishman.

All exit.

Act 1, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter KING RICHARD II, with BAGOT and GREEN at one door; and the DUKE OF AUMERLE at another

KING RICHARD II

We did observe. Cousin Aumerle,
How far brought you high Hereford on his way?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I brought high Hereford, if you call him so,
But to the next highway, and there I left him.

KING RICHARD II

5 And say, what store of parting tears were shed?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Faith, none for me; except the north-east wind,
Which then blew bitterly against our faces,
Awaked the sleeping rheum, and so by chance
Did grace our hollow parting with a tear.

KING RICHARD II

10 What said our cousin when you parted with him?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

'Farewell.'
And, for my heart disdained that my tongue
Should so profane the word, that taught me craft
To counterfeit oppression of such grief
15 That words seem'd buried in my sorrow's grave.
Marry, would the word 'farewell' have lengthen'd hours
And added years to his short banishment,
He should have had a volume of farewells;
But since it would not, he had none of me.

KING RICHARD II

20 He is our cousin, cousin; but 'tis doubt,
When time shall call him home from banishment,
Whether our kinsman come to see his friends.
Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green
Observed his courtship to the common people;
25 How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
30 As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends;'
35 As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

GREEN

Well, he is gone; and with him go these thoughts.
Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland,
Expedient manage must be made, my liege,
40 Ere further leisure yield them further means
For their advantage and your highness' loss.

Shakescleare Translation

Enter KING RICHARD II, with BAGOT and GREEN at one door;
and the DUKE OF AUMERLE at another

KING RICHARD II

We did observe--[he sees Aumerle]. Cousin Aumerle, how
far did you go with mighty Hereford on his journey?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I brought mighty Hereford--if you call him that--just to the
next highway, and left him there.

KING RICHARD II

And tell me, how many tears were shed when you left him?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

None in fact. Except when the northeast wind blew bitterly
against our faces, making our eyes water.

KING RICHARD II

What did our cousin say when you left him?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

"Farewell." And, since I hated to say goodbye without
meaning it, I pretended to be so sorry for him that I couldn't
even speak. Indeed, if the word "farewell" could lengthen
hours and add years to his short banishment, I would have
said volumes of "farewells." But since it would not, he got
no goodbye from me.

KING RICHARD II

He is our cousin, cousin ... But it's doubtful that he'll
come visit us in a friendly way when he comes home from
banishment. Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green
observed how he courted the love of the common people.
He seemed to become very popular with them by acting
humble and familiar. He threw away his respect on slaves,
wooing poor craftsmen with crafty smiles and patience in
the face of his bad luck, as if he wanted to make them love
him instead of me. He took his hat off for some girl selling
oysters. A pair of lowly cart-drivers told him godspeed, and
he bowed to them and said "Thanks, my countrymen, my
loving friends," as if all of England were his, and he were
heir to the throne.

 Aumerle is the son of another of
Richard's uncles, the Duke of York--
and thus, like Bolingbroke, he is also
Richard's cousin.

GREEN

Well, he is gone, and these thoughts should go with him.
Now as for the situation in Ireland--we must do something
to manage the rebels, my liege. If we wait too long they'll
use the extra time to their advantage against us.

KING RICHARD II

We will ourself in person to this war:
And, for our coffers, with too great a court
And liberal largess, are grown somewhat light,
45 We are inforced to farm our royal realm;
The revenue whereof shall furnish us
For our affairs in hand: if that come short,
Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters;
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,
50 They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold
And send them after to supply our wants;
For we will make for Ireland presently.

*Enter BUSHY***KING RICHARD II**

Bushy, what news?

BUSHY

55 Old John of Gaunt is grievous sick, my lord,
Suddenly taken; and hath sent post haste
To entreat your majesty to visit him.

KING RICHARD II

Where lies he?

BUSHY

At Ely House.

KING RICHARD II

60 Now put it, God, in the physician's mind
To help him to his grave immediately!
The lining of his coffers shall make coats
To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.
Come, gentlemen, let's all go visit him:
65 Pray God we may make haste, and come too late!

ALL

Amen.

*Exeunt***KING RICHARD II**

We will go in person to this war: and since we're a little short on funds (having spent generously on entertainment for the court and gifts for our friends), we have no choice but to raise taxes  to fund our war. If that still isn't enough, we'll order our proxies  back home to demand large sums of gold from rich men across the kingdom, and send the money to us abroad: for we will be leaving to travel to Ireland very soon.

 Shakespeare compares raising taxes to farming his royal kingdom to bring in a bountiful "harvest" of money.

 Richard is going to leave "proxies" to rule in his stead while he is in Ireland.
*BUSHY enters.***KING RICHARD II**

Bushy, what's the news?

BUSHY

Old John of Gaunt is deathly sick, my lord; it came on suddenly. He has sent a message asking your majesty to visit him.

KING RICHARD II

Where is he?

BUSHY

At Ely House.

KING RICHARD II

Well, God hopes the doctor will help him to his grave immediately! The money in his coffers will pay for coats for our soldiers in these Irish wars. Come, gentlemen, let's all go visit him: pray God we may get there quickly, but come  too late !

 i.e. Richard hopes that Gaunt will already be dead when they arrive.
ALL

Amen.

All exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare*Enter JOHN OF GAUNT sick, with the DUKE OF YORK, &c***JOHN OF GAUNT**

Will the king come, that I may breathe my last
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

DUKE OF YORK

Vex not yourself, nor strive not with your breath;
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

JOHN OF GAUNT

5 O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony:
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in
pain.
10 He that no more must say is listen'd more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose;
More are men's ends mark'd than their lives before:
The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
15 Writ in remembrance more than things long past:

Shakescleare Translation*JOHN OF GAUNT enters, sick, with the DUKE OF YORK and servants.***JOHN OF GAUNT**

Will the king come, so that I may spend my last breath giving wholesome advice to his reckless youth?

DUKE OF YORK

Don't upset yourself, or waste your breath: it's no use giving him advice.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, but they say people are more likely to listen to the last words of dying men: when words are few, they rarely miss their mark, for those who speak when they're close to death are always truthful. The person who will soon have nothing to say is listened to more than the young, who tend to ramble on and waste words; the death of a man is more notable than his life before. Like the setting sun or the final note of a piece of music, what comes last is sweetest and most memorable. So although Richard would rather not hear my advice, the sad story of my death may make him listen to me.

Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear,
My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

DUKE OF YORK

No; it is stopp'd with other flattering sounds,
As praises, of whose taste the wise are fond,
Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound
The open ear of youth doth always listen;
Report of fashions in proud Italy,
Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
Limps after in base imitation.
Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity--
So it be new, there's no respect how vile--
That is not quickly buzzed into his ears?
Then all too late comes counsel to be heard,
Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard.
Direct not him whose way himself will choose:
'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou
lose.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired
And thus expiring do foretell of him:
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder:
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this
England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son,
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,
Like to a tenement or pelting farm:
England, bound in with the triumphant sea
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds:
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death!

Enter KING RICHARD II and QUEEN, DUKE OF AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, BAGOT, LORD ROSS, and LORD WILLOUGHBY

DUKE OF YORK

The king is come: deal mildly with his youth;
For young hot colts being raged do rage the more.

QUEEN

How fares our noble uncle, Lancaster?

KING RICHARD II

What comfort, man? how is't with aged Gaunt?

DUKE OF YORK

No; his ears are filled with other sounds, like flattering praise  from his hangers-on (which the young are always happy to hear) and reports of Italian fashions (which our country still shamefully attempts to imitate). When is there some new vanity in the world--for it's novelty that matters to him, not morality--that isn't quickly buzzed into his ears? Then advice comes all too late, since his desires are stronger than his willpower. Don't give advice to him, since he only does what he wants: you're already short of breath, so don't waste it on him.

 York's suggestion that the "flattering sounds" of Richard's courtiers are "lascivious" also implies sexual immorality.

JOHN OF GAUNT

I think I am a prophet, newly inspired, and as I die I make this prediction. His bad behavior cannot last, for violent fires soon burn themselves out; small rain showers last long, but sudden storms are short; he who rides too fast will soon exhaust himself; he who eats too quickly will choke; vanity is like an insatiable vulture that feeds on itself. This royal throne of kings, this crowned island, this land of majesty, this seat of war, this other Eden--almost paradise--this fortress built by Nature as her home against disease and invaders, this happy race of men, this little world, this precious stone set in the silver sea (which acts as a wall or a moat that defends a castle against the jealousy of less happy nations), this blessed plot of land, this earth, this realm, this England, this nurse , this birthplace of royal kings who are feared and respected for their ancestry, as famous for their deeds of Christian service and true chivalry as is the tomb of Jesus! This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land, beloved for her reputation through the world--is now rented out, I die pronouncing it, like a tenement  or a paltry little farm. England, surrounded by the triumphant sea, with a rocky shore that beats back the jealousy of the sea god Neptune, is now fenced in by its own shame, sealed with ink blots and rotten legal documents. The England that used to conquer others has made a shameful conquest of itself. Ah, if the scandal ended with my life, I could die happy!

 This is in the sense of a "nursemaid" who brings up a child from birth.

 A "tenement" is a building that can be let out for multiple occupancies, rather like an apartment building. Gaunt implies here that England has been rented out to multiple people, giving the sense that the land has been split up just to make money.

KING RICHARD II and QUEEN enter, with DUKE OF AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, BAGOT, LORD ROSS, and LORD WILLOUGHBY

DUKE OF YORK

The king is here: be gentle to this youth, since young horses only get angrier when shouted at.

QUEEN

How are you, noble uncle Lancaster?

KING RICHARD II

Can you give us some comfort, York? How is old Gaunt?

JOHN OF GAUNT

O how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old:
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;
Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon,
Is my strict fast; I mean, my children's looks;
And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt:
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

KING RICHARD II

Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, misery makes sport to mock itself:
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

KING RICHARD II

Should dying men flatter with those that live?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, no, men living flatter those that die.

KING RICHARD II

Thou, now a-dying, say'st thou flatterest me.

JOHN OF GAUNT

O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.

KING RICHARD II

I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;
And yet, incaged in so small a verge,
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.
O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this land by lease;
But for thy world enjoying but this land,
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou now, not king:
Thy state of law is bondslave to the law; And thou--

KING RICHARD II

A lunatic lean-witted fool,
Presuming on an ague's privilege,
Darest with thy frozen admonition
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence.
Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, how that name fits me! Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt⁴ in being old: grief has made me lose my appetite, and the man who doesn't eat loses weight. I've stayed up late to keep an eye on sleeping England, and lack of sleep makes you thin too. And I am fasting as well of the pleasure that some fathers feed on—by which I mean the sight of my children⁵—and so by depriving me of that, you have made me gaunt: I am gaunt for the grave, gaunt as a grave, whose hollow womb inherits nothing but bones.

⁴ A pun on his name, John of Gaunt, and "gaunt" as in thin and wasted with age.

⁵ referring to the recent banishment of his son, Henry Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD II

Can sick men make such amusing puns on their names?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, I joke because I'm mocking my own misery: since you have tried to kill my family name by banishing my son, I mock my name to flatter you.

KING RICHARD II

Should dying men flatter those that live?

JOHN OF GAUNT

No, no, living men flatter those that die.

KING RICHARD II

But you, who are dying, say that you flatter me.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, no! You're dying, although I'm the sicker one.

KING RICHARD II

I'm healthy, I breathe, and I see that you're sick.

JOHN OF GAUNT

God knows I see you sick; my vision may not be so good anymore, but I see you are ill. Your deathbed is no less than your land, where you lie with a disease of bad reputation; and you, too careless patient that you are, put your body in the hands of the doctors who first hurt you⁶. A thousand flatters sit within your crown, which is no larger than your head: and yet despite its small size, there is a sickness there that might encompass the whole country. Oh, had your grandfather been able to see the future, seeing how his grandson would destroy his own sons, he would have taken the crown out of your grasp, deposing you before you had it—and now, you are about to depose yourself. Why, cousin, if you were king of the world it would be a shame to rent out this land; but since you're only king of this country, it's even more shameful to treat it as you do. You're just the landlord of England, not king: you rule as a slave to the law⁷, not by your own right; and you--

⁶ Gaunt refers to Bushy, Bagot and Greene. The image of the land sickening from flatterers to the King is a common one in sixteenth and seventeenth century England; Shakespeare is describing a troubled and ill-ruled land through the metaphor of sickness in the body politic.

⁷ "Bondslave" indicates that Richard does not have power above the law, as a king at the time should have done.

KING RICHARD II

A crazy dim-witted fool, thinking that he can presume to criticize me just because he's ill—daring with his criticisms to make us turn pale⁸, chasing the royal blood from our cheeks. Now, by the royal majesty of my throne, if you weren't my father's brother, I would have your head for this.

⁸ Richard has been scared by Gaunt's assertions.

JOHN OF GAUNT

O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son,
For that I was his father Edward's son;
That blood already, like the pelican,
130 Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused:
My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul,
Whom fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls!
May be a precedent and witness good
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood:
135 Join with the present sickness that I have;
And thy unkindness be like crooked age,
To crop at once a too long wither'd flower.
Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!
These words hereafter thy tormentors be!
140 Convey me to my bed, then to my grave:
Love they to live that love and honour have.

Exit, borne off by his Attendants

KING RICHARD II

And let them die that age and sullens have;
For both hast thou, and both become the grave.

DUKE OF YORK

I do beseech your majesty, impute his words
145 To wayward sickliness and age in him:
He loves you, on my life, and holds you dear
As Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

KING RICHARD II

Right, you say true: as Hereford's love, so his;
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.

150

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

NORTHUMBERLAND

My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your majesty.

KING RICHARD II

What says he?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Nay, nothing; all is said.
His tongue is now a stringless instrument;
155 Words, life and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

DUKE OF YORK

Be York the next that must be bankrupt so!
Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe.

KING RICHARD II

The ripest fruit first falls, and so doth he;
His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be.
160 So much for that. Now for our Irish wars:
We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns,
Which live like venom where no venom else
But only they have privilege to live.
And for these great affairs do ask some charge,
165 Towards our assistance we do seize to us
The plate, corn, revenues and moveables,
Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possess'd.

DUKE OF YORK

How long shall I be patient? ah, how long
Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?
170 Not Gloucester's death, nor Hereford's banishment
Not Gaunt's rebukes, nor England's private wrongs,
Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke
About his marriage, nor my own disgrace,
Have ever made me sour my patient cheek,
175 Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face.

JOHN OF GAUNT

Oh, don't spare me, my brother Edward's ⁹ son, because I'm the son of *his* father Edward ¹⁰; you've already drained the family blood and drunkenly rolled around in it: I mean my brother Gloucester, a plain and well-meaning soul now in heaven, sacrificed like the pelican. ¹¹ That proves that you had no problem spilling your grandfather's blood before. Your unkindness to our family makes my sickness worse, cutting down the already-withered flower of my life. Live in your shame, but shame won't die with you: you will be remembered this way! Let these words torment you from now on! Take me to my bed, then to my grave: people only love to live when they have love and honor, and I have neither.

⁹ Gaunt's older brother (and Richard's father) was Edward, the Black Prince, who died in France before he could ascend the throne. When Edward III died, the crown thus passed to Richard, his nine-year-old grandson—since by the laws of primogeniture, the crown is inherited by eldest sons. Also, earlier in Richard's reign, Gaunt and his brothers (including the Duke of Gloucester) had acted as major counselors to him.

¹⁰ i.e. Edward III

¹¹ The pelican is a symbol of sacrifice in Christian imagery.

Exit, carried by his attendants

KING RICHARD II

And let them die that are old and bad-tempered! For you are both, and both are appropriate for the grave.

DUKE OF YORK

I beg your majesty, know that he only spoke this way because he is old and sick. He loves you—I swear it on my life—and holds you as dear as his own son, Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

¹² test

KING RICHARD II

Right, you speak true. He loves me just as much as Hereford does. And as they love me, I love them ¹³: that's how we got here.

¹³ Richard is being sarcastic: what he means is that he loves them as much (which is to say, as little) as he loves them.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

NORTHUMBERLAND

My liege, old Gaunt sends greetings to your majesty.

KING RICHARD II

What does he say?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Nothing; he's said all he can. His tongue is now a stringless instrument; his words and his life are finished.

DUKE OF YORK

May I be next! Death is hard, but it ends the struggles of our lives.

KING RICHARD II

The ripest fruit falls first, and so does he; his time is over, so we must carry on his absence. So much for that. Now for our Irish wars: we must defeat these rough woolly-headed rebels, which spread like poison, and since we need money to fund these great affairs, we will take all of Gaunt's property, jewels, and income.

DUKE OF YORK

How long shall I be patient? Ah, how long shall duty to my king make me allow wrongdoing? Not Gloucester's death, nor Hereford's banishment, nor Gaunt's criticisms, nor England's private injuries, nor poor Bolingbroke being prevented from marrying, nor my own disgrace has ever made me give a sour look or provoke one wrinkle on my sovereign's face.

I am the last of noble Edward's sons,
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first:
In war was never lion raged more fierce,
In peace was never gentle lamb more mild,
180 Than was that young and princely gentleman.
His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,
Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours;
But when he frown'd, it was against the French
And not against his friends; his noble hand
185 Did will what he did spend and spent not that
Which his triumphant father's hand had won;
His hands were guilty of no kindred blood,
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.
O Richard! York is too far gone with grief,
190 Or else he never would compare between.

KING RICHARD II

Why, uncle, what's the matter?

DUKE OF YORK

O my liege,
Pardon me, if you please; if not, I, pleased
Not to be pardon'd, am content withal.
195 Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands
The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford?
Is not Gaunt dead, and doth not Hereford live?
Was not Gaunt just, and is not Harry true?
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?
200 Is not his heir a well-deserving son?
Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time
His charters and his customary rights;
Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day;
Be not thyself; for how art thou a king
205 But by fair sequence and succession?
Now, afore God--God forbid I say true!--
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,
Call in the letters patent that he hath
By his attorneys-general to sue
210 His livery, and deny his offer'd homage,
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts
And prick my tender patience, to those thoughts
Which honour and allegiance cannot think.

KING RICHARD II

215 Think what you will, we seize into our hands
His plate, his goods, his money and his lands.

DUKE OF YORK

I'll not be by the while: my liege, farewell:
What will ensue hereof, there's none can tell;
But by bad courses may be understood
220 That their events can never fall out good.

Exit

KING RICHARD II

Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight:
Bid him repair to us to Ely House
To see this business. To-morrow next
We will for Ireland; and 'tis time, I trow:
225 And we create, in absence of ourself,
Our uncle York lord governor of England;
For he is just and always loved us well.
Come on, our queen: to-morrow must we part;
Be merry, for our time of stay is short.

*Flourish. Exeunt KING RICHARD II, QUEEN, DUKE OF AUMERLE,
BUSHY, GREEN, and BAGOT*

NORTHUMBERLAND

230 Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

[to Richard] I am the last of noble Edward's sons, of whom your father, Prince of Wales, was first: that young and princely gentleman was more fierce than a lion and more gentle than a lamb in peace. You have his face, for he looked exactly like you at your age. But when he frowned, it was against the French and not against his friends; he spent within his means and not what his father had earned; his hands were not stained with the blood of his family, but bloody with the enemies of his family. Oh Richard! York is too far gone with grief, or else he never would compare the two of you.

KING RICHARD II

Why, uncle, what's the matter?

DUKE OF YORK

Oh my liege, pardon me, if you please; if not, I will be content not to be pardoned. Will you seize and grip into your hands all the rightful inheritance of banished Hereford? Isn't Gaunt dead, and doesn't Hereford live? Was not Gaunt fair, and is not Harry loyal? Didn't Gaunt deserve to have an heir? Is not his heir a well-deserving son? Take Hereford's rights away, and you take away ancient customs and rights: tomorrow won't come after today, and you won't be yourself--for how are you a king except by fair inheritance and succession ¹⁴? Now, before God--God forbid my prediction comes true!--if you wrongfully seize Hereford's rights, taking away his legal right to the income and honors of the dukedom of Lancaster, you bring a thousand dangers on your head, you lose a thousand hearts that would have been well-disposed towards you, and you test my patience by bringing me to thoughts which honor and allegiance cannot allow me to think.

¹⁴ York is telling Richard that he has broken with the laws of the land, and therefore has undermined his right to rule.

KING RICHARD II

Think what you want. We'll take his jewelry, his goods, his money and his lands.

DUKE OF YORK

I'll not stand here while you do: my liege, goodbye. What will happen after this, no one knows, but bad courses of action never lead to good results.

Exit

KING RICHARD II

Go to the Earl of Wiltshire straight away, Bushy, and tell him to go to Ely House to see to this business. We'll go to Ireland the day after next: it's time to, I think. In our absence, we appoint our uncle York lord governor of England, for he is just and always loved us well. Come on, our queen: tomorrow must we part; be merry, for our time together is short.

Sound of trumpet. KING RICHARD II, QUEEN, DUKE OF AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, and BAGOT exit.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

LORD ROSS

And living too; for now his son is duke.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Barely in title, not in revenue.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Richly in both, if justice had her right.

LORD ROSS

My heart is great; but it must break with silence,
235 Ere't be disburden'd with a liberal tongue.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Nay, speak thy mind; and let him ne'er speak more
That speaks thy words again to do thee harm!

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Tends that thou wouldest speak to the Duke of Hereford?
If it be so, out with it boldly, man;
240 Quick is mine ear to hear of good towards him.

LORD ROSS

No good at all that I can do for him;
Unless you call it good to pity him,
Bereft and gelded of his patrimony.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Now, afore God, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne
245 In him, a royal prince, and many more
Of noble blood in this declining land.
The king is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers; and what they will inform,
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,
250 That will the king severely prosecute
'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

LORD ROSS

The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes,
And quite lost their hearts: the nobles hath he fined
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

255 And daily new exactions are devised,
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what:
But what, o' God's name, doth become of this?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Wars have not wasted it, for warr'd he hath not,
But basely yielded upon compromise
260 That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows:
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.

LORD ROSS

The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

The king's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him.

LORD ROSS

265 He hath not money for these Irish wars,
His burthenous taxations notwithstanding,
But by the robbing of the banish'd duke.

NORTHUMBERLAND

His noble kinsman: most degenerate king!
But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,

LORD ROSS

And living too; for now his son is duke.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

But only in title, not in income.

NORTHUMBERLAND

He would be rich in both, if justice had its way.

LORD ROSS

I have much in my heart, but it must break with silence
before I say what I think.

NORTHUMBERLAND

No, come out with it, and let him never speak again that
betrays you by repeating what he hears!

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Would you speak on behalf of the Duke of Hereford? If it be
so, come out with it boldly, man; I'm eager to hear those
who speak good of him.

LORD ROSS

I can't do much good at all for him, unless you call it good
to pity him for having lost his inheritance.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Now, before God, it is a shame that he, a royal prince, is
wroned in this way, as are so many more of noble blood in
this declining land. The king is not himself, but directed by
flatterers; and they will tell him lies about us to make him
enemies to us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

LORD ROSS

He's taxed the common people so much that he has quite
lost their love; he's fined the nobles too, for old quarrels,
and quite lost their hearts.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Every day new taxes are invented, such as blanks ¹⁵,
benevolences ¹⁶, and I know not what: but what, in God's
name, will come of this?

¹⁵ blank charters giving permission
to raise taxes randomly

¹⁶ forced loans

NORTHUMBERLAND

He hasn't spent it on wars, for he hasn't fought any; instead,
he makes compromises when his noble ancestors would
have fought on the battlefield: he's spent more in peace
than they spent in war.

LORD ROSS

The Earl of Wiltshire ¹⁷ uses the realm like a farm.

¹⁷ one of Richard's favorites--
referred to frequently as a "flatterer"

LORD WILLOUGHBY

The king's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Criticism and debauchery surround him.

LORD ROSS

He has no money for these Irish wars, even with all those
heavy taxes, except by the robbing of the banished duke.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Who is his noble cousin--most wicked king! But, lords, we
hear this fearful tempest coming, but see no shelter in

Yet see no shelter to avoid the storm;
We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,
And yet we strike not, but securely perish.

LORD ROSS

We see the very wreck that we must suffer;
And unavoided is the danger now,
For suffering so the causes of our wreck.

275

NORTHUMBERLAND

Not so; even through the hollow eyes of death
I spy life peering; but I dare not say
How near the tidings of our comfort is.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Nay, let us share thy thoughts, as thou dost ours.

LORD ROSS

Be confident to speak, Northumberland:
We three are but thyself; and, speaking so,
Thy words are but as thoughts; therefore, be bold.

280

NORTHUMBERLAND

Then thus: I have from Port le Blanc, a bay
In Brittany, received intelligence
That Harry Duke of Hereford, Rainold Lord Cobham,
That late broke from the Duke of Exeter,
His brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury,
Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir John Ramston,
Sir John Norbery, Sir Robert Waterton and Francis
Quoint,
All these well furnish'd by the Duke of Bretagne
With eight tall ships, three thousand men of war,
Are making hither with all due expedience
And shortly mean to touch our northern shore:
Perhaps they had ere this, but that they stay
The first departing of the king for Ireland.
If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,
Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,
Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,
Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt
And make high majesty look like itself,
Away with me in post to Ravensburgh;
But if you faint, as fearing to do so,
Stay and be secret, and myself will go.

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LORD ROSS

To horse, to horse! urge doubts to them that fear.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Hold out my horse, and I will first be there.

Exeunt

which to hide from the storm; we see the wind wreck our
sails, and if we don't strike back, we'll surely die.

LORD ROSS

We see the shipwreck that will come to us; there's no
avoiding the danger now, for we will suffer the same.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Not so; even through the hollow eyes of death I can see life;
but I dare not say how close we are to finding hope.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

No, let us share your thoughts, as you do ours.

LORD ROSS

Don't be afraid to speak, Northumberland: telling us would
be like telling yourself; and, speaking so, your words are
just like your own thoughts; come out with it, then.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Then here it is: I have from Port le Blanc, a bay in Brittany,
received news that Harry Duke of Hereford, Rainold Lord Cobham (that late ran away from the Duke of Exeter), his
brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury, Sir Thomas
Erpingham, Sir John Ramston, Sir John Norbery, Sir Robert
Waterton and Francis Quoint have been given eight tall
ships and three thousand men by the Duke of Bretagne,
and will soon land on our northern shore. They would have
come earlier, but are waiting for the king to leave for
Ireland. If you would free us from slavery, mend our
country's broken wing, save the crown from pawnbroking,
wipe off the dust that hides our scepter's gold, and make
high majesty look like itself again, come away with me now
to Ravensburgh; but if you're afraid, stay and tell no one,
and I'll go on my own.

*Exeunt***LORD ROSS**

To horse, to horse! Encourage those who are afraid.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

If my horse holds out, I'll be the first there.

Act 2, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter QUEEN, BUSHY, and BAGOT

BUSHY

Madam, your majesty is too much sad:
You promised, when you parted with the king,
To lay aside life-harming heaviness
And entertain a cheerful disposition.

QUEEN

To please the king I did; to please myself
I cannot do it; yet I know no cause

Shakescleare Translation

QUEEN, BUSHY, and BAGOT enter

BUSHY

Madam, your majesty is sad too often: you promised, when
you parted with the king, to lay aside depression and be
cheerful.

QUEEN

To please the king I did, but to please myself I cannot do it.
Yet I don't know why I welcome such a guest as grief, except

Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,
Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard : yet again, methinks,
10 Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,
Is coming towards me, and my inward soul
With nothing trembles : at some thing it grieves,
More than with parting from my lord the king.

BUSHY

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
15 Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;
For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects;
Like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon
Show nothing but confusion, eyed awry
20 Distinguish form: so your sweet majesty,
Looking awry upon your lord's departure,
Find shapes of grief, more than himself, to wail;
Which, look'd on as it is, is nought but shadows
Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious queen,
25 More than your lord's departure weep not: more's not
seen;
Or if it be, 'tis with false sorrow's eye,
Which for things true weeps things imaginary.

QUEEN

It may be so; but yet my inward soul
30 Persuades me it is otherwise: howe'er it be,
I cannot but be sad; so heavy sad
As, though on thinking on no thought I think,
Makes me with heavy nothing faint and shrink.

BUSHY

'Tis nothing but conceit, my gracious lady.

QUEEN

35 'Tis nothing less: conceit is still derived
From some forefather grief; mine is not so,
For nothing had begot my something grief;
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve:
'Tis in reversion that I do possess;
40 But what it is, that is not yet known; what
I cannot name; 'tis nameless woe, I wot.

Enter GREEN

GREEN

God save your majesty! and well met, gentlemen:
I hope the king is not yet shipp'd for Ireland.

QUEEN

Why hopest thou so? 'tis better hope he is;
45 For his designs crave haste, his haste good hope:
Then wherefore dost thou hope he is not shipp'd?

GREEN

That he, our hope, might have retired his power,
And driven into despair an enemy's hope,
Who strongly hath set footing in this land:
50 The banish'd Bolingbroke repeals himself,
And with uplifted arms is safe arrived
At Ravenspurgh.

QUEEN

Now God in heaven forbid!

GREEN

Ah, madam, 'tis too true: and that is worse,
55 The Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy,
The Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby,
With all their powerful friends, are fled to him.

because I had to say goodbye to so sweet a guest as my sweet Richard. And yet again, I feel as if some unborn sorrow, ready to be birthed by fortune, is coming towards me, and my soul is afraid of something: it grieves at something more than just my parting from the king.

BUSHY

For each real grief there are twenty imaginary shadows, which look like grief but are not so: for sorrow's eye, blurred with blinding tears, divides one thing into many objects ¹. Like a perspective painting ² (which looked at directly is a mass of confusing shapes, but looked at from an angle shows a clear form), you, looking from an angle at your lord's departure, find more shapes of grief to distress you. But, looked at it is, it's nothing but unreal shadows. Then, most gracious queen, don't cry at anything more than your lord's departure: there isn't anything else, or if there is, you're seeing it with the eye of sorrow, whose tears create imaginary images.

¹ i.e. when a person is crying, their vision is distorted by tears and sees many things where there's actually only one (an optical illusion)

² An example of a perspective painting is Holbein's Ambassadors, which has a skull at the bottom which only appears when the painting is viewed from a certain side angle.

QUEEN

It may be so; and yet my inward soul tells me it's not. For whatever reason, I can't help but be sad: so extremely sad that, even if I'm not thinking of anything in particular, I feel exhausted and frightened by this heavy nothing weighing on me.

BUSHY

It's nothing but your imagination, my gracious lady.

QUEEN

It's less than even that: at least imagination has some grief at the root of it, whereas mine has no clear cause. Nothing has caused me grief about something, or something has caused me to grieve about nothing. Something is coming towards me, something that isn't yet known; what it is I cannot name; it's a nameless sadness, I know.

GREEN enters

GREEN

God save your majesty! and greetings, gentlemen: I hope the king has not left for Ireland yet.

QUEEN

Why do you hope so? One had better hope he is, for he's in a hurry, and his success against the rebels requires speed--so why do you hope he isn't gone yet?

GREEN

Because then he, our hope, might have brought his army here and defeated our enemy's hopes--for banished Bolingbroke is back in England, and is safely arrived at Ravenspurgh with an army at his back.

QUEEN

Now God in heaven forbid!

GREEN

Ah, madam, it's too true. And what's worse, the Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy, and the Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby, with all their powerful friends, have gone to fight with them.

BUSHY

Why have you not proclaim'd Northumberland
And all the rest revolted faction traitors?

GREEN

60 We have: whereupon the Earl of Worcester
Hath broke his staff, resign'd his stewardship,
And all the household servants fled with him
To Bolingbroke.

QUEEN

So, Green, thou art the midwife to my woe,
65 And Bolingbroke my sorrow's dismal heir:
Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigie,
And I, a gasping new-deliver'd mother,
Have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow join'd.

BUSHY

Despair not, madam.

QUEEN

70 Who shall hinder me?
I will despair, and be at enmity
With cozening hope: he is a flatterer,
A parasite, a keeper back of death,
Who gently would dissolve the bands of life,
75 Which false hope lingers in extremity.

Enter DUKE OF YORK

GREEN

Here comes the Duke of York.

QUEEN

With signs of war about his aged neck:
O, full of careful business are his looks!
Uncle, for God's sake, speak comfortable words.

DUKE OF YORK

80 Should I do so, I should belie my thoughts:
Comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth,
Where nothing lives but crosses, cares and grief.
Your husband, he is gone to save far off,
Whilst others come to make him lose at home:
85 Here am I left to underprop his land,
Who, weak with age, cannot support myself:
Now comes the sick hour that his surfeit made;
Now shall he try his friends that flatter'd him.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT

My lord, your son was gone before I came.

DUKE OF YORK

90 He was? Why, so! go all which way it will!
The nobles they are fled, the commons they are cold,
And will, I fear, revolt on Hereford's side.
Sirrah, get thee to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester;
Bid her send me presently a thousand pound:
95 Hold, take my ring.

SERVANT

My lord, I had forgot to tell your lordship,
To-day, as I came by, I called there;
But I shall grieve you to report the rest.

DUKE OF YORK

What is't, knave?

SERVANT

100 An hour before I came, the duchess died.

BUSHY

Why have you not proclaimed Northumberland and all the rest of the rebels as traitors?

GREEN

We have: and when we did so, the Earl of Worcester broke his staff  and resigned his stewardship, and all the household servants went with him to Bolingbroke.

. Staff of office: to break this signals the Earl's abandonment of his job.

QUEEN

So, Green, you are the midwife to my sadness, and Bolingbroke is the child of my sorrow: now my soul has brought forth her offspring, and I, a gasping new mother, have joined my unborn sorrow with a real one.

BUSHY

Don't despair, madam.

QUEEN

Who shall stop me? I will despair, and be an enemy to false hope: he is a flatterer, a parasite, and a keeper back of death--death, which would let us end our lives gently, when hope makes up live on and suffer.

DUKE OF YORK enters

GREEN

Here comes the Duke of York.

QUEEN

He's wearing armor; oh, and he looks worried! Uncle, for God's sake, speak comforting words.

DUKE OF YORK

If I did so, I would be lying: comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth, where nothing lives but problems, cares and grief. Your husband went to save a far-away place, while others make him lose at home: I'm here to prop him up, but weak with age, I can't even support myself. Now comes the sickness after his over-indulgence; now he shall test the loyalty of the friends that flattered him.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT

My lord, your son was gone before I came.

DUKE OF YORK

He was? Why, then! What will be will be! The nobles are fled; the common people are cold and will, I fear, join Hereford's side.

[To servant] Go to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester; tell her to send me a thousand pounds as soon as she can; wait, take my ring.

SERVANT

My lord, I had forgot to tell your lordship. Today, on way here, I stopped there--but I will grieve you to report the rest.

DUKE OF YORK

What is it, scoundrel?

SERVANT

An hour before I came, the duchess died.

DUKE OF YORK

God for his mercy! what a tide of woes
Comes rushing on this woeful land at once!
I know not what to do: I would to God,
So my untruth had not provoked him to it,
105 The king had cut off my head with my brother's.
What, are there no posts dispatch'd for Ireland?
How shall we do for money for these wars?
Come, sister,--cousin, I would say--pray, pardon me.
Go, fellow, get thee home, provide some carts
110 And bring away the armour that is there.

*Exit Servant***DUKE OF YORK**

Gentlemen, will you go muster men?
If I know how or which way to order these affairs
Thus thrust disorderly into my hands,
Never believe me. Both are my kinsmen:
115 The one is my sovereign, whom both my oath
And duty bids defend; the other again
Is my kinsman, whom the king hath wrong'd,
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right.
Well, somewhat we must do. Come, cousin, I'll
120 Dispose of you.
Gentlemen, go, muster up your men,
And meet me presently at Berkeley.
I should to Plashy too;
But time will not permit: all is uneven,
125 And every thing is left at six and seven.

*Exeunt DUKE OF YORK and QUEEN***BUSHY**

The wind sits fair for news to go to Ireland,
But none returns . For us to levy power
Proportionable to the enemy
Is all impossible.

GREEN

130 Besides, our nearness to the king in love
Is near the hate of those love not the king.

BAGOT

And that's the wavering commons: for their love
Lies in their purses, and whoso empties them
By so much fills their hearts with deadly hate.

BUSHY

135 Wherein the king stands generally condemn'd.

BAGOT

If judgement lie in them, then so do we,
Because we ever have been near the king.

GREEN

Well, I will for refuge straight to Bristol castle:
The Earl of Wiltshire is already there.

BUSHY

140 Thither will I with you; for little office
The hateful commons will perform for us,
Except like curs to tear us all to pieces.
Will you go along with us?

BAGOT

No; I will to Ireland to his majesty.
145 Farewell: if heart's presages be not vain,
We three here art that ne'er shall meet again.

BUSHY

That's as York thrives to beat back Bolingbroke.

DUKE OF YORK

God for his mercy! What a tide of woes comes rushing on
this sad land at once! I don't know what to do: I wish to
God, provided I hadn't done anything disloyal, the king had
cut off my head with my brother's. What, are there no
messages sent to Ireland? How will we have money for
these wars?

[To Queen] Come, sister-cousin, I would say-pray, pardon
me. Go, man, go home, find some carts and bring us the
armor that is there.

*Exit Servant***DUKE OF YORK**

Gentlemen, will you go raise men for battle? I don't know
how or which way to order the disorderly affairs that have
been thrust into my hands, believe me. Both are of my
family: the one is my sovereign, whom both my oath and
duty bids me to defend; the other is also my kinsman, who
the king has wronged, and conscience and my family bids
me to fight for his rights. Well, we have to do something.

[To Queen] Come, cousin, I'll take you somewhere safe.

[To others] Gentlemen, go, raise your men, and meet me at
Berkeley as soon as you can. I should go to Plashy too, but
there's no time; everything is a mess.

*Exit DUKE OF YORK and QUEEN***BUSHY**

The wind is good to send messages to Ireland, but we've
heard nothing back. We can't raise an army the size of
Bolingbroke's.

GREEN

Besides, the king's enemies hate us because he loves us.

BAGOT

And the wavering common people are his enemies too: they
love their wallets, and whoever takes money from them fills
their hearts with deadly hate.

BUSHY

In that the king is condemned by everyone.

BAGOT

If they have power over us, we'll be condemned too,
because we've been always near the king.

GREEN

Well, I'll go to Bristol castle now for safety; the Earl of
Wiltshire is already there.

BUSHY

I'll go there for you; for the common people won't do
anything for us, except to tear us to pieces like dogs. Will
you go along with us?

BAGOT

No; I'll go to Ireland to his majesty. Goodbye: if the heart
can predict the future, the three of us will never meet again.

BUSHY

Unless York succeeds in beating back Bolingbroke.

GREEN

Alas, poor duke! the task he undertakes
Is numbering sands and drinking oceans dry:
Where one on his side fights, thousands will fly.
150 Farewell at once, for once, for all, and ever.

BUSHY

Well, we may meet again.

BAGOT

I fear me, never.

Exeunt

GREEN

Oh, poor duke! His task is like counting the sands or
drinking an ocean dry; where one fights for him, thousands
will fly to the other side. Goodbye at once, for once, forever.

BUSHY

Well, we may meet again.

BAGOT

I fear never.

All exit

Act 2, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE and NORTHUMBERLAND, with Forces

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Believe me, noble lord,
I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire:
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
5 Draws out our miles, and makes them wearisome,
And yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar,
Making the hard way sweet and delectable.
But I bethink me what a weary way
From Ravensburgh to Cotswold will be found
10 In Ross and Willoughby, wanting your company,
Which, I protest, hath very much beguiled
The tediousness and process of my travel:
But theirs is sweetened with the hope to have
The present benefit which I possess;
15 And hope to joy is little less in joy
Than hope enjoy'd: by this the weary lords
Shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done
By sight of what I have, your noble company.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Of much less value is my company
20 Than your good words. But who comes here?

Enter HENRY PERCY

NORTHUMBERLAND

It is my son, young Harry Percy,
Sent from my brother Worcester, whencesoever.
Harry, how fares your uncle?

HENRY PERCY

25 I had thought, my lord, to have learn'd his health of
you.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Why, is he not with the queen?

HENRY PERCY

No, my good Lord; he hath forsook the court,
Broken his staff of office and dispersed
30 The household of the king.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What was his reason?
He was not so resolved when last we spake together.

Shakescleare Translation

*HENRY BOLINGBROKE and NORTHUMBERLAND enter, with
Soldiers.*

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Believe me, noble lord, Gloucestershire is unknown to me:
these high wild hills and rough uneven roads have made us
go more slowly. And yet your words have been like sugar,
making the hard way sweet and delicious. It will be a tiring
journey from Ravensburgh to Cotswold for Ross and
Willoughby, lacking your company, which, I say, has very
much improved our progress. But theirs is sweetened by
the hope to have what I have; and hope of future joy is
almost as good as hope currently enjoyed. So by this their
journey will seem short, as mine has in your company.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My company is worth less than your good words. But who
comes here?

HENRY PERCY enters.

NORTHUMBERLAND

It is my son, young Harry Percy, sent by my brother
Worcester, wherever he is. Harry, how is your uncle?

HENRY PERCY

I had thought, my lord, that I might hear about him from
you.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Why, isn't he with the queen?

HENRY PERCY

No, my good lord; he has left the court, broken his staff of
office and dispersed the king's household.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What was his reason?
He wasn't on our side when we last
spoke together.

HENRY PERCY

Because your lordship was proclaimed traitor.
But he, my lord, is gone to Ravensburgh,
To offer service to the Duke of Hereford,
And sent me over by Berkeley, to discover
What power the Duke of York had levied there;
Then with directions to repair to Ravensburgh.

35

NORTHUMBERLAND

Have you forgot the Duke of Hereford, boy?

HENRY PERCY

No, my good lord, for that is not forgot
Which ne'er I did remember: to my knowledge,
I never in my life did look on him.

40

NORTHUMBERLAND

Then learn to know him now; this is the duke.

HENRY PERCY

My gracious lord, I tender you my service,
Such as it is, being tender, raw and young:
Which elder days shall ripen and confirm
To more approved service and desert.

45

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I thank thee, gentle Percy; and be sure
I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends;
And, as my fortune ripens with thy love,
It shall be still thy true love's recompense:
My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.

50

NORTHUMBERLAND

How far is it to Berkeley? and what stir
Keeps good old York there with his men of war?

55

HENRY PERCY

There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees,
Mann'd with three hundred men, as I have heard;
And in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour;
None else of name and noble estimate.

Enter LORD ROSS and LORD WILLOUGHBY

NORTHUMBERLAND

Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby,
Bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste.

60

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, my lords. I wot your love pursues
A banish'd traitor: all my treasury
Is yet but unfeft thanks, which more enrich'd
Shall be your love and labour's recompense.

65

LORD ROSS

Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

And far surmounts our labour to attain it.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor;
Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,
Stands for my bounty. But who comes here?

70

Enter LORD BERKELEY

NORTHUMBERLAND

It is my Lord of Berkeley, as I guess.

HENRY PERCY

Because your lordship was proclaimed a traitor. But he, my lord, is gone to Ravensburgh, to offer his service to the Duke of Hereford, and sent me over here to Berkeley, to find out how large an army the Duke of York had raised there; then he told me to meet him in Ravensburgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Have you forgotten the Duke of Hereford, boy?

HENRY PERCY

No, my good lord, for that would be to forget what I never remembered; to my knowledge, I've never seen him in my life.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Then learn to know him now; this is the duke.

HENRY PERCY

[To Bolingbroke] My gracious lord, I offer you my service, such as it is, being tender, raw and young: when I'm older, I'll be more worthy of it.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I thank you, gentle Percy; and be sure that I count myself lucky for nothing so much as my good friends. And as my fortune improves with your love, I'll reward you well: my heart promises this, and a handshake seals it.

NORTHUMBERLAND

How far is it to Berkeley? And what business keeps good old York there with his soldiers?

HENRY PERCY

There stands the castle, by that patch of trees, with three hundred men defending it, as I have heard; and in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour, but no other noblemen.

LORD ROSS and LORD WILLOUGHBY enter.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby, their horses bloody from spurring them on and their faces red from hurrying here.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, my lords. I know you follow a banished traitor: I can only give you thanks now, but soon you'll be rewarded for your efforts on my behalf.

LORD ROSS

Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

And is worth more than our labor to find you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Eternal thanks, my poor-man bankers; this richness must stand for my reward until my infant fortune inherits his due. But who comes here?

LORD BERKELEY enters.

NORTHUMBERLAND

I think it is my Lord of Berkeley.

LORD BERKELEY

My Lord of Hereford, my message is to you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My lord, my answer is--to Lancaster;
And I am come to seek that name in England;
75 And I must find that title in your tongue,
Before I make reply to aught you say.

LORD BERKELEY

Mistake me not, my lord; 'tis not my meaning
To raze one title of your honour out:
To you, my lord, I come, what lord you will,
80 From the most gracious regent of this land,
The Duke of York, to know what pricks you on
To take advantage of the absent time
And fright our native peace with self-born arms.

Enter DUKE OF YORK attended

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I shall not need transport my words by you;
85 Here comes his grace in person. My noble uncle!

Kneels

DUKE OF YORK

Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee,
Whose duty is deceivable and false.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious uncle--

DUKE OF YORK

90 Tut, tut!
Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle:
I am no traitor's uncle; and that word 'grace'
In an ungracious mouth is but profane.
Why have those banish'd and forbidden legs
95 Dared once to touch a dust of England's ground?
But then more 'why?' why have they dared to march
So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,
Frighting her pale-faced villages with war
And ostentation of despised arms?
100 Comest thou because the anointed king is hence?
Why, foolish boy, the king is left behind,
And in my loyal bosom lies his power.
Were I but now the lord of such hot youth
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself
105 Rescued the Black Prince, that young Mars ² of men,
From forth the ranks of many thousand French,
O, then how quickly should this arm of mine
Now prisoner to the palsy, chastise thee
And minister correction to thy fault!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

110 My gracious uncle, let me know my fault:
On what condition stands it and wherein?

DUKE OF YORK

Even in condition of the worst degree,
In gross rebellion and detested treason:
Thou art a banish'd man, and here art come
115 Before the expiration of thy time,
In braving arms against thy sovereign.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford;
But as I come, I come for Lancaster.
And, noble uncle, I beseech your grace
120 Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye:
You are my father, for methinks in you
I see old Gaunt alive; O, then, my father,

LORD BERKELEY

My Lord of Hereford, my message is for you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My lord, my answer can only come from my Lord
of Lancaster ²; I am here to seek that name in England;
and you must call me by my proper title before I can reply
to anything you say.

 After John of Gaunt's death,
Bolingbroke inherits the title Duke of
Lancaster.

LORD BERKELEY

Don't mistake me, my lord; I didn't mean to erase one of
your titles. To you, my lord, I come, whatever lord you are,
from the most gracious regent of this land, the Duke of York,
to ask why you take advantage of the king's absence to
frighten our natural peace with your army.

DUKE OF YORK with servants and soldiers enter

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I won't need to talk to him through you; here comes his
grace in person. My noble uncle!

Kneels

DUKE OF YORK

Show me your humble heart, and not your knee; you're
only pretending to be dutiful.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious uncle--

DUKE OF YORK

Tut, tut! Don't "grace" me or "uncle" me: I am no traitor's
uncle; and the word "grace" in an ungracious mouth is just
profanity. Why have those banished and forbidden feet
dared once to touch a dust of England's ground? But then
more "why?" Why have they dared to march so many miles
upon this peaceful land, frightening her pale-faced villages
with war and display of arms? Do you come because the
anointed king isn't here? Why, foolish boy, the king *is* here;
he appointed me his representative. If only I were the young
lord I was when brave Gaunt, your father, and myself
rescued the Black Prince, that young Mars ² of men, from
many thousand French soldiers, oh, then how quickly
should my hand (now prisoner to the palsy) punish you for
your offence!

 Roman God of War.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious uncle, tell me what I've done wrong: what law
have I broken and when?

DUKE OF YORK

You've broken the law in the worst way possible, in
shameless rebellion detested treason: you are a banished
man, but you came here before the end of your
banishment, bearing arms against your sovereign.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

When I was banished, I was banished as Hereford; but as I
come, I come for Lancaster. And, noble uncle, I ask you to
be indulgent with me: you are my father, for I think in you I
see old Gaunt alive. Oh, then, my father, will you allow me
to stand condemned as a wandering beggar, my rights and
income taken from me by force and given away to upstart

Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd
A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties
125 Pluck'd from my arms perforce and given away
To upstart unthrifts? Wherefore was I born?
If that my cousin king be King of England,
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.
You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin;
130 Had you first died, and he been thus trod down,
He should have found his uncle Gaunt a father,
To rouse his wrongs and chase them to the bay.
I am denied to sue my livery here,
And yet my letters-patents give me leave:
135 My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold,
And these and all are all amiss employ'd.
What would you have me do? I am a subject,
And I challenge law: attorneys are denied me;
And therefore, personally I lay my claim
140 To my inheritance of free descent.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The noble duke hath been too much abused.

LORD ROSS

It stands your grace upon to do him right.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Base men by his endowments are made great.

DUKE OF YORK

My lords of England, let me tell you this:
145 I have had feeling of my cousin's wrongs
And laboured all I could to do him right;
But in this kind to come, in braving arms,
Be his own carver and cut out his way,
To find out right with wrong, it may not be;
150 And you that do abet him in this kind
Cherish rebellion and are rebels all.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The noble duke hath sworn his coming is
But for his own; and for the right of that
We all have strongly sworn to give him aid;
155 And let him ne'er see joy that breaks that oath!

DUKE OF YORK

Well, well, I see the issue of these arms:
I cannot mend it, I must needs confess,
Because my power is weak and all ill left:
But if I could, by Him that gave me life,
160 I would attach you all and make you stoop
Unto the sovereign mercy of the king;
But since I cannot, be it known to you
I do remain as neuter. So, fare you well;
Unless you please to enter in the castle
165 And there repose you for this night.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

An offer, uncle, that we will accept:
But we must win your grace to go with us
To Bristol castle, which they say is held
By Bushy, Bagot and their complices,
170 The caterpillars of the commonwealth,
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

DUKE OF YORK

It may be I will go with you: but yet I'll pause;
For I am loath to break our country's laws.
Nor friends nor foes, to me welcome you are:
175 Things past redress are now with me past care.

Exeunt

spendthrifts? Why was I born? If my cousin is King of England, it must be that I am Duke of Lancaster. You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin; if you had died first, and he was treated this way, he would have found in his uncle Gaunt a father to fight for him. I am refused the right to wear the colors of the dukedom of Lancaster here, although I have the legal right to do so; my father's good are all liquidated and sold, and these and everything he owned are put to ill ends. What do you want me to do? I am a subject, and I challenge the law: I am denied attorneys, and therefore I've come here to claim my inheritance in person.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The noble duke has been too much abused.

LORD ROSS

Your grace is responsible for seeing justice done.

LORD WILLOUGHBY

Low-born men enrich themselves by his property.

DUKE OF YORK

My lords of England, let me tell you this: I know my cousin has been wronged, and I've done all I could to do him right. But to come like this, with an army, to help himself to what he wants at the dinner table, to do right by doing a wrong—it must not be. And you that help him do this are all damned rebels.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The noble duke has sworn his coming is just to claim his inheritance; and to obtain that, we have all sworn to help him. Let him never see joy that breaks that oath!

DUKE OF YORK

Well, well, I see how it is: I can't do anything about it, I admit, because my army is weak and too small to fight. But if I could, by Him that gave me life, I would punish you all and make you stoop under the king's power. But since I cannot, be it known to you, I will remain neutral. So, go on your way; unless you'd like to enter in the castle and sleep for this night.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

An offer, uncle, that we will accept: but we must persuade your grace to go with us to Bristol castle, which they say is held by Bushy, Bagot and their accomplices--the caterpillars of the commonwealth, which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

DUKE OF YORK

It may be I will go with you...but I'm still reluctant to break our country's laws. Friend or foe, it's all the same to me: I can't care anymore about things that can no longer be fixed.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter EARL OF SALISBURY and a Welsh Captain

CAPTAIN

My lord of Salisbury, we have stay'd ten days,
And hardly kept our countrymen together,
And yet we hear no tidings from the king;
Therefore we will disperse ourselves: farewell.

EARL OF SALISBURY

5 Stay yet another day, thou trusty Welshman:
The king reposeth all his confidence in thee.

CAPTAIN

'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay.
The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd
And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
10 The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change;
Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap,
The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
The other to enjoy by rage and war:
15 These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.
Farewell: our countrymen are gone and fled,
As well assured Richard their king is dead.

Exit

EARL OF SALISBURY

Ah, Richard, with the eyes of heavy mind
I see thy glory like a shooting star
20 Fall to the base earth from the firmament.
Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
Witnessing storms to come, woe and unrest:
Thy friends are fled to wait upon thy foes,
And crossly to thy good all fortune goes.

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

EARL OF SALISBURY and a Welsh Captain enter

CAPTAIN

My lord of Salisbury, we have waited ten days, and hardly
kept our countrymen together, and yet we hear nothing
from the king. Therefore we will disperse the army:
farewell.

EARL OF SALISBURY

Stay yet another day, trusty Welshman: you're the king's
last hope.

CAPTAIN

It's thought the king is dead; we will not wait. The bay-trees
in our country are all withered, and meteors disturb the
fixed stars in the sky; the pale-faced moon looks bloody on
the earth; and frightened prophets whisper of fearful
change. Rich men look sad and poor men dance and leap,
the one fearing to lose what they enjoy, the other looking
forward to enjoying the spoils of war: these signs predict
the death or fall of kings. Farewell, our countrymen are as
surely gone as Richard is dead.

Captain exits

EARL OF SALISBURY

Ah, Richard, with the eyes of a heavy heart I see your glory
fall like a shooting star from the sky back down to earth.
The sun cries as it sets in the west, seeing storms to come,
sadness, and unrest. Your friends have abandoned you to
help your enemies, and all your luck is running out.

EARL OF SALISBURY exits

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

*Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND,
LORD ROSS, HENRY PERCY, LORD WILLOUGHBY, with BUSHY and
GREEN, prisoners*

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bring forth these men.
Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls--
Since presently your souls must part your bodies--
With too much urging your pernicious lives,
5 For 'twere no charity; yet, to wash your blood
From off my hands, here in the view of men
I will unfold some causes of your deaths.
You have misled a prince, a royal king,
A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,
10 By you unhappied and disfigured clean:
You have in manner with your sinful hours
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,
Broke the possession of a royal bed
And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks
15 With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs.
Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth,
Near to the king in blood, and near in love

Shakescleare Translation

*HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK,
NORTHUMBERLAND, LORD ROSS, HENRY PERCY, LORD
WILLOUGHBY enter, with BUSHY and GREEN as prisoners*

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bring the men out. Bushy and Green, I won't bother with
your souls--since they'll be parted from your body soon
anyway--by telling you what an evil life you've led, since
that will be no help. But to justify myself, I will publicly
explain some reasons why you must die. You have misled a
prince, a royal king--a gentleman happy in his ancestry,
disfigured, and made unhappy by you. Your sinfulness has
caused a divorce between his queen and him, since he
spent his time away from the marriage bed, amusing
himself with you. You have stained the queen's cheeks with
tears from your awful wrongs. I was myself a prince, near to
the king in fortune and blood, until you made him
misinterpret me, and have stooped my neck under your
crimes, sighing my English breath in foreign lands and
eating the bitter bread of banishment. Meanwhile, you have
used my seal for your own gain, ruined my land and cut
down my trees, and destroyed my coat of arms in my own

Till you did make him misinterpret me,
Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries,
20 And sigh'd my English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment;
Whilst you have fed upon my signories,
Dispark'd my parks and fell'd my forest woods,
From my own windows torn my household coat,
25 Razed out my impresa, leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To show the world I am a gentleman.
This and much more, much more than twice all this,
Condemns you to the death. See them deliver'd over
30 To execution and the hand of death.

BUSHY

More welcome is the stroke of death to me
Than Bolingbroke to England. Lords, farewell.

GREEN

My comfort is that heaven will take our souls
And plague injustice with the pains of hell.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

35 My Lord Northumberland, see them dispatch'd.

Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND and others, with the prisoners

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Uncle, you say the queen is at your house;
For God's sake, fairly let her be entreated:
Tell her I send to her my kind commands;
40 Take special care my greetings be deliver'd.

DUKE OF YORK

A gentleman of mine I have dispatch'd
With letters of your love to her at large.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Thanks, gentle uncle. Come, lords, away.
To fight with Glendower and his complices:
45 Awhile to work, and after holiday.

Exeunt

windows--leaving me no sign, except men's opinions and my living blood, to show the world I am a gentleman. This and much more, much more than twice all this, condemns you to die.

[To Northumberland] See them delivered over to execution and the hand of death.

BUSHY

The stroke of death is more welcome to me than Bolingbroke is to England. Lords, goodbye.

GREEN

My comfort is that heaven will take our souls, and that the unjust people who do this to us will suffer in hell.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My Lord Northumberland, see they are executed.

NORTHUMBERLAND and others exit, with the prisoners

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Uncle, you say the queen is at your house; for God's sake, treat her fairly. Tell her I send her my kind regards; take special care that my greetings are delivered.

DUKE OF YORK

I've sent a servant to deliver her the letters explaining your continued love and affection for her.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Thanks, gentle uncle. Come, lords, let's go to fight with Glendower  and his accomplices: we must work a while before we can take a holiday.

 Glendower is the "trusty Welshman" seen in the last scene.

All exit

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Drums; flourish and colours. Enter KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, and Soldiers

KING RICHARD II

Barkloughly castle call they this at hand?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

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

KING RICHARD II

Needs must I like it well: I weep for joy
5 To stand upon my kingdom once again.
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,
10 So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favours with my royal hands.
Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,

Shakescleare Translation

Drums; sound of trumpets and display of flags. KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, and Soldiers enter

KING RICHARD II

Do they call this place Barkloughly castle?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Yes, my lord. How do you feel, now that you're on land again after that rough sea journey?

KING RICHARD II

I feel much better: I weep for joy to stand upon my kingdom once again. *[Kneels to touch the ground]* Dear earth, I touch you with my hand, even as rebels wound you with their horses' hoofs: just as a mother who's been separated from her child smiles and cries when they're reunited, so I greet you, my earth, both crying and smiling, and honor you with my royal hand. Let no food grow for your sovereign's enemies, my gentle earth, and don't give them anything to comfort them--but let your venomous spiders and toads lie

Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;
But let thy spiders, that suck up thy venom,
15 And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way,
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,
20 Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder
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
25 Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
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.
The means that heaven yields must be embraced,
30 And not neglected; else, if heaven would,
And we will not, heaven's offer we refuse,
The proffer'd means of succor and redress.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

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

KING RICHARD II

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
40 In murders and in outrage, boldly 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,
45 The cloak of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night
Whilst we were wandering with the antipodes,
50 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
55 Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord:
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
60 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 EARL OF SALISBURY

KING RICHARD II

Welcome, my lord! how far off lies your power?

EARL OF SALISBURY

Nor near nor farther off, my gracious lord,
65 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,
70 And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
To-day, to-day, unhappy day, too late,
O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune and thy state:
For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead.
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed and fled.

in their way, biting the treacherous feet that tread on you.
Let your plants sting them; when they pluck a flower, let
there be a poisonous snake inside it whose forked tongue
could kill them in an instant. Don't make fun of me for
talking to the ground, my lords; this earth will hear me and
the stones themselves will rise to my defense, before her
native king is defeated by rebellion.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

Don't be afraid, my lord; God, who made you king, has the
power to keep you king in spite of everything. We should
make use of what heaven gives us, not ignore it; otherwise,
by refusing His help, we're disobeying God's will.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

He means, my lord, that we should be doing more, since
Bolingbroke grows stronger in power and arms through our
lack of opposition.

KING RICHARD II

Silly, gloomy cousin! Don't you know that when the sun is
down, thieves and robbers roam about unseen, boldly
committing murders and other crimes; but when the sun
appears again in the east, he sets the tops of trees on
fire and shines a light in every dark place--then, murders,
treason, and other detestable sins will show themselves for
what they are, the cloak of night plucked from their backs.
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke--who has
enjoyed the night while we, the sun, were wandering
down below--shall see us rising in our throne, the east, his
treason will not survive the light of day, and even he will
tremble at his sin. Not all the water in the rough rude sea
can wash the balm off from an anointed king; no word
from an ordinary, earthly man can depose the deputy
elected by the Lord. For every man that Bolingbroke has in
his army, God has a glorious angel to fight for Richard; and
if angels fight, weak men must be defeated, for heaven still
defends the what is right.

 Richard is referring to the "balm," or oil, used to anoint kings in the coronation ceremony.

EARL OF SALISBURY enters

KING RICHARD II

Welcome, my lord! How far away is your army?

EARL OF SALISBURY

My weak arm, my gracious lord, is as close as you're going
to get to an army: gloom guides my tongue and makes me
speak of nothing but despair. Returning one day too late,
I'm afraid, noble lord, has ruined all your happy days on
earth: oh, call back yesterday, tell time to run backwards,
and you would have had twelve thousand men to fight for
you! But today, today, unhappy day, it's too late: your joys,
friends, fortune and kingdom are lost. For all the
Welshmen, hearing you were dead, have left and gone to
fight for Bolingbroke.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

75 Comfort, my liege; why looks your grace so pale?

KING RICHARD II

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?
80 All souls that will be safe fly from my side,
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Comfort, my liege; remember who you are.

KING RICHARD II

I had forgot myself; am I not king?
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.
85 Is not the king's name twenty 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
90 Hath power enough to serve our turn. But who comes
here?

Enter SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

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

KING RICHARD II

Mine ear is open and my heart prepared;
95 The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold.
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,
100 We'll serve Him too and be his fellow so:
Revolt our subjects? that we cannot mend;
They break their faith to God as well as us:
Cry woe, destruction, ruin and decay:
The worst is death, and death will have his day.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

105 Glad am I that your highness is so arm'd
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,
110 So high above his limits swells the rage
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land
With hard bright steel and hearts harder than steel.
White-beards have arm'd their thin and hairless scalps
Against thy majesty; boys, with women's voices,
115 Strive to speak big and clap their female joints
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown:
The very beadlemen learn to bend their bows
Of double-fatal yew against thy state;
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills
120 Against thy seat: both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

KING RICHARD II

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?
125 That they have let the dangerous enemy
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?
If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it:
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Take comfort, my liege; why are you so pale?

KING RICHARD II

Until now the blood of twenty thousand men made my
cheeks red with triumph, but now they're gone; and until so
much blood comes to me again, don't I have good reason to
look pale and dead? Anyone who would be safe, leave me!
For time has ruined me.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Be calm, my liege--remember who you are.

KING RICHARD II

Yes, I had forgotten. Aren't I the king? Wake up, cowardly
majesty! You've been sleeping. Isn't the king's name worth
twenty thousand names? Take up arms and fight for me, my
name! A puny subject threatens your great glory. Don't look
at the ground, my friends; aren't you raised high, as
favorites of a king? Our thoughts should be positive too; I
know my uncle York has an army large enough to fight for
us. But who's here now?

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP enters

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

I wish you more health and happiness, my liege, than I can
give you!

KING RICHARD II

I'm listening and my heart is ready; the worst you can say is
just loss on this earth. Tell me, is my kingdom lost? Well, it
was my responsibility; and what loss is it to be rid of a
burden? Does Bolingbroke want to take my throne? He can
never be greater; if he serves God, we're both His servants.
Do our subjects rebel against us? We can't fix that, since
they betray God as well as us. Go ahead, speak of despair,
destruction, ruin and decay: the worst is death, and death
will have his day.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

I'm glad that your highness is so prepared to handle my sad
news. Bolingbroke covers your fearful land with bright steel
and hearts as hard as swords, like a stormy day that makes
the rivers overflow and drown their shores. Old men have
put on helmets to cover their thin and hairless scalps; boys
with women's voices try to sound like tough men; your own
archers turn their bows against you; even washer-women
are taking up rusty pikes against your throne: both young
and old rebel, and everything goes worse than I have power
to tell.

KING RICHARD II

You tell a sad tale too well, too well. Where is the Earl of
Wiltshire? Where is Bagot? How have Bushy and Green let
the dangerous enemy come into this country without
meeting any opposition? If we survive this, they'll pay for it
with their heads: I bet they've made peace with
Bolingbroke.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

They have indeed made peace with him, my lord.

KING RICHARD II

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

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

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

DUKE OF AUMERLE

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

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

Ay, all of them at Bristol lost their heads.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Where is the duke my father with his power?

KING RICHARD II

145 No matter where; of comfort no man speak;
 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:
 150 And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
 Save our deposed 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
 155 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 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;
 160 Some poison'd by their wives: some sleeping kill'd;
 All murder'd: 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,
 165 Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
 To monarchize, be fear'd and kill with looks,
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
 As if this flesh which walls about our life,
 Were brass impregnable, and humour'd thus
 170 Comes at the last and with a little pin
 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,
 175 For you have but mistook me all this while:
 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 sit and wail their woes,
 180 But presently prevent the ways to wail.
 To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth 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:
 185 And fight and die is death destroying death;
 Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My father hath a power; inquire of him
 And learn to make a body of a limb.

KING RICHARD II

Oh villains, vipers, damn them to hell! Dogs, easily won to slobber over any man! Snakes, nurtured in my own blood, that now sting my heart! Three Judases, each one three times worse than Judas! They want peace? Let hell make war on their souls for this!

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

I see that sweet love easily turns to the most deadly hate. Uncurse their souls; their peace is made by losing their heads, not with a handshake; the men you curse are dead in the ground for you.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

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

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

Yes, all of them lost their heads at Bristol.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Where is the duke my father with his army?

KING RICHARD II

Who cares where; let no man talk of comfort. Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs; dust is our paper, and with our tears we'll write "sorrow" on the ground. Let's choose executors and talk of wills--but no, for what can we leave behind after we're dead, except our deposed ² body to the grave? Our lands, our lives and everything we have are Bolingbroke's; we have nothing to call our own but death, and the earth covering our coffin. For God's sake, let us sit on the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings: how some have been deposed; some killed in war; some haunted by the ghosts of the kings they deposed; some poisoned by their wives: some killed while they slept--all murdered. For within the hollow crown that sits on the king's mortal head, Death keeps his court, and sits amusing himself, grinning at his power, allowing the king a breath, a little time, to be a monarch, be feared and kill with looks, feeling vain and self-satisfied, as if this thin wall of flesh were impenetrable brass. But Death comes and with a little pin breaks through his castle wall, and: farewell king! Cover your heads ³; such signs of respect now are just a mockery, when you know that I'm flesh and blood. Throw away respect, tradition, all forms of royal ceremony and duty, for you have been mistaken all this while: I live by bread like you, feel want, taste grief, need friends. Subjected like this, how can you say to me that I am a king?

² "Depose" means to remove a king from his throne.

³ Traditionally, subjects were expected to remove their hats in the king's presence.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

My lord, wise men never sit and wail with grief, but find ways to prevent more grief. If you're afraid--since fear saps your strength--you give strength to your enemy by your weakness, and so fight against yourself. Be afraid and you'll die; there's nothing worse than coming to a fight afraid, since to be afraid of dying is to make yourself a slave to death.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My father has an army; ask about him and learn to make a whole body from a single limb.

KING RICHARD II

Thou chidest me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come
190 To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague fit of fear is over-blown;
An easy task it is to win our own.
Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

195 Men judge by the complexion of the sky
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
200 To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken:
Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke,
And all your northern castles yielded up,
And all your southern gentlemen in arms
Upon his party.

KING RICHARD II

205 Thou hast said enough.
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
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
210 That bids me be of comfort any more.
Go to Flint castle: there I'll pine away;
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,
215 For I have none: let no man speak again
To alter this, for counsel is but vain.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My liege, one word.

KING RICHARD II

He does me double wrong
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.
220 Discharge my followers: let them hence away,
From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day.

Exeunt

KING RICHARD II

You speak the truth. Proud Bolingbroke, I come to fight with
you for our day of doom. This fit of fear was overblown;
winning will be an easy task, since we're winning what
belongs to us. Tell us, Scroop, where is our uncle with his
army? Speak sweetly, man, although your looks are sour.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP

Men look at the sky and see what sort of a day it will be; so
you can guess, by my sad and tearful eyes, that my tongue
has another heavy tale to say. I'm like a torturer, telling you
all the bad news in small parts. Your uncle York has allied
with Bolingbroke, giving up all your northern castles and all
your southern army to him.

KING RICHARD II

You've said enough.

[To DUKE OF AUMERLE] I hate you, cousin, for leading me
out of that sweet way to despair! What do you have to say
now? What comfort do we have now? By heaven, I'll hate
him forever that tells me to "be of comfort" anymore. I'll go
to Flint castle: there I'll waste away; a king, sorrow's slave,
shall obey his sorrow. The men that I have, let them go, to
plow the earth that still has some hope to give, for I have
none. Let no men try to argue with me, for advice is no use.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My liege, one word--

KING RICHARD II

He wrongs me twice that wounds me with flattery. Release
my followers; let them all go free--from Richard's night to
Bolingbroke's fair day.

All exit

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter, with drum and colours, HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, Attendants, and forces

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

So that by this intelligence we learn
The Welshmen are dispersed, and Salisbury
Is gone to meet the king, who lately landed
With some few private friends upon this coast.

NORTHUMBERLAND

5 The news is very fair and good, my lord:
Richard not far from hence hath hid his head.

DUKE OF YORK

It would beseem the Lord Northumberland
To say 'King Richard': alack the heavy day
When such a sacred king should hide his head.

Shakescleare Translation

HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, Attendants, and their army enter, with drum and colours.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

So we hear that the Welshmen have abandoned him, and
Salisbury went to meet the king, who recently landed with
a few close friends upon this coast.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The news is very favorable and good, my lord: Richard is
hiding not far from here.

DUKE OF YORK

Lord Northumberland should be more respectful and say
'King Richard'; God forbid such a sacred king should have
to hide.

NORTHUMBERLAND

10 Your grace mistakes; only to be brief
Left I his title out.

DUKE OF YORK

The time hath been,
Would you have been so brief with him, he would
Have been so brief with you, to shorten you,
15 For taking so the head, your whole head's length .

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Mistake not, uncle, further than you should.

DUKE OF YORK

Take not, good cousin, further than you should.
Lest you mistake the heavens are o'er our heads.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I know it, uncle, and oppose not myself
20 Against their will. But who comes here?

Enter HENRY PERCY

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, Harry: what, will not this castle yield?

HENRY PERCY

The castle royally is mann'd, my lord,
25 Against thy entrance.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Royally!
Why, it contains no king?

HENRY PERCY

Yes, my good lord,
It doth contain a king; King Richard lies
30 Within the limits of yon lime and stone:
And with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury,
Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman
Of holy reverence; who, I cannot learn.

NORTHUMBERLAND

O, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

35 Noble lords,
Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle;
Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley
Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver:
Henry Bolingbroke
40 On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand
And sends allegiance and true faith of heart
To his most royal person, hither come
Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,
Provided that my banishment repeal'd
45 And lands restored again be freely granted:
If not, I'll use the advantage of my power
And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood
Rain'd from the wounds of slaughter'd Englishmen:
The which, how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke
50 It is, such crimson tempest should bedrench
The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land,
My stooping duty tenderly shall show.
Go, signify as much, while here we march
Upon the grassy carpet of this plain.
55 Let's march without the noise of threatening drum,
That from this castle's tatter'd battlements
Our fair appointments may be well perused.
Methinks King Richard and myself should meet
With no less terror than the elements
60 Of fire and water, when their thundering shock

NORTHUMBERLAND

Your grace has misunderstood me; I left his title out only to be brief.

DUKE OF YORK

There was a time when, if you had been so brief with him,
he would have been so brief with you as to shorten your
body by a head.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Careful, uncle--don't misunderstand me further than you should.

DUKE OF YORK

Don't take, good cousin, further than you should, lest you should forget that heaven watches our actions.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I know it, uncle, and would not oppose myself against the will of heaven. But who's here now?

HENRY PERCY enters.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, Harry: what, won't this castle surrender?

HENRY PERCY

The castle is royally defended against your entrance, my lord.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Royally! Why, since it contains no king?

HENRY PERCY

Yes, my good lord, it does contain a king; King Richard is inside those lime and stone walls, and with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stephen Scroop, and a clergyman whose name I can't find out.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Oh, no doubt it is the Bishop of Carlisle.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Noble lords, go to the old outer walls of that ancient castle, and sound the trumpet to announce our intention to talk with him. Say: Henry Bolingbroke kneels to King Richard and kisses his hand, in allegiance and true good faith, and comes here to lay my army and power at his feet--provided that my banishment be repealed and he freely returns my property to me. If not, I'll use the advantage of my numbers to cover the summer's dust with showers of blood rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen--although to drench fair King Richard's green land with such a scarlet storm could not be further from my intention, as this show of respect demonstrates! Go, tell him that, while we march here on this grassy plain. But let's march without the noise of threatening war drums, so that our offer of peace may be taken favorably from this castle's old battlements. I think King Richard and I should meet with no less force than fire and water, when they thunder and bring tears to the cheek of heaven. But if he's the fire, I'll be the submissive water: he'll rage while I rain  my waters on the earth, and not on him. March on, and make sure to tell me how King Richard looks.

 The pun on "reign" is inescapable--and perhaps reveals Bolingbroke's true intentions.

At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.
Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water:
The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain
My waters; on the earth, and not on him.

65 March on, and mark King Richard how he looks.

*Parle without, and answer within. Then a flourish. Enter on the walls,
KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, SIR
STEPHEN SCROOP, and EARL OF SALISBURY*

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent

70 To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident.

DUKE OF YORK

Yet looks he like a king: behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty: alack, alack, for woe,
That any harm should stain so fair a show!

KING RICHARD II

We are amazed; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king:
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget

80 To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismissed us from our stewardship;
For well we know, no hand of blood and bone
Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,

85 Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.
And though you think that all, as you have done,
Have torn their souls by turning them from us,
And we are barren and bereft of friends;
Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,

90 Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf
Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my head
And threat the glory of my precious crown.

95 Tell Bolingbroke--for yond methinks he stands--
That every stride he makes upon my land
Is dangerous treason: he is come to open
The purple testament of bleeding war;

100 But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons
Shall ill become the flower of England's face,
Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace
To scarlet indignation and bedew

105 Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood.

NORTHUMBERLAND

105 The king of heaven forbid our lord the king
Should so with civil and uncivil arms
Be rush'd upon! Thy thrice noble cousin
Harry Bolingbroke doth humbly kiss thy hand;
And by the honourable tomb he swears,

110 That stands upon your royal gransire's bones,
And by the royalties of both your bloods,
Currents that spring from one most gracious head,
And by the buried hand of warlike Gaunt,
And by the worth and honour of himself,

115 Comprising all that may be sworn or said,
His coming hither hath no further scope
Than for his lineal royalties and to beg
Enfranchisement immediate on his knees:
Which on thy royal party granted once,

120 His glittering arms he will command to rust,
His barbed steeds to stables, and his heart
To faithful service of your majesty.

Trumpets outside, and response within. Another trumpet. Enter on the walls of the castle, KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, SIR STEPHEN SCROOP, and EARL OF SALISBURY.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Look, look, King Richard has appeared in person, like the angry sun from the fiery portal of the east, when it seems the jealous clouds intend to dim his brightness as he travels to the west.

DUKE OF YORK

Yet he looks like a king: see, his eye, as bright as the eagle's, shoots majestic glances. Oh, it would be a pity if any harm should come to something so fair!

KING RICHARD II

We are amazed; and have waited a long time for you to kneel to us, because we thought ourself your lawful king.

[To NORTHUMBERLAND] And if we are, how do your joints forget to pay respect to our presence by kneeling? If we aren't your king, show us the hand of God that has dismissed us from our throne; for we know well that no hand of blood and bone can grip the sacred handle of our scepter--unless he disrespects ², steals, or usurps. And although you might think that everyone as turned against us as you have, and that we are entirely abandoned by our friends, know that my master--omnipotent God--is raising an army on my behalf, which will strike your children that aren't even born yet, for daring to raise your vassal ³ hands against my precious crown. Tell Bolingbroke--for there I think I see him--that every step he takes on my land is dangerous treason: he comes to start a war, but before he lives in peace with my crown, ten thousand bloody crowns ⁴ of mothers' sons will bleed, changing the complexion of England's innocent, pale peace to scarlet rage and fear, and covering the grass of this land with faithful English blood.

² To profane something sacred is to treat it without due reverence.

³ A subject.

⁴ Richard puns on "crown," which here refers to the crowns of heads.

NORTHUMBERLAND

God forbid that we should threaten our lord the king with such violence! Your noble cousin Henry Bolingbroke humbly kisses your hand, swearing by the honorable tomb of your royal grandfather--and by the royal blood that runs in both your veins, and by the hands of his father Gaunt--that he comes here only to reclaim his rightful property and to beg on his knees that you take back his banishment. Once he has that, he will let his glittering sword rust away, confining his horses to their stables and his heart to the faithful service of your majesty. As a prince, his word is good; as I am a gentleman, I believe him.

This swears he, as he is a prince, is just;
And, as I am a gentleman, I credit him.

KING RICHARD II

125 Northumberland, say thus the king returns:
His noble cousin is right welcome hither;
And all the number of his fair demands
Shall be accomplish'd without contradiction:
With all the gracious utterance thou hast
130 Speak to his gentle hearing kind commands.
We do debase ourselves, cousin, do we not,
To look so poorly and to speak so fair?
Shall we call back Northumberland, and send
Defiance to the traitor, and so die?

135

DUKE OF AUMERLE

No, good my lord; let's fight with gentle words
Till time lend friends and friends their helpful
swords.

KING RICHARD II

O God, O God! that e'er this tongue of mine,
140 That laid the sentence of dread banishment
On yon proud man, should take it off again
With words of sooth! O that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been,
145 Or not remember what I must be now!
Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee scope to
beat,
Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD II

150 What must the king do now? must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be deposed?
The king shall be contented: must he lose
The name of king? o' God's name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
155 My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figured goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints
160 And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway,
Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;
165 For on my heart they tread now whilst I live;
And buried once, why not upon my head?
Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!
We'll make foul weather with despised tears;
Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn,
170 And make a dearth in this revolting land.
Or shall we play the wantons with our woes,
And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
As thus, to drop them still upon one place,
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
175 Within the earth; and, therein laid,--there lies
Two kinsmen digg'd their graves with weeping eyes.
Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see
I talk but idly, and you laugh at me.
Most mighty prince, my Lord Northumberland,
180 What says King Bolingbroke? will his majesty
Give Richard leave to live till Richard die?
You make a leg, and Bolingbroke says ay.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, in the base court he doth attend
To speak with you; may it please you to come down.

KING RICHARD II

Northumberland, tell him that the king says this: his noble
cousin is very welcome here, and all his fair demands will
be accepted without contradiction. Say this to him as
graciously as you can.

[To DUKE OF AUMERLE] We shame ourselves, cousin, don't
you think, by looking so poorly and speaking so fair. Shall
we call back Northumberland, and send defiant words to
the traitor, and so die?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

No, my good lord; let's fight with gentle words, and wait it
out until our friends can come to our aid with their swords.

KING RICHARD II

Oh God, oh God--that my tongue, which laid the sentence of
banishment on this proud man, should ever take it off again
with accommodating words! Oh, that I were as a great as
my grief, or less than a king! Or that I could forget what I
have been, or not remember what I must be now! Do you
swell, proud heart? I'll give you some room to beat, since
my enemies will soon beat both you and me.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Northumberland returns with a message from Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD II

What does the king have to do now? Must he submit? The
king shall do it. Must he be deposed? The king will be
satisfied. Must he lose the name of king? In God's name, let
it go: I'll exchange my jewels for a set of beads, my gorgeous
palace for a hermitage, my fine clothes for a beggar's gown,
my engraved goblets for a wooden dish, my scepter for a
pilgrim's walking staff, and my large kingdom for a little
grave, a little little grave, an obscure grave. Or I'll be buried
in the king's highway, some common road, where the feet
of my subjects can trample on their sovereigns' head--for
they tread on my heart while I live, so why not on my head
after I'm dead [*Notices that Aumerle is crying*] Aumerle,
you're crying, my tender-hearted cousin! Our tears will
make bad weather; our sighs will tear the summer corn
from its stems, making a famine in this rebellious land. Or,
shall we make a game of it, dropping all our tears in one
place, until they have made a pair of graves within the
earth, and lie in them--there lies two kinsmen who digged
their own graves with tears. Wouldn't that be funny? Well,
well, I see I'm just babbling, and you laugh at me.

[To Northumberland] What does King Bolingbroke say? Will
his majesty let Richard live until Richard
dies? [*Northumberland bows*] You're still bowing to me,
which must mean Bolingbroke says yes.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, he waits to speak with you in the lower courtyard,
if you'll come down.

KING RICHARD II

185 Down, down I come; like glistering Phaethon,
Wanting the manage of unruly jades.
In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base,
To come at traitors' calls and do them grace.
In the base court? Come down? Down, court!
190 down, king!
For night-owls shriek where mounting larks
should sing.

Exeunt from above

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What says his majesty?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Sorrow and grief of heart
195 Makes him speak fondly, like a frantic man
Yet he is come.

Enter KING RICHARD and his attendants below

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Stand all apart,
And show fair duty to his majesty.

He kneels down

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

200 My gracious lord,--

KING RICHARD II

Fair cousin, you debase your princely knee
To make the base earth proud with kissing it:
Me rather had my heart might feel your love
205 Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least, although your knee be low.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.

KING RICHARD II

Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

210 So far be mine, my most redoubted lord,
As my true service shall deserve your love.

KING RICHARD II

Well you deserve: they well deserve to have,
That know the strong'st and surest way to get.
Uncle, give me your hands: nay, dry your eyes;
215 Tears show their love, but want their remedies.
Cousin, I am too young to be your father,
Though you are old enough to be my heir.
What you will have, I'll give, and willing too;
For do we must what force will have us do.
220 Set on towards London, cousin, is it so?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Yea, my good lord.

KING RICHARD II

Then I must not say no.

Flourish. Exeunt

KING RICHARD II

Down, down I come, like glittering Phaethon 5, unable to manage his unruly horses. In the lower courtyard? Lower courtyard, where kings are made low, coming when a traitor calls and acting respectful to him. In the lower courtyard? Come down? Down, court! Down, king! For it's night when it should be day.

5 In Greek mythology, Phaethon was a son of Helios, the sun god, who begged his father let him drive his chariot—but was unable to manage the horses and lost control, just as Richard is losing control of his kingdom.

They exit from above.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What does his majesty say?

NORTHUMBERLAND

His sorrow and grief make him sound unhinged--but he's here.

KING RICHARD and his servants enter below.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Everyone make way, and show respect to his majesty.

He kneels down

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious lord--

KING RICHARD II

Fair cousin, you shouldn't shame your knee by kneeling on the ground. I'd rather that my heart feel you love than my eye see this sign of respect. Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know--this high [points to crown] at least, although your knee is low.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

My gracious lord, I come only for what belongs to me.

KING RICHARD II

Your own is yours, and I am yours, and everything.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Let it be mine, my most noble lord, only as my true service deserves your love.

KING RICHARD II

Oh, you deserve: they deserve who know the strongest and best way to get what they want. [To York] Uncle, give me your hands: no, dry your eyes; tears show their love, but won't fix anything. [To Bolingbroke] Cousin, I am too young to be your father, though you are old enough to be my heir. What you want, I'll give you willingly, for we must do what force compels us to do. We'll go to London, cousin, isn't that so?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Yes, my good lord.

KING RICHARD II

Then I must not say no.

Trumpets sound. They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter the QUEEN and two Ladies

QUEEN

What sport shall we devise here in this garden,
To drive away the heavy thought of care?

LADY

Madam, we'll play at bowls.

QUEEN

'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,
5 And that my fortune rubs against the bias.

LADY

Madam, we'll dance.

QUEEN

My legs can keep no measure in delight,
When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief:
Therefore, no dancing, girl; some other sport.

LADY

10 Madam, we'll tell tales.

QUEEN

Of sorrow or of joy?

LADY

Of either, madam.

QUEEN

Of neither, girl:
For of joy, being altogether wanting,
15 It doth remember me the more of sorrow;
Or if of grief, being altogether had,
It adds more sorrow to my want of joy:
For what I have I need not to repeat;
And what I want it boots not to complain.

LADY

20 Madam, I'll sing.

QUEEN

'Tis well that thou hast cause
But thou shouldst please me better, wouldest thou weep.

LADY

I could weep, madam, would it do you good.

QUEEN

And I could sing, would weeping do me good,
25 And never borrow any tear of thee.

Enter a Gardener, and two Servants

QUEEN

But stay, here come the gardeners:
Let's step into the shadow of these trees.
My wretchedness unto a row of pins,
30 They'll talk of state; for every one doth so
Against a change; woe is forerun with woe.

QUEEN and Ladies retire

Shakescleare Translation

QUEEN and two Ladies enter

QUEEN

What game should we play in this garden, to distract
ourselves from our sad thoughts?

LADY

Madam, bowling!

QUEEN

That will make me think the world is full of rubs , and
that the ball is weighted against me.

 In early modern lawn bowling, a "rub" was an obstacle in the field that caused the ball to go astray.

LADY

Madam, we'll dance.

QUEEN

My legs can't keep time in delight, when my poor heart
can't keep time in grief. Therefore, no dancing, girl;
something else to pass the time.

LADY

Madam, we'll tell stories.

QUEEN

Happy or sad?

LADY

Either, madam.

QUEEN

Neither, girl: for happy stories remind me of my sorrow, and
sad stories add more sorrow to my already sad life. I already
know I'm sad, and there's no point in complaining about
my lack of happiness.

LADY

Madam, I'll sing.

QUEEN

I'm pleased that you feel like singing, but it would please
me better if you cried.

LADY

I would cry, madam, if it would do you good.

QUEEN

And I could sing, if crying did me any good, and you
wouldn't need to cry at all.

Gardener, and two Servants enter

QUEEN

But wait, here come the gardeners: let's hide in the shadow
of these trees. Oh, God, I bet they'll talk about politics, for
everyone does when they expect a change in government;
sorrow is a sign that there's more sorrow to come.

QUEEN and ladies-in-waiting hide behind the trees

GARDENER

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,
Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight:
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.
Go thou, and like an executioner,
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays,
That look too lofty in our commonwealth:
All must be even in our government.
You thus employ'd, I will go root away
The noisome weeds, which without profit suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

SERVANT

Why should we in the compass of a pale
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate,
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,
Her fruit-trees all upturned, her hedges ruin'd,
Her knots disorder'd and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?

GARDENER

Hold thy peace:
He that hath suffer'd this disorder'd spring
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf:
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,
That seem'd in eating him to hold him up,
Are pluck'd up root and all by Bolingbroke,
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.

SERVANT

What, are they dead?

GARDENER

They are; and Bolingbroke
Hath seized the wasteful king. O, what pity is it
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,
With too much riches it confound itself:
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have lived to bear and he to taste
Their fruits of duty: superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live:
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.

SERVANT

What, think you then the king shall be deposed?

GARDENER

Depress'd he is already, and deposed
'Tis doubt he will be: letters came last night
To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's,
That tell black tidings.

QUEEN

O, I am press'd to death through want of speaking!

Coming forward

QUEEN

Thou, old Adam's likeness, set to dress this garden,
How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this unpleasing
news?
What Eve, what serpent, hath suggested thee
To make a second fall of cursed man?
Why dost thou say King Richard is deposed?
Darest thou, thou little better thing than earth,
Divine his downfall? Say, where, when, and how,
Camest thou by this ill tidings? speak, thou wretch.

GARDENER

Go, tie up those dangling apricots, which overburden their parent tree with their weight, like unruly children--give some support to the bending twigs. Go and, like an executioner, cut off the heads of plants that grow too fast and too high: in our commonwealth ², this garden, we must govern fairly and make sure no plant is taller than the others. While you're busy with that, I'll pull out the useless weeds ³ that suck the soil's nutrients from our healthy flowers.

² The garden of the "commonwealth" was a common metaphor for the state of the political nation. When overgrown with weeds, the political nation was unhealthy and ill-governed.

³ These "noisome weeds" are the flattering favourites of Richard.

SERVANT

But why we should we govern our garden this way--making sure everything is in proportion--within these walls, while the world outside is full of weeds, her fairest flowers unable to grow, her fruit-trees all cut down, her hedges ruined, her mazes disorganized, and her healthy herbs swarming with caterpillars?

GARDENER

Be quiet: the gardener that allowed such a mess is getting what he deserves; fall is coming after spring. The weeds sheltered by the tree's leaves (parasites that seemed to hold it up by eating it) are all plucked up, root and all, by Bolingbroke--I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, and Green.

SERVANT

What, are they dead?

GARDENER

They are; and Bolingbroke has imprisoned the wasteful king. Oh, it's a pity that he didn't manage his land as we take care of this garden! At this time of year, we harvest the sap from our fruit-trees, so they don't rot with oversweetness; if he had done the same with his nobleman, they might have lived to produce the fruits of duty. We cut away unnecessary branches, so that the more fruitful branches can live: if he had done so, he might still wear the crown which he has cast away by being so lazy and careless.

SERVANT

What, so you think the king will be deposed, then?

GARDENER

Well, he's been cast down already, so it seems likely that he'll be deposed: letters came last night to a dear friend of the good Duke of York's, telling bad news.

QUEEN

Oh, I'll die if I don't reply!

Coming forward

QUEEN

You, old man--who, like Adam, are commanded to tend this garden--how dare you talk about this sad news so rudely? What Eve, what serpent, has persuaded you to make man fall a second time? Why do you say King Richard is deposed? Do you dare--since you're little better than dust--to predict his downfall? Say, where, when, and how you heard this news? Speak, you fool.

GARDENER

Pardon me, madam: little joy have I
To breathe this news; yet what I say is true.
King Richard, he is in the mighty hold
90 Of Bolingbroke: their fortunes both are weigh'd:
In your lord's scale is nothing but himself,
And some few vanities that make him light;
But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,
Besides himself, are all the English peers,
95 And with that odds he weighs King Richard down.
Post you to London, and you will find it so;
I speak no more than every one doth know.

QUEEN

Nimble mischance, that art so light of foot,
100 Doth not thy embassage belong to me,
And am I last that knows it? O, thou think'st
To serve me last, that I may longest keep
Thy sorrow in my breast. Come, ladies, go,
To meet at London London's king in woe.
105 What, was I born to this, that my sad look
Should grace the triumph of great Bolingbroke?
Gardener, for telling me these news of woe,
Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow.

Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies

GARDENER

Poor queen! so that thy state might be no worse,
110 I would my skill were subject to thy curse.
Here did she fall a tear; here in this place
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace:
Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.

Exeunt

GARDENER

Forgive me, madam: I am sad to say it, but what I say is true. King Richard is imprisoned by the powerful Bolingbroke. Weighed against each other, Richard has only himself (and his vanities make him light); on his side of the scale, Bolingbroke has, in addition to himself, all the English noblemen, and with those odds the scale tips in his favor. If you send a letter to London to ask for news, you'll hear the same; I'm only saying what everyone already knows.

QUEEN

Bad luck, do you move so quickly that I'm the last to know it? Oh, I see, you think to come to me last, so that I'll be sorry for longer. Come ladies, go, let's meet the king at London. What, was I born for this, that I should give Bolingbroke satisfaction by looking sad at his triumph? Gardener, for telling me this sad news, I pray to God your plants may never grow.

QUEEN and Ladies exit

GARDENER

Poor queen! I would take that curse, if only it would help you. *[Looking at the ground]* Here did she let a tear fall to the ground; so in this place I'll plant a bed of rue, a sour but noble herb. Soon we'll see rue here--which stands for *ruth* 4--to remember a queen's tears.

4 "Ruth" can also refer to sorrow or compassion for another.

All exit

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter, as to the Parliament, HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, NORTHUMBERLAND, HENRY PERCY, LORD FITZWATER, DUKE OF SURREY, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot Of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, Officers, and BAGOT

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Call forth Bagot.
Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind;
What thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death,
Who wrought it with the king, and who perform'd
5 The bloody office of his timeless end.

BAGOT

Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man.

BAGOT

My Lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue
Scorns to unsay what once it hath deliver'd.
10 In that dead time when Gloucester's death was plotted,
I heard you say, 'Is not my arm of length,
That reacheth from the restful English court
As far as Calais, to mine uncle's head?'
Amongst much other talk, that very time,
15 I heard you say that you had rather refuse
The offer of an hundred thousand crowns

Shakescleare Translation

HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, NORTHUMBERLAND, HENRY PERCY, LORD FITZWATER, DUKE OF SURREY, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot Of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, Officers, and BAGOT
enter into the Hall of Parliament

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Tell Bagot to come in. *[Bagot enters.]* Now, Bagot tell me honestly: what do you know about noble Gloucester's death—who conspired with the king? Who committed the murder?

BAGOT

Then tell the Lord Aumerle to look me in the face.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Cousin, come forward and look at this man.

BAGOT

My Lord Aumerle, I know you'll be ashamed to take back what you said before. When we were plotting the Duke of Gloucester's death, I heard you say: "Isn't my arm long enough to reach my uncle's head in Calais?" And among other things, that time, I heard you say that you would rather refuse a hundred thousand pounds than see Bolingbroke ever come back to England, adding what a blessing you thought it would be if your cousin died.

Than Bolingbroke's return to England;
Adding withal how blest this land would be
In this your cousin's death.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

- Princes and noble lords,
What answer shall I make to this base man?
Shall I so much dishonour my fair stars,
On equal terms to give him chastisement?
Either I must, or have mine honour soil'd
With the attainer of his slanderous lips.
There is my gage, the manual seal of death,
That marks thee out for hell: I say, thou liest,
And will maintain what thou hast said is false
In thy heart-blood, though being all too base
To stain the temper of my knightly sword.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bagot, forbear; thou shalt not take it up.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Excepting one, I would he were the best
In all this presence that hath moved me so.

LORD FITZWATER

- If that thy valour stand on sympathy,
There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine:
By that fair sun which shows me where thou stand'st,
I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spakest it
That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester's death.
If thou deny'st it twenty times, thou liest;
And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart,
Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Thou darest not, coward, live to see that day.

LORD FITZWATER

Now by my soul, I would it were this hour.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this.

HENRY PERCY

- Aumerle, thou liest; his honour is as true
In this appeal as thou art all unjust;
And that thou art so, there I throw my gage,
To prove it on thee to the extremest point
Of mortal breathing: seize it, if thou darest.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

- An if I do not, may my hands rot off
And never brandish more revengeful steel
Over the glittering helmet of my foe!

LORD

- I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle;
And spur thee on with full as many lies
As may be holloa'd in thy treacherous ear
From sun to sun: there is my honour's pawn;
Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

- Who sets me else? by heaven, I'll throw at all:
I have a thousand spirits in one breast,
To answer twenty thousand such as you.

DUKE OF SURREY

My Lord Fitzwater, I do remember well
The very time Aumerle and you did talk.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Princes and noble lords, how can I respond to this villain?
Will I dishonor myself by getting angry at him, descending
to his level? But I must do that, or have my honor soiled by
his lies. [Throws down his gage] This is my gage, which will
seal your death sentence and send you to hell: I call you a
liar, and will prove it by defeating you in battle, although
your blood isn't noble enough to stain my sword.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bagot, wait; don't pick it up.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I wish Bagot had a higher rank—except yours, of course--so
that he'd be worth fighting.

LORD FITZWATER

If you're braver with a man of your own rank, here's my
gage, Aumerle: by the sun that shines on us, I hear you
say—and you said it boastingly—that you were responsible
for noble Gloucester's death. Even if you deny it twenty
times, you're still a liar; and I'll stab you in your lying heart.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

You wouldn't dare, coward.

LORD FITZWATER

I wish we could fight this very hour.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Fitzwater, you are damned to hell for this.

HENRY PERCY

Aumerle, you lie; he is as honest and honorable as you are
unjust. And to prove it, here I throw my gage [*throws down
gage*] to prove it in battle: pick it up, if you dare.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

And if I don't, may my hands rot off and never wield a sword
again!

LORD

[*Throws gage*] I throw my gage down too, damn you,
Aumerle, and will fight you from sun-up to sun-down: there
is the sign of my honor, so accept the challenge, if you dare.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Who else comes after me? By God, I'll beat you all; I have a
thousand spirits in my heart and could answer twenty
thousand challenges.

DUKE OF SURREY

My Lord Fitzwater, I remember the time you and Aumerle
talked of these matters.

LORD FITZWATER

'Tis very true: you were in presence then;
And you can witness with me this is true.

DUKE OF SURREY

65 As false, by heaven, as heaven itself is true.

LORD FITZWATER

Surrey, thou liest.

DUKE OF SURREY

Dishonourable boy!
That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword,
That it shall render vengeance and revenge
70 Till thou the lie-giver and that lie do lie
In earth as quiet as thy father's skull:
In proof whereof, there is my honour's pawn;
Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

LORD FITZWATER

How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!
75 If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,
I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness,
And spit upon him, whilst I say he lies,
And lies, and lies: there is my bond of faith,
To tie thee to my strong correction.
80 As I intend to thrive in this new world,
Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal:
Besides, I heard the banish'd Norfolk say
That thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men
To execute the noble duke at Calais.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

85 Some honest Christian trust me with a gage
That Norfolk lies: here do I throw down this,
If he may be repeal'd, to try his honour.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

These differences shall all rest under gage
Till Norfolk be repeal'd: repeal'd he shall be,
90 And, though mine enemy, restored again
To all his lands and signories: when he's return'd,
Against Aumerle we will enforce his trial.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

That honourable day shall ne'er be seen.
Many a time hath banish'd Norfolk fought
95 For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens:
And toil'd with works of war, retired himself
To Italy; and there at Venice gave
100 His body to that pleasant country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his captain Christ,
Under whose colours he had fought so long.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Why, bishop, is Norfolk dead?

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

As surely as I live, my lord.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

105 Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom
Of good old Abraham! Lords appellants,
Your differences shall all rest under gage
Till we assign you to your days of trial.

Enter DUKE OF YORK, attended

LORD FITZWATER

That's true; you were there, and can testify that what I say is true.

DUKE OF SURREY

It's as false, by heaven, as heaven is true.

LORD FITZWATER

Surrey, you lie.

DUKE OF SURREY

Dishonorable boy! Your lie weighs my sword to take vengeance, and so the liar and the lie will soon lie dead in the earth. To prove it, there's the sign of my honor [*throws down gage*]: take the challenge, if you dare.

LORD FITZWATER

You're foolishly spurring on, I see! As long as I live, if I meet Surrey I'll spit on him, while I say he lies, and lies, and lies: I promise to have my revenge. By my immortal soul, Aumerle is guilty of what I accuse him of; besides, I heard the banished Norfolk  say that you, Aumerle, sent two of your servants to execute the noble duke at Calais.

 i.e. Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, who appears in Act 1, Scene 1.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Some honest Christian give me another gage, so that I can throw it down and show that Norfolk lies: [*throws down gage*] I throw this down, so that if he comes back I can challenge him in battle.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

These challenges will stand until Norfolk comes back: although he's my enemy, I'll repeal his banishment and restore his lands and dukedom to him again. When he's returned, he'll fight with Aumerle.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

That honorable day will never be seen. Since his banishment, Norfolk has been fighting for Jesus Christ in the Holy Land; afterwards, he retired to Italy and died in Venice, surrendering his pure soul to his captain Christ, under whose flag he had fought for so long.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What, bishop, is Norfolk dead?

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

He is as dead as I am alive, my lord.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

May his soul rest in peace with good old Abraham in heaven! Lords, your challenges will wait until we assign a day for the duel.

Duke of York enters, with servants

DUKE OF YORK

Great Duke of Lancaster, I come to thee
 From plume-pluck'd Richard; who with willing soul
 Adopts thee heir, and his high sceptre yields
 To the possession of thy royal hand:
 Ascend his throne, descending now from him;
 And long live Henry, fourth of that name!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

Marry, God forbid!
 Worst in this royal presence may I speak,
 Yet best beseeming me to speak the truth.
 Would God that any in this noble presence
 Were enough noble to be upright judge
 Of noble Richard! then true noblesse would
 Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong.
 What subject can give sentence on his king?
 And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
 Thieves are not judged but they are by to hear,
 Although apparent guilt be seen in them;
 And shall the figure of God's majesty,
 His captain, steward, deputy-elect,
 Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
 Be judged by subject and inferior breath,
 And he himself not present? O, forfend it, God,
 That in a Christian climate souls refined
 Should show so heinous, black, obscene a deed!
 I speak to subjects, and a subject speaks,
 Stirr'd up by God, thus boldly for his king:
 My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,
 Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king:
 And if you crown him, let me prophesy:
 The blood of English shall manure the ground,
 And future ages groan for this foul act;
 Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
 And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
 Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;
 Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
 Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd
 The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
 O, if you raise this house against this house,
 It will the woefullest division prove
 That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
 Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,
 Lest child, child's children, cry against you woe!

NORTHUMBERLAND

Well have you argued, sir; and, for your pains,
 Of capital treason we arrest you here.
 My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge
 To keep him safely till his day of trial.
 May it please you, lords, to grant the commons' suit.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view
 He may surrender; so we shall proceed
 Without suspicion.

DUKE OF YORK

I will be his conduct.

Exit

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Lords, you that here are under our arrest,
 Procure your sureties for your days of answer.
 Little are we beholding to your love,
 And little look'd for at your helping hands.

Re-enter DUKE OF YORK, with KING RICHARD II, and Officers bearing the regalia

DUKE OF YORK

Great Duke of Lancaster, I come to you from humbled
 Richard, who voluntarily names you his heir and turns over
 his kingdom to you. Ascend his throne, and long live Henry,
 fourth of that name!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

In God's name, I'll ascend the royal throne.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

Indeed, God forbid! I know my words may not be welcome,
 but I must speak the truth. Who among us is noble enough
 to judge our king? If there were such a person, he would
 know not to commit such a foul crime. What subject can
 pass sentence on his king? And who sits here that is not
 Richard's subject? We don't judge thieves without hearing
 what they have to say, even if they look guilty: so will the
 symbol of God's majesty, His captain, steward, and deputy-
 elect, who was anointed and crowned by Him and reigned
 over us many years—will he be judged by subjects, and
 without his even being present? Oh, God forbid that in a
 Christian climate refined souls should be guilty of such a
 terrible deed! I speak to subjects, and I speak as a subject,
 inspired by God to advocate for what's right: my Lord of
 Hereford here, whom you call king, is a foul traitor to the
 true king. And if you crown him, let me warn you: the blood
 of the English will water the ground, and our future children
 will suffer: we'll have nothing but war, never peace, as
 families turn against each other; horror and civil war will
 come to live in this land, which will be called the field of
 Golgotha  and dead men's skulls. Oh, if you pit families
 against each other, it will be the saddest war that ever
 struck this earth. Prevent it, resist it, let this not happen—or
 your children and your children's children will blame you
 for their suffering.

 In the Gospels, Golgotha is a hill
 resembling a skullcap located near
 the site of Jesus's crucifixion.

NORTHUMBERLAND

You've argued well, sir—and in return, we arrest you here
 for capital treason. My Lord of Westminster, keep him under
 guard until his trial. My lords, may it please you to grant the
 request from the House of Commons.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bring Richard here, so that he may surrender the crown in
 front of everyone—thus, we can proceed without anyone
 suspecting us of double-dealing.

DUKE OF YORK

I'll bring him.

DUKE OF YORK exits

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Lords, you who are here under arrest, put up your bail for
 your trial days. I owe nothing to your love, and will hardly
 turn to you for help when I need it.

*DUKE OF YORK re-enter, with KING RICHARD II, and Officers
 carrying his crown and scepter.*

KING RICHARD II

Alack, why am I sent for to a king,
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts
Wherewith I reign'd? I hardly yet have learn'd
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs:
170 Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me
To this submission. Yet I well remember
The favours of these men: were they not mine?
Did they not sometime cry, 'all hail!' to me?
So Judas did to Christ: but he, in twelve,
175 Found truth in all but one: I, in twelve thousand,
none.
God save the king! Will no man say amen?
Am I both priest and clerk? well then, amen.
God save the king! although I be not he;
180 And yet, amen, if heaven do think him me.
To do what service am I sent for hither?

DUKE OF YORK

To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer,
The resignation of thy state and crown
185 To Henry Bolingbroke.

KING RICHARD II

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown;
Here cousin:
On this side my hand, and on that side yours.
Now is this golden crown like a deep well
190 That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen and full of water:
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

195 I thought you had been willing to resign.

KING RICHARD II

My crown I am; but still my griefs are mine:
You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs; still am I king of those.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Part of your cares you give me with your crown.

KING RICHARD II

200 Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.
My care is loss of care, by old care done;
Your care is gain of care, by new care won:
The cares I give I have, though given away;
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

205 Are you contented to resign the crown?

KING RICHARD II

Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.
Now mark me, how I will undo myself;
I give this heavy weight from off my head
210 And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
215 With mine own breath release all duty's rites:
All pomp and majesty I do forswear;
My manors, rents, revenues I forego;
My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny:
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!
220 God keep all vows unbroke that swear to thee!
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing grieved,
And thou with all pleased, that hast all achieved!

KING RICHARD II

Oh, why does the new king bring me here before I have
shook off my own regal thoughts? I haven't yet learned to
flatter, bow, and bend my limbs: give me some time to learn
how to submit. And yet I remember the tokens of respect
from these men: were they not my subjects? Did they not
sometimes shout "all hail" to me? So Judas did to Christ:
but he, in twelve disciples, found that they were all truthful
except for one: I, in twelve thousand, don't have one true
friend. God save the king! Why doesn't anyone say amen?
Do I have to be the priest and the clerk? Well then, amen.
God save the king! Although I'm not him: and yet amen, if
heaven thinks it's me. What can I do for you?

DUKE OF YORK

To give your kingdom to Henry Bolingbroke, as you
promised, because you're tired and can't properly execute
your duties.

KING RICHARD II

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, take the crown; here,
cousin. [Bolingbroke steps forward to take the crown, but
Richard won't let go.] My hand is on one side, and yours is
on the other: this golden crown is like a deep well with two
buckets; when one goes up, the other goes down. I'm the
bucket at the bottom, full of tears, while you go up even
higher.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I thought you were willing to resign.

KING RICHARD II

I'm willing to resign my crown, but my sadness is still mine:
you may take my crown and my kingdom from me, but not
my sadness: I'm still king of that.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

But you give me part of your cares with your crown.

KING RICHARD II

Just because you have more cares doesn't mean I have
fewer. I'm sad because I've lost my cares; you're sad
because you've gained cares. I still have my cares, although
I've given them away; they go along with the crown, but still
they stay with me.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Will you freely give me the crown?

KING RICHARD II

Yes—no—no—yes ³: for I must be nothing, therefore no
"no," and I must surrender to you. Now watch how I will
undo myself. I give this heavy weight from my head, this
unwieldy sceptre from my hand, and the pride of a king's
power from my heart; with my own tears I wash away my
balm ⁴, with my own hands I give away my crown, with
my own tongue say that I'm not king, with my own breath
release everyone from allegiance to me. I give up all pomp
and majesty and all the revenue from my lands; I take back
all my acts, decrees, and statutes: God pardon all the oaths
everyone breaks to me! God keep all the vows they swear to
you! Make me, that has nothing, not be sad about anything;
and you be happy all the time, since you have everything
you wanted! Long may you live to sit in Richard's seat; and
may Richard soon lie in a pit in the ground! God save King
Harry, unkinged Richard says, and send him many years of
sunshine days! What else do I have to do?

³ "Ay, no; no, ay" is a pun on "I know no I". Richard doesn't know who he is without being King.

⁴ The oils with which a King is anointed at his coronation: here .Richard undoes the sacred act of being made King.

Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,
And soon lie Richard in an earthly pit!
225 God save King Harry, unking'd Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days!
What more remains?

NORTHUMBERLAND

No more, but that you read
These accusations and these grievous crimes
230 Committed by your person and your followers
Against the state and profit of this land;
That, by confessing them, the souls of men
May deem that you are worthily deposed.

KING RICHARD II

Must I do so? and must I ravel out
235 My weaved-up folly? Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offences were upon record,
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldest,
There shouldest thou find one heinous article,
240 Containing the deposing of a king
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath,
Mark'd with a blot, damn'd in the book of heaven:
Nay, all of you that stand and look upon,
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,
245 Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin .

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, dispatch; read o'er these articles.

KING RICHARD II

Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see:
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.
Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;
255 For I have given here my soul's consent
To undock the pompous body of a king;
Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord,-

KING RICHARD II

260 No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man,
Nor no man's lord; I have no name, no title,
No, not that name was given me at the font,
But 'tis usurp'd: alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out,
265 And know not now what name to call myself!
O that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,
To melt myself away in water-drops!
Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,
270 An if my word be sterling yet in England,
Let it command a mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have,
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.

275

Exit an attendant

NORTHUMBERLAND

Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

KING RICHARD II

Fiend, thou torment'st me ere I come to hell!

NORTHUMBERLAND

Nothing else, except read these accusations and admit that you and your followers committed crimes against the state: by confessing them, everyone here will see that you have been rightfully deposed.

KING RICHARD II

Do I have to? Do I have to read out everything I've done wrong 5? Kind Northumberland, if your offences were on the record, wouldn't you feel ashamed to read them all out? If you did, you'd find one crime there—the deposing of a king, marked with a blot, damned in the eyes of heaven. And all of you that stand here and watch me suffer are guilty too: though some of you wash your hands with Pilate 6 and look sorry for me, you have delivered me to my cross, and water won't wash away your sin.

5 "Ravel out my weaved up folly" is an image of un-knitting a piece of cloth: Richard does not want to unpick the full list of everything he's done.

6 Pontius Pilate was the Roman Prefect in charge of the trial of Jesus. In order to free himself from responsibility for his execution, he lobbied for Jesus to be spared crucifixion, only agreeing when the crowd demanded it. He then washed his hands in order to signify that he was not responsible for his death. As such, Richard is claiming these men are involved in his deposition despite their pretences otherwise.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, come on; read the list.

KING RICHARD II

My eyes are full of tears, I can't see. And yet—they're not so blinded by salt water that they can't see the traitors in front of them. But if I look at myself, I see that I'm a traitor too, for allowing myself to be deposed, making a glorious sovereign a slave, proud majesty a subject, a king a peasant.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord--

KING RICHARD II

I'm no lord of yours, you haughty insulting man, nor no man's lord; I have no name, no title—no, not even the name that was given to me when I was baptized—that isn't usurped. How can I have lived so many winters and don't know now what name to call myself? Oh, that I were a mockery, a king of snow, that would melt away in water-drops, standing before the sun of Bolingbroke! *[To Bolingbroke]* Good king, great king—and yet not greatly good—if my word still counts for something in England, ask that someone bring a mirror here, so that I can see what I look like now that I'm no longer king.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Go, some of you, and get a mirror.

A servant exits

NORTHUMBERLAND

Read this list while we wait for the mirror.

KING RICHARD II

Devil, torturing me even before I've come to hell!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The commons will not then be satisfied.

KING RICHARD II

280 They shall be satisfied: I'll read enough,
When I do see the very book indeed
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

Re-enter Attendant, with a glass

KING RICHARD II

Give me the glass, and therein will I read.
285 No deeper wrinkles yet? hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face
290 That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that faced so many follies,
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?
295 A brittle glory shineth in this face:
As brittle as the glory is the face;

Dashes the glass against the ground

KING RICHARD II

For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport,
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

300 The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd
The shadow of your face.

KING RICHARD II

Say that again.
The shadow of my sorrow! ha! let's see:
'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;
305 And these external manners of laments
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
That swells with silence in the tortured soul;
There lies the substance: and I thank thee, king,
For thy great bounty, that not only givest
310 Me cause to wail but teachest me the way
How to lament the cause. I'll beg one boon,
And then be gone and trouble you no more.
Shall I obtain it?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Name it, fair cousin.

KING RICHARD II

315 'Fair cousin'? I am greater than a king:
For when I was a king, my flatterers
Were then but subjects; being now a subject,
I have a king here to my flatterer.
Being so great, I have no need to beg.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

320 Yet ask.

KING RICHARD II

And shall I have?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

You shall.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Don't ask him anymore, my lord Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND

The commons won't be satisfied, then.

KING RICHARD II

They will be satisfied: I'll read from the book where all my
sins are written—myself.

Re-enter Servant, with a mirror

KING RICHARD II

Give me the mirror, and I'll read from that. No deeper
wrinkles yet? Has sorrow struck so many blows against my
face and not left any deeper wounds? Oh, the mirror flatters
me, like my old courtiers, lying to me! Was this the face that
every day under his household roof kept ten thousand
servants? Was this the face that, like the sun, blinded
people who looked at it? Was this the face that faced so
many follies, and was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke? I see
a fragile glory shining in this face, and the face is fragile too.

Smashes the mirror against the ground

KING RICHARD II

For there it is, cracked in a hundred pieces. See, silent king,
what I mean by this: my sorrow has destroyed my face.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

The shadow of your sorrow has destroyed the shadow of
your face.

KING RICHARD II

Say that again? The shadow of my sorrow... hmm, let's see:
that's very true, since my grief is inward, and these outward
signs of sadness are just shadows of the unseen grief that
lies within. Thanks, king, for your great generosity, that not
only makes me sad but teaches me how to lament the
cause of my sadness. I'll ask one favor, and then leave and
trouble you no more: shall I have it?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Name it, fair cousin.

KING RICHARD II

"Fair cousin?" I must be greater than a king—for when I was
a king, my flatterers were only subjects, but now as a
subject, I have a king to flatter me. Since I'm so great, I
suppose there's no need to beg.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Yet ask.

KING RICHARD II

And shall I have what I ask?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

You shall.

KING RICHARD II

Then give me leave to go.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Whither?

KING RICHARD II

325 Whither you will, so I were from your sights.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Go, some of you convey him to the Tower.

KING RICHARD II

O, good! convey? conveyers are you all,
That rise thus nimbly by a true king's fall.

Exeunt KING RICHARD II, some Lords, and a Guard

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

330 On Wednesday next we solemnly set down
Our coronation: lords, prepare yourselves.

*Exeunt all except the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot of Westminster,
and DUKE OF AUMERLE*

ABBOT

A woeful pageant have we here beheld.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

The woe's to come; the children yet unborn.
335 Shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

You holy clergymen, is there no plot
To rid the realm of this pernicious blot?

ABBOT

340 My lord,
Before I freely speak my mind herein,
You shall not only take the sacrament
To bury mine intents, but also to effect
Whatever I shall happen to devise.
I see your brows are full of discontent,
Your hearts of sorrow and your eyes of tears:
345 Come home with me to supper; and I'll lay
A plot shall show us all a merry day.

Exeunt

KING RICHARD II

Then give me permission to go.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Where?

KING RICHARD II

Wherever you want, as long as I'm out of your sight.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Go, some of you, and convey him to the Tower.

KING RICHARD II

Oh, good! Convey? You're all conveyers, taking advantage
of a true king's fall to raise yourselves up.

KING RICHARD II, some Lords, and a Guard exit

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Next Wednesday will be our coronation; lords, prepare
yourselves.

*All exit except the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot of
Westminster, and DUKE OF AUMERLE*

ABBOT

We've seen a sad scene here.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

But the worst is yet to come—children who aren't even born
yet will remember this day as sharp as a thorn to them.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

You holy clergymen, can't we do something to rid the
kingdom of him?

ABBOT

My lord, before I tell you what I know, you must swear not
only to keep my secret, but also to help me. I see your faces
look distressed, your hearts are sad, and your eyes are full
of tears: come home with me to dinner, and I'll tell you
about a plot that will make everything better again.

All exit

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter QUEEN and Ladies

QUEEN

This way the king will come; this is the way
To Julius Caesar's ill-erected tower,
To whose flint bosom my condemned lord
Is doom'd a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke:
5 Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth
Have any resting for her true king's queen.

Enter KING RICHARD II and Guard

Shakescleare Translation

The QUEEN and her servants enter.

QUEEN

The king will come this way; this is the way to Julius Caesar's tower, where my lord is condemned by proud Bolingbroke to be a prisoner. Let us rest here, if this rebellious earth can offer any rest for her true king's queen.

 Legend held that Julius Caesar had built the Tower of London.

KING RICHARD II and a guard enter.

QUEEN

But soft, but see, or rather do not see,
My fair rose wither: yet look up, behold,
That you in pity may dissolve to dew,
10 And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.
Ah, thou, the model where old Troy did stand,
Thou map of honour, thou King Richard's tomb,
And not King Richard; thou most beauteous inn,
Why should hard-favour'd grief be lodged in thee,
15 When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

KING RICHARD II

Join not with grief, fair woman, do not so,
To make my end too sudden: learn, good soul,
To think our former state a happy dream;
From which awaked, the truth of what we are
20 Shows us but this: I am sworn brother, sweet,
To grim Necessity, and he and I
Will keep a league till death. Hie thee to France
And cloister thee in some religious house:
Our holy lives must win a new world's crown,
25 Which our profane hours here have stricken down.

QUEEN

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind
Transform'd and weaken'd? hath Bolingbroke depos'd
Thine intellect? hath he been in thy heart?
The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw,
30 And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage
To be o'erpower'd; and wilt thou, pupil-like,
Take thy correction mildly, kiss the rod,
And fawn on rage with base humility,
Which art a lion and a king of beasts?

KING RICHARD II

35 A king of beasts, indeed; if aught but beasts,
I had been still a happy king of men.
Good sometime queen, prepare thee hence for France:
Think I am dead and that even here thou takest,
As from my death-bed, thy last living leave.
40 In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire
With good old folks and let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages long ago betid;
And ere thou bid good night, to quit their griefs,
Tell thou the lamentable tale of me
45 And send the hearers weeping to their beds:
For why, the senseless brands will sympathize
The heavy accent of thy moving tongue
And in compassion weep the fire out;
And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,
50 For the deposing of a rightful king.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND and others

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, the mind of Bolingbroke is changed:
You must to Pomfret, not unto the Tower.
And, madam, there is order ta'en for you;
With all swift speed you must away to France.

KING RICHARD II

55 Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,
The time shall not be many hours of age
More than it is ere foul sin gathering head
Shalt break into corruption: thou shalt think,
60 Though he divide the realm and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
And he shall think that thou, which know'st the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urged, another way
65 To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
The love of wicked men converts to fear;
That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both
To worthy danger and deserved death.

QUEEN

But wait, see—or rather, don't see—my fair rose wither. Yet still look at him, so that you can cry in pity and wash him fresh again with true love's tears. Ah, you, you're the grave where Troy once stood, the map of honor: the tomb of King Richard, not King Richard himself. You, most beautiful inn
—why should sadness stay with you, while triumph rejoices in the alehouse?

 *The Queen is comparing Bolingbroke (the "alehouse") unfavourably to Richard (the "most beauteous inn").*

KING RICHARD II

Don't be sad too, fair woman; it will bring me to my end sooner. Good soul, pretend that our old life was a happy dream that we've not woken up from. My only companion now is Necessity, sweetheart, and I'll be with him until my death. Go to France to some religious house; we'll find another crown in heaven, although we've lost the ones we had on earth.

QUEEN

What, is my Richard transformed and weakened in shape and mind? Has Bolingbroke depos'd your intellect? Has he been in your heart? The dying lion hits the ground with his paw in rage; will you accept these humiliations and take your punishment like this, when you're a lion and a king of beasts?

KING RICHARD II

A king of beasts, indeed; if they had been nothing but beasts, I would still be a happy king of men. Good old queen, prepare to go to France: imagine that I'm dead, and that here you're saying goodbye to me on my deathbed. During long winter nights, sit by the fire with good old people and let them tell you sad stories from long ago. And before you say goodnight, tell them my sad story, and send them crying to their beds: the logs themselves will weep and extinguish the fire, and some will cry in ashes, when they hear about the deposing of a rightful king.

NORTHUMBERLAND and his guards enter.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, Bolingbroke has changed his mind: you must go to Pomfret, not to the Tower. And madam, he's ordered that you must go to France.

KING RICHARD II

Northumberland—the ladder with which Bolingbroke climbs to the throne—it won't be long until things go bad between you two: if he gives you half the kingdom, you won't think it's enough, since you helped give him everything. And he'll be suspicious of you; since you know how to depose kings and put someone else in their place, what's to stop you from doing it again? The love of wicked men turns to fear, that fear to hate, and hate to danger and deserved death.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My guilt be on my head, and there an end.
70 Take leave and part; for you must part forthwith.

KING RICHARD II

Doubly divorced! Bad men, you violate
A twofold marriage, 'twixt my crown and me,
And then betwixt me and my married wife.
Let me unkiss the oath 'twixt thee and me;
75 And yet not so, for with a kiss 'twas made.
Part us, Northumberland; I toward the north,
Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime;
My wife to France: from whence, set forth in pomp,
She came adorned hither like sweet May,
80 Sent back like Hallowmas or short'st of day.

QUEEN

And must we be divided? must we part?

KING RICHARD II

Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

QUEEN

Banish us both and send the king with me.

NORTHUMBERLAND

That were some love but little policy.

QUEEN

85 Then whither he goes, thither let me go.

KING RICHARD II

So two, together weeping, make one woe.
Weep thou for me in France, I for thee here;
Better far off than near, be ne'er the near.
Go, count thy way with sighs; I mine with groans.

QUEEN

90 So longest way shall have the longest moans.

KING RICHARD II

Twice for one step I'll groan, the way being short,
And piece the way out with a heavy heart.
Come, come, in wooing sorrow let's be brief,
Since, wedding it, there is such length in grief;
95 One kiss shall stop our mouths, and dumbly part;
Thus give I mine, and thus take I thy heart.

QUEEN

Give me mine own again; 'twere no good part
To take on me to keep and kill thy heart.
So, now I have mine own again, be gone,
100 That I might strive to kill it with a groan.

KING RICHARD II

We make woe wanton with this fond delay:
Once more, adieu; the rest let sorrow say.

Exeunt

NORTHUMBERLAND

Well, on my own head be it, and that's it. Say goodbye; you
have to go now.

KING RICHARD II

Doubly divorced! Bad men, you've broken two marriages,
one between my crown and me, and then between me and
and my married wife. Let me unkiss the oath between you
and me—and yet no, since we made it with a kiss. Separate
us, Northumberland; I to the north, where there's nothing
but cold and sickness; my wife to France, from whence she
came like the spring, sent back like the depth of winter.

QUEEN

And must we be divided? Do we have to leave each other?

KING RICHARD II

Yes, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

QUEEN

Banish us both and send the king with me.

NORTHUMBERLAND

That would be nice of us, but hardly politically sensible.

QUEEN

Then wherever he goes, let me go with him.

KING RICHARD II

So the two of us will cry together. Cry for me in France, and
I'll cry for you here; better to be as far away from me as
possible. Go, count your journey with sighs, I'll count mine
with groans.

QUEEN

The longest journey will have the longest moans of grief.

KING RICHARD II

I'll groan twice for every step, since my journey is short, and
go with a heavy heart. Let's be brief in wooring sorrow, since
it will be a long marriage. One kiss shall stop our mouths,
and we'll leave in silence; I'll give you mine [*kisses her*] and
leave with your heart.

QUEEN

Give me my heart back again; I can't be responsible for
killing your heart. So, now I have my heart again, be gone,
so that I can kill it with a groan.

KING RICHARD II

We're making a fool of sorrow with all this delaying;
goodbye, once more, and let sorrow say the rest.

Everyone exits.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter DUKE OF YORK and DUCHESS OF YORK

Shakescleare Translation

DUKE OF YORK and DUCHESS OF YORK enter

DUCHESS OF YORK

My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
When weeping made you break the story off,
of our two cousins coming into London.

DUKE OF YORK

Where did I leave?

DUCHESS OF YORK

At that sad stop, my lord,
Where rude misgovern'd hands from windows' tops
Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard's head.

DUKE OF YORK

Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,
Whilst all tongues cried 'God save thee,
Bolingbroke!'
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage, and that all the walls
With painted imagery had said at once
'Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!'
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,
Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespeak them thus: 'I thank you, countrymen:
And thus still doing, thus he pass'd along.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Alack, poor Richard! where rode he the whilst?

DUKE OF YORK

As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried 'God save
him!'
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head:
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted
And barbarism itself have pitied him.
But heaven hath a hand in these events,
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.
To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,
Whose state and honour I for aye allow.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Here comes my son Aumerle.

DUKE OF YORK

Aumerle that was;
But that is lost for being Richard's friend,
And, madam, you must call him Rutland now:
I am in parliament pledge for his truth
And lasting fealty to the new-made king.

Enter DUKE OF AUMERLE

DUCHESS OF YORK

Welcome, my son: who are the violets now
That strew the green lap of the new come spring?

DUCHESS OF YORK

My lord, you told me you would tell the rest of the story of
how our two cousins came into London, since crying made
you stop.

DUKE OF YORK

Where was I?

DUCHESS OF YORK

At the sad place, my lord, where people threw dust and
garbage on King Richard's head from the windows.

DUKE OF YORK

Then, as I was saying: the duke rode through the streets on
a royal horse while everyone cried "God save you,
Bolingbroke!" You would have thought the windows
themselves were speaking, since so many people, young
and old, leaned out their windows to get a look at him, and
that the walls were crying out "Jesus preserve you!
Welcome, Bolingbroke!" Meanwhile, he turned his head
from one to the other, taking his hat off and speaking to
them like this: "I thank you, countrymen." And doing that,
he went on his way.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Oh, poor Richard! Where did he ride?

DUKE OF YORK

Just like the audience at a theater tends not to like an actor
that follows the star player, thinking him to be tedious,
men's eyes looked at Richard with contempt; no one cried
"God save him!" No one welcomed him back, but they
threw dust on his sacred head: which he shook off with
such gentle sorrow, smiling and crying at the same time,
that had not God (for some purpose) steeled the hearts of
men against sympathy, even a barbarian might have pitied
him. But heaven has a hand in these things, and we must go
along with God's will. We're all Bolingbroke's subjects now,
and I've sworn to be loyal to him.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Here comes my son Aumerle.

DUKE OF YORK

He was Aumerle; but his earldom is lost for being Richard's
friend, and madam, you must call him Rutland now. I will
vouch for his loyalty in Parliament.

DUKE OF AUMERLE enters

DUCHESS OF YORK

Welcome, my son; who are the violets now  that
celebrate the new spring?

 The duchess is asking Aumerle to
tell her who the favorite courtiers are
now with the new king.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Madam, I know not, nor I greatly care not:
God knows I had as lief be none as one.

DUKE OF YORK

Well, bear you well in this new spring of time,
55 Lest you be cropp'd before you come to prime.
What news from Oxford? hold those justs and triumphs?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

For aught I know, my lord, they do.

DUKE OF YORK

You will be there, I know.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

If God prevent not, I purpose so.

DUKE OF YORK

60 What seal is that, that hangs without thy bosom?
Yea, look'st thou pale? let me see the writing.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My lord, 'tis nothing.

DUKE OF YORK

No matter, then, who see it;
I will be satisfied; let me see the writing.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

65 I do beseech your grace to pardon me:
It is a matter of small consequence,
Which for some reasons I would not have seen.

DUKE OF YORK

Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see.
I fear, I fear,--

DUCHESS OF YORK

70 What should you fear?
'Tis nothing but some bond, that he is enter'd into
For gay apparel 'gainst the triumph day.

DUKE OF YORK

Bound to himself! what doth he with a bond
That he is bound to? Wife, thou art a fool.
75 Boy, let me see the writing.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I do beseech you, pardon me; I may not show it.

DUKE OF YORK

I will be satisfied; let me see it, I say.

He plucks it out of his bosom and reads it

DUKE OF YORK

Treason! foul treason! Villain! traitor! slave!

80

DUCHESS OF YORK

What is the matter, my lord?

DUKE OF YORK

Ho! who is within there?

Enter a Servant

DUKE OF YORK

Saddle my horse.
85 God for his mercy, what treachery is here!

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Madam, I don't know, and I don't care: I would rather be
nothing than one of them.

DUKE OF YORK

Well, behave yourself in this new spring, lest you be
cropped before your time. What's the news from Oxford?
Did they hold the jousts?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

For all I know, my lord, they do.

DUKE OF YORK

You will be there, I know.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

If God doesn't prevent me from going, I plan to be there.

DUKE OF YORK

What's that letter you have? Why do you look so pale? Let
me see it.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

My lord, it's nothing.

DUKE OF YORK

Then it shouldn't matter who sees it; I will be satisfied in
this. Let me see the letter.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I ask your grace to forgive me; it's a letter of no importance,
which for some reasons I don't want you to see.

DUKE OF YORK

Which for some reasons, sir, I will see. I fear, I fear--

DUCHESS OF YORK

What should you be afraid? It's nothing but some receipt for
his clothes on the tournament day.

DUKE OF YORK

Bound to himself? Why would he have a receipt, if he hasn't
paid yet? Wife, you're a fool. Boy, let me see the letter.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

I beg you, forgive me; I can't show you.

DUKE OF YORK

I will be satisfied; let me see it, I order you.

He takes it from AUMERLE and reads it

DUKE OF YORK

Treason! Foul treason! Villain! Traitor! Slave!

DUCHESS OF YORK

What is the matter, my lord?

DUKE OF YORK

Hey! Who's inside?

Servant enters

DUKE OF YORK

Saddle my horse. God have mercy, what treachery is here!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, what is it, my lord?

DUKE OF YORK

Give me my boots, I say; saddle my horse.
Now, by mine honour, by my life, by my troth,
I will impeach the villain.

90

DUCHESS OF YORK

What is the matter?

DUKE OF YORK

Peace, foolish woman.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I will not peace. What is the matter, Aumerle.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Good mother, be content; it is no more
Than my poor life must answer.

95

DUCHESS OF YORK

Thy life answer!

DUKE OF YORK

Bring me my boots: I will unto the king.

Re-enter Servant with boots

DUCHESS OF YORK

Strike him, Aumerle. Poor boy, thou art amazed.
Hence, villain! never more come in my sight.

100

DUKE OF YORK

Give me my boots, I say.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, York, what wilt thou do?
Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?
Have we more sons? or are we like to have?
Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?
And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age,
And rob me of a happy mother's name?
Is he not like thee? is he not thine own?

105

DUKE OF YORK

Thou fond mad woman,
Wilt thou conceal this dark conspiracy?
A dozen of them here have ta'en the sacrament,
And interchangeably set down their hands,
To kill the king at Oxford.

110

DUCHESS OF YORK

He shall be none;
We'll keep him here: then what is that to him?

115

DUKE OF YORK

Away, fond woman! were he twenty times my son,
I would impeach him.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Hadst thou groan'd for him
As I have done, thou wouldest be more pitiful.
But now I know thy mind; thou dost suspect
That I have been disloyal to thy bed,
And that he is a bastard, not thy son:
Sweet York, sweet husband, be not of that mind:
He is as like thee as a man may be,
Not like to me, or any of my kin,
And yet I love him.

120

125

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, what is it, my lord?

DUKE OF YORK

Give me my boots, I tell you; saddle my horse. Now, by my honor, by my life, and by my word, I'll turn in the villain.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What's the matter?

DUKE OF YORK

Be quiet, foolish woman.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I will not be quiet. What is the matter, Aumerle?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Good mother, don't ask any more questions; my life will have to answer for it.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Your life answer for it!

DUKE OF YORK

Bring me my boots; I'm going to the king.

Servant re-enters with boots

DUCHESS OF YORK

Hit him, Aumerle. Poor boy, you're shocked. Go away, villain! Never come into my sight again.

DUKE OF YORK

Give me my boots, I tell you.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, York, what will you do? Will you not hide the crime of your own child? Do we have any other sons? Are we likely to have any more? Aren't I too old? And will you take my fair son away from me in my old age, robbing me of the name of a happy mother? Isn't he like you? Isn't he your own?

DUKE OF YORK

You too-fond crazy woman, will you hide this dark plot? A dozen of them have sworn on God to kill the king at Oxford.

DUCHESS OF YORK

He won't be a part of it; we'll keep him here. Then what is that to him?

DUKE OF YORK

Get away from me, fond woman! If he were twenty times my son, I would still turn him in.

DUCHESS OF YORK

If you had suffered for him in childbirth as I have, you would be more sympathetic. But now I see: you suspect that I've been disloyal to your bed, and that he's a bastard, not your son. Sweet York, sweet husband, don't think that: he looks as much like you as any man could, not like me or my family, and yet I love him.

DUKE OF YORK

Make way, unruly woman!

Exit

DUCHESS OF YORK

After, Aumerle! mount thee upon his horse;
130 Spur post, and get before him to the king,
And beg thy pardon ere he do accuse thee.
I'll not be long behind; though I be old,
I doubt not but to ride as fast as York:
And never will I rise up from the ground
135 Till Bolingbroke have pardon'd thee. Away, be gone!

Exeunt

DUKE OF YORK

Get out of my way, unruly woman!

Exit

DUCHESS OF YORK

After him, Aumerle! Get on his horse, ride fast, and get to
the king before him to beg his pardon before he's accused
you. I won't be far behind you: although I'm old, I can ride
as fast as York: I won't rise from kneeling until Bolingbroke
has pardoned you. Go now, be gone!

Exit all

Act 5, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, HENRY PERCY, and other Lords

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
'Tis full three months since I did see him last;
If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
I would to God, my lords, he might be found:
5 Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent,
With unrestrained loose companions,
Even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes,
And beat our watch, and rob our passengers;
10 Which he, young wanton and effeminate boy,
Takes on the point of honour to support
So dissolute a crew.

HENRY PERCY

My lord, some two days since I saw the prince,
And told him of those triumphs held at Oxford.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

15 And what said the gallant?

HENRY PERCY

His answer was, he would unto the stews,
And from the common'st creature pluck a glove,
And wear it as a favour; and with that
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

20 As dissolute as desperate; yet through both
I see some sparks of better hope, which elder years
May happily bring forth. But who comes here?

Enter DUKE OF AUMERLE

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Where is the king?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What means our cousin, that he stares and looks
25 So wildly?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

God save your grace! I do beseech your majesty,
To have some conference with your grace alone.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Withdraw yourselves, and leave us here alone.

Shakescpeare Translation

HENRY BOLINGBROKE, HENRY PERCY, and other Lords enter

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Can't anyone tell me where my wasteful son has gone? I
haven't seen him for three months; if we have a plague, it's
him. I wish we could find him—ask around at London,
among the taverns, for they say he spends his time there
with the sort of companions who rob people in the streets,
while he, young, stupid, and effeminate boy, spends my
money supporting that crew.

HENRY PERCY

My lord, I saw the prince about two days ago, and told him
about the tournament happening at Oxford.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

And what did the young man say?

HENRY PERCY

He said he would go to the slums and take a glove from a
beggar, and wear it as a favor, and with that would defeat
the champion in a joust.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Foolish and out-of-control; yet even so, I see some sparks of
something better which might come out when he's older.
But who's here now?

DUKE OF AUMERLE enters

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Where is the king?

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What's wrong with you--why do you look so wild?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

God save your grace! I beg you to give me some time to talk
to you alone.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Leave us alone.

*Exeunt HENRY PERCY and Lords***HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

30 What is the matter with our cousin now?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

For ever may my knees grow to the earth,
My tongue cleave to my roof within my mouth
Unless a pardon ere I rise or speak.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

35 Intended or committed was this fault?
If on the first, how heinous e'er it be,
To win thy after-love I pardon thee.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Then give me leave that I may turn the key,
That no man enter till my tale be done.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

40 Have thy desire.

DUKE OF YORK

[Within] My liege, beware; look to thyself;
Thou hast a traitor in thy presence there.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Villain, I'll make thee safe.

*Drawing***DUKE OF AUMERLE**

45 Stay thy revengeful hand; thou hast no cause to fear.

DUKE OF YORK

[Within] Open the door, secure, foolhardy king:
Shall I for love speak treason to thy face?
Open the door, or I will break it open.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK***HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What is the matter, uncle? speak;
50 Recover breath; tell us how near is danger,
That we may arm us to encounter it.

DUKE OF YORK

Peruse this writing here, and thou shalt know
The treason that my haste forbids me show.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Remember, as thou read'st, thy promise pass'd:
55 I do repent me; read not my name there
My heart is not confederate with my hand.

DUKE OF YORK

It was, villain, ere thy hand did set it down.
I tore it from the traitor's bosom, king;
Fear, and not love, begets his penitence:
60 Forget to pity him, lest thy pity prove
A serpent that will sting thee to the heart.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

O heinous, strong and bold conspiracy!
O loyal father of a treacherous son!
Thou sheer, immaculate and silver fountain,
65 From when this stream through muddy passages
Hath held his current and defiled himself!
Thy overflow of good converts to bad,
And thy abundant goodness shall excuse
This deadly blot in thy digressing son.

*HENRY PERCY and Lords exit***HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What is the matter with our cousin now?

DUKE OF AUMERLE

[Kneels] May my knees grow into the earth and my tongue
stick to roof of my mouth, unless you pardon me before I
stand up or speak.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Did you intend to do something wrong, or did you already
do it? If it's the first, no matter how bad it is, I'll forgive you
to make you love me from now on.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Then let me lock the door, so that no one can come in until
I've explained myself.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

As you wish.

DUKE OF YORK

(From outside the door) My liege, beware; protect yourself;
you have a traitor in there with you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Villain, I know how to protect myself.

*Draws his sword***DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Wait, don't draw your sword; you have no reason to be
afraid.

DUKE OF YORK

[Outside] Open this locked door, foolish king: will you make
me speak in this treasonous way to you when I'm trying to
protect you? Open the door, or I will break it open.

*DUKE OF YORK enters***HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What's the matter, uncle? Speak *[wheezes]*; recover breath.
Tell us how close we are to danger, so that we can protect
ourselves.

DUKE OF YORK

[Shows the letter] Read this, and you'll know about the
treason that I'm too out of breath to explain.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Remember, as you read, what you promised me! I'm sorry
for what I did; don't see my name signed there, since my
hand didn't follow my heart.

DUKE OF YORK

Your heart was with them even before you signed this. I
took it from the traitor, king; fear, and not love, motivates
his confession now. Don't forgive him, lest you regret your
pity later when he stabs you in the back.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Oh, horrible plot! Oh, loyal father of a treacherous soon!
You're a clear fountain and he's the stream that muddies
your water. But your overflow of goodness will redeem your
son, even though he's committed a crime punishable by
death.

DUKE OF YORK

70 So shall my virtue be his vice's bawd;
And he shall spend mine honour with his shame,
As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold.
Mine honour lives when his dishonour dies,
Or my shamed life in his dishonour lies:
75 Thou kill'st me in his life; giving him breath,
The traitor lives, the true man's put to death.

DUCHESS OF YORK

[Within] What ho, my liege! for God's sake,
let me in.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What shrill-voiced suppliant makes this eager cry?

DUCHESS OF YORK

80 A woman, and thy aunt, great king; 'tis I.
Speak with me, pity me, open the door.
A beggar begs that never begg'd before.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Our scene is alter'd from a serious thing,
And now changed to 'The Beggar and the King.'
85 My dangerous cousin, let your mother in:
I know she is come to pray for your foul sin.

DUKE OF YORK

If thou do pardon, whosoever pray,
More sins for this forgiveness prosper may.
This fester'd joint cut off, the rest rest sound;
90 This let alone will all the rest confound.

Enter DUCHESS OF YORK

DUCHESS OF YORK

O king, believe not this hard-hearted man!
Love loving not itself none other can.

DUKE OF YORK

Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?
Shall thy old dugs once more a traitor rear?

DUCHESS OF YORK

95 Sweet York, be patient. Hear me, gentle liege.

Kneels

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Rise up, good aunt.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Not yet, I thee beseech:
For ever will I walk upon my knees,
100 And never see day that the happy sees,
Till thou give joy; until thou bid me joy,
By pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

Unto my mother's prayers I bend my knee.

DUKE OF YORK

Against them both my true joints bended be.
105 Ill mayst thou thrive, if thou grant any grace!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Pleads he in earnest? look upon his face;
His eyes do drop no tears, his prayers are in jest;
His words come from his mouth, ours from our breast:
He prays but faintly and would be denied;
110 We pray with heart and soul and all beside:
His weary joints would gladly rise, I know;

DUKE OF YORK

My virtue will pay for his vice, then, so that he can spend my honor with his shame, like a spendthrift son who steals his father's money. You dishonour me by letting him live: the traitor survives, the true man dies.

DUCHESS OF YORK

[Outside] Are you there, my liege? For God's sake, let me in.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

What shrill-voiced petitioner is shouting at us?

DUCHESS OF YORK

A woman, and your aunt, great king: it's me. Speak with me, take pity on me, open the door. I'm a beggar that's never begged before.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

This scene now looks less like a serious thing, and more like "The Beggar and the King." My dangerous cousin, let your mother in: I know she's come to pray that I forgive you for your crime.

DUKE OF YORK

If you forgive him, whoever prays against it, bad things will come of it. If you cut off this diseased limb, the rest of the body will live; but if you leave it, it will poison you.

DUCHESS OF YORK enters

DUCHESS OF YORK

Oh king, don't believe this hard-hearted man! He doesn't know how to love his own, so how can he love you?

DUKE OF YORK

You crazy woman, what are you doing here? Shall your old breasts wean another traitor?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Sweet York, shut up. Listen to me, gentle liege.

Kneels

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Get up, good aunt.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Not yet, I beseech you: I'll stay on my knees forever and never have a happy day in my life, until you give me joy again by pardoning Rutland, my son, who has offended you.

DUKE OF AUMERLE

[Kneeling] I kneel to add my pleas to my mother's.

DUKE OF YORK

[Kneels] I kneel against them with my loyal joints! It won't go well for you, if you grant any forgiveness!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Do you think he really means it? Look at his face; he's not crying, his prayers are false; his words come from his mouth, but ours from our hearts. He begs weakly and would rather that you not grant his request; we pray with heart and soul and everything else. His tired joints would rather rise, I know; our knees will kneel to the ground until

Our knees shall kneel till to the ground they grow:
His prayers are full of false hypocrisy;
Ours of true zeal and deep integrity.
115 Our prayers do out-pray his; then let them have
That mercy which true prayer ought to have.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Nay, do not say, 'stand up;'
Say, 'pardon' first, and afterwards 'stand up.'
120 And if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach,
'Pardon' should be the first word of thy speech.
I never long'd to hear a word till now;
Say 'pardon,' king; let pity teach thee how:
The word is short, but not so short as sweet;
125 No word like 'pardon' for kings' mouths so meet.

DUKE OF YORK

Speak it in French, king; say, 'pardonne moi.'

DUCHESS OF YORK

Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?
Ah, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord,
That set'st the word itself against the word!
130 Speak 'pardon' as 'tis current in our land;
The chopping French we do not understand.
Thine eye begins to speak; set thy tongue there;
Or in thy piteous heart plant thou thine ear;
That hearing how our plaints and prayers do pierce,
135 Pity may move thee 'pardon' to rehearse.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I do not sue to stand;
Pardon is all the suit I have in hand.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I pardon him, as God shall pardon me.

DUCHESS OF YORK

140 O happy vantage of a kneeling knee!
Yet am I sick for fear: speak it again;
Twice saying 'pardon' doth not pardon twain,
But makes one pardon strong.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

With all my heart
145 I pardon him.

DUCHESS OF YORK

A god on earth thou art.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

But for our trusty brother-in-law and the abbot,
With all the rest of that consorted crew,
Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels.
150 Good uncle, help to order several powers
To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are:
They shall not live within this world, I swear,
But I will have them, if I once know where.
Uncle, farewell: and, cousin too, adieu:
155 Your mother well hath pray'd, and prove you true.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Come, my old son: I pray God make thee new.

they take root there. His prayers are full of false hypocrisy; ours are full of true emotion and deep honesty. Our prayers out-pray his--so let us have the mercy which true prayer should receive.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS OF YORK

No, don't say "stand up"; say "pardon" first, and "stand up" afterwards. If I were your nurse teaching you your first words, "pardon" would be the first word you knew. I never wanted to hear any word so much; say "pardon," king, and let pity teach you how: the word is short, but short is sweet, and no word is better to hear from a king.

DUKE OF YORK

[Sarcastically] Speak it in French, king; say, 'pardonne moi.'

DUCHESS OF YORK

Are you trying to ruin this? Oh, my bitter husband, my hard-hearted lord, to set our words against yours! *[To Bolingbroke]* Say "pardon" as we do it in our country; we don't understand French. Your eye begins to say it; may your tongue say it too; or put your heart in your ear, so that, hearing our prayers, it might take pity on us and command your mouth to say the words.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Good aunt, stand up.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I don't beg to stand; I only ask for pardon.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

I pardon him, as God shall pardon me.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Oh, happy outcome from my kneeling! But I am still afraid;
say it again. Two pardons is better than one.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

With all my heart I pardon him.

DUCHESS OF YORK

You're a god on earth.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

But as for our trusty brother-in-law and the abbot, they'll be destroyed with the rest of the plotters. Good uncle, help us send an army to Oxford, or wherever the traitors are: they won't live much longer if I can help it, once we find them. Uncle, goodbye, and cousin too; your mother has begged well for you, so be loyal going forward.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Come on, my old son; I hope God makes you new.

Exeunt

All exit

Act 5, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter EXTON and Servant

EXTON

Didst thou not mark the king, what words he spake,
'Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?'
Was it not so?

SERVANT

These were his very words.

EXTON

5 'Have I no friend?' quoth he: he spake it twice,
And urged it twice together, did he not?

SERVANT

He did.

EXTON

And speaking it, he wistly look'd on me,
And who should say, 'I would thou wert the man'
10 That would divorce this terror from my heart;
Meaning the king at Pomfret. Come, let's go:
I am the king's friend, and will rid his foe.

Exeunt

Shakescleare Translation

Enter EXTON and Servant

EXTON

Didn't you hear what the king said: "Don't I have a friend
that will rid me of this living fear?" Didn't he say so?

SERVANT

That's what he said.

EXTON

"Don't I have a friend?" he said; he said it twice, and asked
it twice, didn't he?

SERVANT

He did.

EXTON

And saying it, he looked at me as if he meant to say, "I wish
you were the man to rid me of the thing that makes me
afraid," referring to the king at Pomfret. Come on, let's go;
I'm the king's friend, and will destroy his enemy.

Exit all

Act 5, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter KING RICHARD

KING RICHARD II

I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world:
And for because the world is populous
And here is not a creature but myself,
5 I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father; and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
10 In humours like the people of this world,
For no thought is contented. The better sort,
As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd
With scruples and do set the word itself
Against the word:
15 As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,
'It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails
20 May tear a passage through the flinty ribs
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.
Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,
25 Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars
Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there;
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
30 Of such as have before endured the like.
Thus play I in one person many people,

Shakescleare Translation

Enter KING RICHARD

KING RICHARD II

I've been thinking how I might compare my prison to the
world: but because the world is full of people and here
there's no one but me, I can't do it. But I'll give it a try. My
brain will be the mother and my soul will be the father, and
together they'll produce a generation of children, my
thoughts. Those thoughts will populate this little world--
they'll have moods just like people in the real world, none
of them satisfied. The better sort of thoughts, thoughts of
heaven, have too many doubts and make me read the Bible
against itself: for example, "Come, little one" versus "It is as
hard to come as for a camel to thread the eye of a small
needle." Ambitious thoughts dwell on ways to escape, like
tearing a passage through my rough prison walls with my
weak fingernails--and since, there's no hope of escape, die
before they have the chance to go any further. Happier
thoughts flatter themselves that they aren't the first people
to be unlucky, and won't be the last: like beggars sitting in
the stocks who tell themselves that many have and other
will be in the same place, and in that thought find a kind of
comfort, imagining others who have endured the same
misfortunes. So I, in one person, play many people--none
happy. Sometimes I'm a king; then treason makes me wish
to be a beggar (and so I am); then crushing suffering
persuades me that it was better when I was a king; then I'm
king again, but soon remember that Bolingbroke has taken
my throne, and I am nothing at all. But whatever I am,
neither I nor anyone will pleased with anything, unless he's
happy with being nothing. Is this music that I'm
hearing?

 i.e. being dead

And none contented: sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am: then crushing penury
35 Persuades me I was better when a king:
Then am I king'd again: and by and by
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing: but whate'er I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
40 With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
With being nothing. Music do I hear?

Music

KING RICHARD II
Ha, ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is,
When time is broke and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men's lives.
45 And here have I the daintiness of ear
To cheque time broke in a disorder'd string;
But for the concord of my state and time
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
50 For now hath time made me his numbering clock:
My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
55 Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart,
Which is the bell: so sighs and tears and groans
Show minutes, times, and hours: but my time
Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
60 While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock.
This music mads me; let it sound no more;
For though it have helped madmen to their wits,
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.
Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!
65 For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

*Enter a Groom of the Stable***GROOM**

Hail, royal prince!

KING RICHARD II

Thanks, noble peer;
The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.
70 What art thou? and how comest thou hither,
Where no man never comes but that sad dog
That brings me food to make misfortune live?

GROOM

I was a poor groom of thy stable, king,
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,
75 With much ado at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.
O, how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld
In London streets, that coronation-day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,
80 That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

KING RICHARD II

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?

GROOM

So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground.

KING RICHARD II

85 So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;

*Music***KING RICHARD II**

Ha, ha! Keep time: sweet music is sour when it doesn't stay on beat! This is true as well in the music of men's lives. But while here I have a good enough ear to notice when time is broken in a song, when I was king I couldn't hear my own time break. I wasted time, and now time wastes ² me. For now time itself could tell the time by me: my thoughts are minutes, my eyes are the face of the clock, and the finger that wipes the tears from them is the hand that tells us the time. My groans are like the chimes that ring on the hour; so my sighs and tears and groans show minutes, times, and hours, like a clock. But actually, Bolingbroke is in charge of my time; I'm just his Jack of the clock ³. The music will make me go mad; stop it now. For though it's helped madmen to be sane again, it seems it will make sane men mad. And yet I bless the person who plays the music, since that's a sign of love; and not many people in this hateful world love me.

² Richard puns on "waste" to suggest that time is "wasting" him--i.e. killing him slowly

³ A "Jack of the clock" is a mechanical man who strikes the bell of the clock every hour--so, Richard is saying that he's just Bolingbroke's instrument.

*Groom of the Stable enters***GROOM**

Hail, royal prince!

KING RICHARD II

Thanks, noble lord, but you've priced me ten groats above what I am--I'm not even a noble, let alone royal. ⁴ Who are you? And how did you get in, since no one ever comes here but the sad jailer that brings me just enough food to keep me alive?

⁴ A "royal" is worth ten groats (a unit of currency in early modern England) more than a noble.

GROOM

I was a poor groom of your stable, king--when you were king, that is--and on my way to York I got permission to stop here and see the man who used to be my royal master. Oh, it broke my heart on coronation day to see Bolingbroke ride through the streets of London on Barbary, the horse that you used to ride and that I would so carefully saddle for you!

KING RICHARD II

So he rode on Barbary? Tell me, kind friend, how did the horse take to him?

GROOM

Very proudly, as if he had contempt for the ground beneath his feet.

KING RICHARD II

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back! That horse used to eat bread from my royal hand; he was proud when I

This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? would he not fall down,
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck
90 Of that proud man that did usurp his back?
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be awed by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;
And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,
95 Spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jouncing Bolingbroke.

Enter Keeper, with a dish

KEEPER

Fellow, give place; here is no longer stay.

KING RICHARD II

If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away.

GROOM

What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

Exit

KEEPER

100 My lord, will't please you to fall to?

KING RICHARD II

Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do.

KEEPER

My lord, I dare not: Sir Pierce of Exton, who lately came from the king, commands the contrary.

KING RICHARD II

The devil take Henry of Lancaster and thee!
105 Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

Beats the keeper

KEEPER

Help, help, help!

Enter EXTON and Servants, armed

KING RICHARD II

How now! what means death in this rude assault?
110 Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's instrument.

Snatching an axe from a Servant and killing him

KING RICHARD II

Go thou, and fill another room in hell.

He kills another. Then Exton strikes him down

KING RICHARD II

That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire
115 That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand
Hath with the king's blood stain'd the king's own land.
Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;
Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.

Dies

EXTON

As full of valour as of royal blood:
120 Both have I spill'd; O would the deed were good!
For now the devil, that told me I did well,
Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.
This dead king to the living king I'll bear

touched him. Why didn't he stumble? Why didn't he fall down--since pride must have a fall--so that Bolingbroke would fall break his neck? But I forgive you, horse! Why am I angry at you, since you were born to carry men on your back? I was not born a horse, but I bear a burden like a donkey, spurred on and exhausted by Bolingbroke.

Enter Keeper 5, with a dish of food

. 5 i.e. jailer

KEEPER

Man, go away; you can't stay here any longer.

KING RICHARD II

[To GROOM] If you love me, it's time for you to go.

GROOM

My heart will show what I can't tell you with words.

Exit

KEEPER

My lord, will you eat?

KING RICHARD II

Taste it first, as you always do.

KEEPER

My lord, I don't dare; Sir Pierce of Exton, who came here on the king's orders, commands that I don't taste your food for poison.

KING RICHARD II

You and Henry of Lancaster should both go to the devil! I'm tired of being patient.

Attacks the jailer

KEEPER

Help, help, help!

EXTON and Servants enter, armed

KING RICHARD II

What's happening? Is death coming for me? Villain, I'll take the weapon that would kill me from your own hands.

Snatching an axe from a Servant and killing him

KING RICHARD II

Go and fill another room in hell.

He kills another. Then Exton strikes him down

KING RICHARD II

The hand that kills me will burn in hell forever. Exton, you've stained the land with its own king's blood. Go up to heaven, my soul! Your place is up there, while my body sinks downward to die.

Dies

EXTON

He's as full of bravery as he is of royal blood--and I've killed both. Oh, I wish this were a good deed! For now the devil, that told me I was doing the right thing, tells me that this is a deed of hell. I'll take this dead king to the living king; *[to servants]* take away the rest of the bodies and bury them.

Take hence the rest, and give them burial here.

Exeunt

All exit

Act 5, Scene 6

Shakespeare

Flourish. Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, with other Lords, and Attendants

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Kind uncle York, the latest news we hear
Is that the rebels have consumed with fire
Our town of Cicester in Gloucestershire;
But whether they be ta'en or slain we hear not.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

5 Welcome, my lord what is the news?

NORTHUMBERLAND

First, to thy sacred state wish I all happiness.
The next news is, I have to London sent
The heads of Oxford, Salisbury, Blunt, and Kent:
10 The manner of their taking may appear
At large discoursed in this paper here.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

We thank thee, gentle Percy, for thy pains;
And to thy worth will add right worthy gains.

Enter LORD FITZWATER

LORD FITZWATER

15 My lord, I have from Oxford sent to London
The heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely,
Two of the dangerous consorted traitors
That sought at Oxford thy dire overthow.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Thy pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgot;
20 Right noble is thy merit, well I wot.

Enter HENRY PERCY, and the BISHOP OF CARLISLE

HENRY PERCY

The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,
With clog of conscience and sour melancholy
Hath yielded up his body to the grave;
25 But here is Carlisle living, to abide
Thy kingly doom and sentence of his pride.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Carlisle, this is your doom:
Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life;
30 So as thou livest in peace, die free from strife:
For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
High sparks of honour in thee have I seen.

Enter EXTON, with persons bearing a coffin

EXTON

Great king, within this coffin I present
Thy buried fear: herein all breathless lies
35 The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought.

Shakescleare Translation

Sound of trumpets. HENRY BOLINGBROKE and the DUKE OF YORK, with other Lords and Servants enter

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Kind uncle York, the latest news is that the rebels have set the town of Cicester in Gloucestershire on fire; but we don't know whether they've been captured or killed.

NORTHUMBERLAND enters

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Welcome, my lord. What's the news?

NORTHUMBERLAND

First, I wish you all happiness in your sacred position. The next news is that I've sent the decapitated heads of Oxford, Salisbury, Blunt, and Kent to London; how I captured them is described in this paper.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

We thank you, gentle Percy, for your efforts; we'll reward you well for this.

LORD FITZWATER enters

LORD FITZWATER

My lord, from Oxford I've sent the heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely to London--they were two of the dangerous traitors that plotted against you.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Your actions won't be forgotten, Fitzwater; I know that you deserve rewards.

HENRY PERCY and the BISHOP OF CARLISLE enter

HENRY PERCY

The ringleader, the Abbot of Westminster, has died with the burden of a guilty conscience; but Carlisle is here, captured, to hear your sentence on him.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Carlisle, this is my sentence. Find some secret place, some little monastery, and enjoy your life there. So long as you live in peace, die free from conflict; for though you've always been my enemy, I know you're an honorable man.

EXTON enters, with people carrying a coffin

EXTON

Great king, I present your deepest fear. Richard of Bordeaux, the greatest of your enemies, lies in this coffin, brought here by me.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast wrought
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand
Upon my head and all this famous land.

EXTON

40 From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

They love not poison that do poison need,
Nor do I thee: though I did wish him dead,
I hate the murderer, love him murdered.
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,
45 But neither my good word nor princely favour:
With Cain go wander through shades of night,
And never show thy head by day nor light.
Lords, I protest, my soul is full of woe,
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow:
50 Come, mourn with me for that I do lament,
And put on sullen black incontinent:
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand:
March sadly after; grace my mournings here;
55 In weeping after this untimely bier.

Exeunt

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Exton, I don't thank you; for you have done a scandalous
deed that will make me look guilty in the eyes of the world.

EXTON

I did this because you asked me to with your own words,
my lord.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

No one loves poison, even when they need it--and I don't
love you either. Though I wished him dead, I hate the
murderer and love the one he killed. You won't get anything
from me for your efforts but a guilty conscience; go wander
in the desert, like Cain after he killed Abel, and never show
your face here by day or night.

[To Lords] Lords, I tell you, I'm sad that I grow by the spilling
of blood. Come, put on black clothes and mourn with me:
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land  , to wash this blood
from my guilty hands. Come with me there, and grace our
mourning here by joining the funeral procession.

 Bolingbroke promises to go on a
crusade to atone for his role in
Richard's death.

Exit all

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