

King Richard II

by William Shakespeare

Presented by Paul W. Collins

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Chapter One Accusations, Denials

At the end of the 14th century, King Richard II, thirty-two, holds court in Windsor Castle, just west of London on the Thames. Annoyance shows as he takes his seat upon the throne; he must now deal with a festering matter—one he had hoped to settle privately.

He begins the formal proceeding. “Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster, hast thou, according to thine oath and bond, brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son, here to make good the boisterous late appeal, which then our leisure would not let us hear, against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?”

“I have, my liege,” replies the duke, one of the king’s uncles.

“Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him if he accuse the duke from ancient *malice*, or worthily, as a good subject should, on some *known* ground of treachery in him?” the king asks pointedly.

“As near as I could sift him on that argument,” says Gaunt dryly, “on some *apparent danger* seen in him aimed at Your Highness, not inveterate malice.”

“Then call them to our presence,” says Richard. “Ourselves will hear the accuser and the accused freely speak, face to face, and frowning brow to brow.” He thinks, as the lords are summoned, *High-stomached are they both, and full of ire!—in rage, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire!*

From opposite doors, two noblemen enter the chamber: Henry Bolingbroke, Gaunt’s son, thirty-two, Duke of Hereford and Earl of Derby; and the accused, Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, forty-two.

Bolingbroke bows to King Richard. “Many years of happy days befall my gracious sovereign, my most beloved liege.”

Mowbray bows to the king. “May each day better still the others’ happiness, until the heavens, envying earth’s good hap, add an immortal title to your crown.”

“We thank you both—yet *one* but *flatters* us,” says Richard, “as well appeareth by the cause you come in—namely, to *accuse each other of high treason!*”

“Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?”

Bolingbroke steps forward. “First, heaven be the recorder of 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.

“Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee—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!*—too good”—high-born—“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! And wish, so please my sovereign, ere I move, what my tongue speaks, my right-drawn sword may prove!”

Mowbray stands before the king, stone-faced. “Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal. ’Tis not a trial of *women’s* war, the bitter clamour of two eager *tongues*, can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain,” he says, glancing contemptuously at Bolingbroke. “The blood is *hot* that must be cooled for this!

“Yet can I not of such tame patience boast as to be hushèd, and nought at all to say.

“First, the fair reverence of Your Highness curbs me from giving reins and spurs to my free speech—which else would post until it had *returned* these terms of treason, *doubled*, down his *throat!*”

“Setting aside his high blood’s royalty—let *him* be no kinsman to my liege!—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 even were I *tied* and *run afoot* to the frozen ridges of the *Alps!*—or any other inhospitable ground where ever Englishman durst set his foot!

“Meantime, let this defend my loyalty, and all my hopes: most *falsely* doth he *lie!*”

Bolingbroke tosses down a glove before Mowbray’s foot. “Pale, trembling *coward*, there I throw my gage, disclaiming here the kindred of the king,”—not asserting its protection, “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! By that and all the rites of knighthood else will I *make good*”—prove—“against thee, arm to arm, what I have spoken or thou canst *worse* devise!”

“I take it up!” Mowbray lifts the glove in a fist. “And I swear by that sword which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,”—King Richard so elevated him, “I’ll *answer* thee in any fair degree, or chivalrous design of knightly trial!

“And when I mount, alive may I not alight if I be traitor, or unjustly fight!”

As the noblemen glare at each other, Richard asks, “What doth our cousin lay to Mowbray’s charge? It must be great, that can provoke *us* to so much as a *thought* of ill in him....”

Bolingbroke turns slightly, the better to be heard by the courtiers. “Look that what I speak, my *life*”—winning the duel—“shall prove true: that Mowbray hath received *eight thousand* pieces of *gold* in the name of lendings for support of Your Highness’ *soldiers*—the which he hath *retained* for *lewd employments*, like a false *traitor* and injurious *villain!*”

“Besides I say—and will in battle *prove!*—either here or elsewhere, to the furthest verge that ever was surveyed by English eye!—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, that he did *plot the Duke of Gloucester’s death!*—*deceivèd* his soon-believing adversaries, and consequently, like a *traitor coward*, sluiced out his innocent soul through *streams of blood!*”

“Which blood, like sacrificèd *Abel’s*, cries to me even from the tongueless caverns of the earth for *justice* and rough *chastisement!* And, by the glorious worth of my descent, this arm shall *do it*, or this life be *spent!*”

Richard is aware of his courtiers’ intense interest as they listen. *How high a pitch his resolution soars!* The violent death a year ago of Thomas of Woodstock, another of the king’s uncles and a very wealthy duke—who was being held, imprisoned by Mowbray, on Richard’s order—has provoked much public speculation.

The monarch turns to the other complainant. “Thomas of Norfolk, what say’st thou to this?”

“Oh, let my sovereign turn away his face,” says Mowbray, “and bid his ears a little while be deaf, till I have told this *slanderer of his blood* how *God* and good men *hate* so foul a *liar!*”

The king speaks solemnly. “Mowbray, *impartial* are our eyes and ears. Were he my *brother*, nay, my *kingdom’s heir*—and he is but my father’s brother’s son—now, by my sceptre’s awe, I make a vow that such neighbour *nearness* to our sacred blood 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.”

Mowbray proceeds: “Then, Bolingbroke, as *low* as to *thy heart*, through the false passage of thy throat, *thou liest!* *Three parts* of that receipt I had for Calais I *disbursèd duly* to his highness’ soldiers; the other part—for that my sovereign liege was in my debt—reservèd I, *by consent*, upon remand of a costly account since last I went to France to fetch his queen.” He had escorted Lady Isabelle, a French princess, to England, where she was married to King Richard.

“Now *swallow down that lie!*” demands Mowbray. “As for Gloucester’s death, *I slew him not!*—but, to my own disgrace, neglected my sworn duty”—to guard him in safety—“in that case,” Mowbray admits.

He faces John of Gaunt. “As for you, my noble Lord of Lancaster, the honourable father to my foe, once I did lay an ambush for your life—a trespass that doth vex my grievèd soul; but ere

I last received the Sacrament I did *confess* it, and exactly begged Your Grace's pardon, and I hope I *had* it.

"That is my wrong.

"The rest are issues accusèd from the *rancour* of a *villain*, a *recreant* and most degenerate *traitor!*" he cries, "against which I myself boldly will *defend!*—and in exchange, hurl down *my* gage upon this overweening traitor's foot, to *prove* myself a loyal gentleman, even with the best blood chambered in his bosom!

"In haste whereof, most heartily I pray Your Highness to assign our trial day!"

King Richard rises. "Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me. Let's purge this choler without letting *blood*.

"This we prescribe, though no physician: deep *malice* makes too deep *incision*; forget, forgive; conclude and be agreed." He smiles gently. "Our doctors say this is no month to bleed."

He turns to John of Gaunt. "Good uncle, let this end where it begun; *we'll* calm the Duke of Norfolk, *you* your son."

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

"And, Norfolk, throw down his," the king tells Mowbray.

But neither opponent complies.

Old Gaunt frowns at Henry Bolingbroke. "*When, Harry, when? Obedience* bids I should not bid again!"

Says Richard sternly, "Norfolk, *throw down*, we bid; there is no boot!"—no benefit in persisting.

Mowbray replies, kneeling, "*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 *death* thou shalt not have to use in dark *dishonour* that lives upon my grave!

"I am *disgracèd, impeached* and *humiliated* here!" he protests, "pierced to the soul with slander's venomèd spear, the which no balm can cure but his *heart-blood* who breathèd this poison!"

Richard scowls. "Rage must be *withstood!* Give me his gage!" he demands. "*Lions* make leopards tame!"

"Yea—but not to change their *spots!*" retorts Mowbray, playing on *spot* as blemish. "Take off my *shame*, and I'll *resign* my gage! My dear, dear lord, the purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless *reputation!* That away, men are but gilded *forms* or painted *clay!* A jewel in a ten-times-barred-up chest is a bold *spirit* in a *loyal* breast!—mine *honour* is my *life!* Both grow in *one!*—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!"

Richard fumes, but still hopes for conciliation; he tells Bolingbroke, "Cousin, take back your gage; do *you* begin."

"O God, defend my soul from such deep sin!" cries the duke. "Shall I seem crest-fall'n in my *father's* sight?—or with pale, beggar *fear* impeach my height before this out-darèd *dastard?*

"Ere my *tongue* shall wound mine honour with such feeble wrong, or sound so base a parole, my *teeth* shall tear the slavish motive"—perpetrator—"of recanting, and *spit* it, bleeding in its high disgrace, to where *shame* doth harbour: even in Mowbray's *face!*"

While their obstinacy has affronted him as king, Richard knows that punishment of either could inflame supporters. "*We* were not born to request," he says peevishly, "but to *command!*

"Which is this: since we cannot do to make you *friends*, 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 *Justice* design the victor's chivalry."

He motions a nobleman forward. "Lord marshal, command our officers-at-arms be ready to direct these *home alarums,*" he orders gravely.

I

n London, despite his declining health, John of Gaunt—an aging son of King Edward III, who was King Richard’s grandfather and predecessor—meets with the distraught widow of Gaunt’s brother, the Duke of Gloucester. To sit near her, he lowers himself, slowly, and groaning with pain, into a heavy chair. “The part I have in Woodstock’s blood doth more solicit me than your exclams to stir against the butchers of his life.

“But since, alas, *correction* lieth in those hands which *made* the fault which we cannot correct, we put our quarrel to the will of the *heavens*—who, when they see the hour is ripe on earth, will *rain hot vengeance* on offenders’ heads!”

The duchess, too, believes that Richard ordered her husband’s killing; she is angry—and indignant. “Finds *brotherhood* in thee no *sharper spur*? 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, 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—and all the precious fluid is *spilt*! One flourishing branch of this most-royal root, its summer leaves all faded by envy’s hand, is *cracked*—*hacked down* by *murder*’s bloody axe!

“*Ah*, Gaunt, *his* blood was *thine*! That bed, that womb, that metal, that self-same mould which fashioned *thee* made *him* a man!—and though thou livest and breathest, yet art thou *slain* in him!

“Thou dost *consent* in some large measure to thy father’s death if thus thou seest thy wretched brother die, who was a model after thy father’s *life*!”

She sees that, perturbed but unwilling to act, he is shaking his head. “Call it not *patience*, Gaunt—it is *despair*!” And, she warns, “In suffering thus thy brother to be slaughtered, thou showest the naked pathway to *thy* life, teaching stern Murder how to butcher *thee*!”

“That which in lower men we *entitle* ‘patience’ is pale, cold *cowardice* in a noble breast!

“What shall I say? To safeguard thine *own* life, the best way is to *avenge* my Gloucester’s death!”

But Gaunt is tenaciously loyal to the anointed monarch. “*God*’s is the quarrel!—for God’s *substitute*, his deputy anointed in his sight, hath caused this death—the which, if wrongfully, let *Heaven* revenge; for I may never lift an angry arm against his minister.”

“*Where* then, alas, may I complain for myself?”

“To *God*, the widow’s champion and defence.”

Angrily, the lady wipes tears from her eyes. “Well, then I *will*.

“Thou goest to Coventry, there to behold our cousin Hereford and fell Mowbray fight.”

Looking upward, she clasps her hands in prayer. “Oh, set my husband’s wrongs in *Hereford*’s *spear*, that it may enter butcher Mowbray’s breast! Or if his fortune is amiss in the *first* attack, be *Mowbray*’s *sins* so heavy in his bosom that they may break his foaming courser’s back, and throw the rider headlong in the lists, a caitiff recreant, toward my cousin Hereford!”

She rises. “Farewell, old Gaunt; thy sometime brother’s wife with her companion Grief must end her life.”

He stands, and leans unsteadily on his cane. “Sister, farewell! I must to Coventry. May as much good stay with thee as goes with me.”

“Yet one word more. Grief woundeth where it falls, not with the empty hollowness but with *weight*! Sorrow ends not when it *seemeth* done; so I take my leave before I have begun,” she says sadly, anticipating her own death. “Commend me to thy brother Edmund York,” she says sharply; of seven brothers, only he and Gaunt are still alive. “*Lo*, this is all...”

Gaunt moves to leave.

“Nay, yet depart not so; though this be all, do not so quickly go,” she says, dreading to be alone—and still hoping to move her brother-in-law to take revenge. “I shall remember more”—of what he is to tell Edmund, Duke of York. “Bid him—*ah*, what?—with all good speed at Plashy visit me.” But then she muses, mournfully, on her home. “*Alack*, and what shall good old York

there see but empty lodgings and unfurnished halls, unpeopled spaces, untrodden stones? And what hear there for welcome but my *groans*?

“Therefore commend me thus: let him *not* come there to seek out sorrow that dwells *everywhere*!”

“Desolate, *desolate*, will I hence and die!” she sobs. “This last leave of thee takes my weeping eye!”

He turns and shuffles away, not wanting her to see his own tears streaking an angry face.

Chapter Two Chivalry Overruled

At Coventry, servants commanded by the lord marshal have readied the lists—boundaries to an oval of grassy field on which armored knights can joust on horseback, each with a lance aimed at the other’s heart, or fight on the turf with sword and dagger. Above, flags and banners flutter in the autumn breeze, and colorful emblems of heraldry adorn the noble opponents’ tents.

Beneath a canvas canopy, the royal court and other lords of the realm have gathered on a platform to watch. This sunny afternoon brings not a lively tournament but a deadly trial by combat.

“My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford armored?” asks the marshal, beside the gate to the lists.

“Yea, at all points!—and longs to enter in!” says the slender young duke. Edward, Edmund of York’s son is not yet twenty. He has just come from Bolingbroke’s tent.

“The Duke of Norfolk, spirited and bold, stays but the summons of the appellant’s trumpet,” the marshal reports.

The young nobleman is eager to witness the contest. “Why, then, the champions are prepared, and stay for nothing but his majesty’s approach!”

Trumpets are sounded, and King Richard steps up into the stand, followed by a number of lords, along with certain favorites: counselors Sir John Bushy, Sir William Bagot and Sir Henry Green—all looking elegant in colorful, costly clothing of the latest Italian fashion. With them, seeming quite drab, is the staid, conservative John of Gaunt.

When they are gathered in position, the king nods at the front. The marshal signals to begin.

With his page walking before him and bearing a shield, the defendant, clad in full armor and carrying his helmet, comes before the regal party and bows.

King Richard moves forward. “Marshal, demand of yonder champion the cause of his arrival here in arms. Ask him his name, and orderly proceed to swear him in the justice of his cause.”

The official bows and turns to Mowbray. “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.

“Speak truly, on thy knighthood and thy oath; and so defend thee heaven and thy valour!”

“My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, who hither come engaged by my oath—which God forbend a knight should violate—to defend both my loyalty and truth, to God, my king, and my succeeding issue, against the Duke of Hereford, who accuses me.

“And, by the grace of God and this mine arm, in defending of myself to prove him a *traitor* to my God, my king, and me!

“And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!”

The king’s trumpets sound, and the appellant enters the lists with his page.

Richard speaks again: “Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms, both who he is and why he cometh hither thus plated in habiliments of war, and formally, according to our law, depose him in the justice of his cause.”

“What is thy name,” asks the marshal, “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!”

“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, to King Richard, and to me!

“And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!”

The marshal turns to warn the courtiers and their attendants: “On pain of death, no person be so bold or in daring so hardy as to touch the lists, except the marshal and such officers appointed to direct these fair designs.”

Henry Bolingbroke takes a step forward. “Lord marshal, let me kiss my sovereign’s hand, and bow my knee before his majesty! For as 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.”

The marshal tells the king, “The appellant in all duty greets Your Highness, and craves to kiss your hand, and take his leave.”

King Richard comes down the wooden steps to the grass. “We will descend and fold him in our arms.” He embraces the duke. “Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause be right, so be thy fortune in this royal fight. Farewell, my blood—which if today thou shed, lament we may, but not revenge thee, dead.”

“Oh, let no noble eye profane a tear for me if I be gored with Mowbray’s spear,” says Bolingbroke. “As confident as is the falcon in’s flight against a wind do I Mowbray fight!

“My loving lord, I take my leave of you.” He nods to his smiling nephew. “And of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle!—not sick, although I have to do with *death*, but lusty, young, and cheerly drawing breath!”

He turns to his father, frail John of Gaunt. “*Lo*, as at English feasts, so I regret the most excellent last, to make the end most sweet! 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, and with thy blessings steel my lance’s point, that it may enter Mowbray’s waxen coat and furbish anew the name of John o’ Gaunt, even in the lusty havior of his son!”

“God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!” says Gaunt. “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!*”

Bolingbroke smiles. “Mine innocency, and Saint George, to thrive!” Commoners watching from outside the fence cheer at the reference the England’s patron saint; Henry is seen as a patriot unsullied by Richard’s extravagant court.

Thomas Mowbray now faces the assembly. “However God or Fortune cast my lot, here lives or dies, true to King Richard’s throne, a loyal, just and upright *gentleman!* Never did captive with a freer heart cast off his chains of bondage and embrace his golden, uncontrolled *enfranchisement* more than my dancing soul doth celebrate this *feast of battle* with mine adversary!

“Most mighty liege, and my companion peers, 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.”

“Fare well, my lord,” says Richard. “Securely, I espy, virtue with valour couchèd in thine eye.

“Order the trial, marshal, and begin.” The king returns to stand at the center of the wooden platform.

The marshal motions a page forward on the turf, and calls out, “Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby, receive thy lance; and God defend the right!”

Bolingbroke, gripping the long weapon brought by the boy, replies: “Strong as a tower in hope, I cry *Amen!*”

The marshal tells Mowbray's page, "Go bear this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk."

Bolingbroke's herald pronounces: "Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby, stands here for God, his sovereign and himself, on pain of being false and recreant, to prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray, a *traitor* to his God, his king and him; and dares him to set forward to the fight!"

The other herald replies: "Here standeth Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, on pain to be found false and recreant, both to defend himself—and to prove Henry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby, to God, to his sovereign, and to him *disloyal*—courageously and with a free desire attending but the signal to begin!"

"*Sound, trumpets!*" cries the lord marshal, "and set forward, combatants!"

The two noblemen mount their steeds and proceed to opposite ends of the lists, where each lifts his lance, aiming its point at the other man's chest.

Brass horns blare out a loud call to charge—but just then the marshal shouts, "*Stay!* The king hath thrown his warder down!"

Richard's arms are raised, and the carved rod symbolizing royal authority lies on the rush-strewn planks before him. "Let them lay aside their helmets and their spears, and both return back again!"

"Withdraw with us," he tells his key advisers. "Then let the trumpets sound when we'll inform these dukes what we decree." They move away and confer privately.

The combatants ride to the stand, disarm, and dismount.

The horns provide a long flourish.

"Draw near," Richard commands, stepping to the front, "and list what, with our council, we will have done."

He regards both noblemen gravely. "For that our kingdom's earth should not be soiled with that dear blood which it hath fostered;

"And for that our eyes do hate the dire aspect of *civil wounds*, ploughed up with neighbour's sword;

"And because we think the eagle-wingèd pride of sky-aspiring and *ambitious* thoughts set you on with rival-hating envy to *break our peace*—which in our country's cradle draws the sweet, infant breath of gentle sleep—so *roused up, untuned*, with boisterous *drums*, with harsh resounding *trumpets*' dreadful bray, and grating shock of wrathful *iron arms*, might from our quiet confines fright fair *peace*, and make us wade even in our kindred's *blood!*—

"Therefore, we *banish* you from our territories!"

"You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of death, till *twice-five summers* have enriched our fields shall not regret our fair dominions, but tread the stranger paths of banishment!"

Bolingbroke bows stiffly. "Your will be done," he says grimly. "This must my comfort be: the sun that warms you here shall *shine* on *me*—and those his golden beams to you here lent shall paint me, and *gild* my banishment!"

"Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom," Richard tells the duke, "which I with some unwillingness pronounce. The shy, slow hours shall not determine the dateless limit of *thy* dire exile; breathe I against thee the hopeless words of '*Never do return*, upon pain of *death!*'"

Mowbray is clearly stricken, but he bows. "A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege!—and all unlooked-for from Your Highness' mouth!" He had acted in accordance with the king's wishes. "A dear *merit* have I deserved at Your Highness' hands, not so deep a *maim* as to be cast forth in the common air!"

"The language I have learned these forty years, my native English, I must forego; and now my tongue's use is to me no more than an unstringèd viol or harp—like a delicate instrument *casèd up*; or, being open, put into his hands who knows no touch to tune the harmony!"

"Within my mouth you have jailed my tongue, doubly portcullisèd with my teeth and lips; and dull, unfeeling, barren Ignorance is made my keeper to attend on me!"

“I am too old to fawn upon a nurse; too far in years to be a *pupil* now! What then is thy sentence, which robs my lungs from breathing native breath, but speechless *death*?”

Richard’s intention is indeed to silence a now-troublesome minion. “It boots thee not to compassionate after our sentence; pleading comes too late.”

Mowbray starts away angrily. “Then thus I turn me from my country’s light, to dwell in solemn shades of endless night.”

“Return again, and take an *oath* with thee,” insists the king, drawing his sword and holding it, point downward, in his left hand; the hilt is a silver cross over the gleaming blade.

“Lay on our royal sword your banished hands!” Richard tells the dukes. “*Swear* by the duty that you owe to *God*—*our* part therein we banish with yourselves—to keep the oath that we administer, so help you in truth with God: that you shall never embrace each other’s love in banishment; nor never look upon each other’s face; nor never write, regret, nor reconcile this luring 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 grasps the hilt. “I swear.”

“And I, to keep all this,” says Mowbray, reaching to touch it.

Bolingbroke glares. “Norfolk, mine enemy so far as until now, by this time, had the king permitted us, *one* of our souls had wandered in the air, banished from its frail sepulchre of flesh as *both* are banished from this our 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!”

Mowbray is equally adamant: “*No*, Bolingbroke! If ever *I* were traitor, may my name be blotted from the book of life, and I from *heaven* banished as from hence!

“But God, thou, and *I* do know what thou art!—and all too soon, I fear, the *king* shall, too!”

He bows to Richard. “Farewell, my liege. No longer can I *stray*: save back to England, all the *world’s* my way.” He goes to his tent.

The king turns to John of Gaunt. “Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes I see thy grievèd heart. Thy sad aspect hath from the number of his banished years plucked *four* away.” Richard tells Bolingbroke kindly, “*Six* frozen winters spent, return with welcome home from banishment.”

Banishment. “How long a time lies in one little *word*!” says Bolingbroke. “*Six* lagging *winters* and six wanton *springs* held in a *word*! Such is the breath of kings.”

Old Gaunt look dourly at Richard. “I thank my liege, that in regard of me he shortens by four years my son’s exile.

“But little vantage shall *I* reap thereby! For, ere the *six years* that he hath to spend can change their moons and bring their times about, my oil-dry lamp and time-bewasted sight 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!”

“Why Uncle, thou hast many years to live,” says Richard.

“But not a *minute*, king, that *thou* canst give!” replies Gaunt, leaning on his cane. “*Shorten* my days thou canst with sullen sorrow, and pluck nights’ sleep from me—but not lend a morrow! Thou canst help Time to furrow me with age, but stop no wrinkle in my pilgrimage; thy word’s concurrent with his ’fore my death—but for me, *dead*, thy *kingdom* cannot buy breath!”

Richard frowns at the counselor’s reversal. “Thy son is banished upon good *advice*—whereto *thy* tongue as party verdict gave! Why at our justice seem’st thou now to lour?”

“Things sweet to taste in digestion prove sour,” says Gaunt. “You urged me on as a *judge*; but I’d rather you had bid me argue like a *father*! Oh, had it been a stranger, not my child, to smooth his fault I should have been more mild!

“A ‘*partial*’ slander sought I to avoid—and in the sentence, my own life destroyed!” He regards the council’s other advisers dolefully. “*Alas*, I looked for when some of you should say I was *too strict* in making mine own away; but against my will you gave to my tongue willing leave to do myself this wrong!”

Richard has no sympathy for carping. “Six years we banish him, and he shall go. Cousin, farewell—and, Uncle, bid him so.” He nods to his herald, and under a flourish of trumpets, the king and his train return to the royal tent.

As the platform gradually clears, young Aumerle comes to Bolingbroke. “Cousin, fare well!” he says earnestly. “What prescience must not know, from where you do remain let *paper* show,” he asks, quietly, as the marshal and several other noblemen approach them.

The marshal bows deeply. “My lord, no leave take I,” he tells the banished duke, “for I will ride, as far as land will let me, by your side!” Bolingbroke is widely admired—especially by those discontented with the king’s wasteful rule, his prodigal spending.

Gaunt chides his son’s silence. “Oh, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy *words*, that thou return’st no greeting to thy *friends*?”

Bolingbroke’s tearful frustration is now apparent. “I have too few to take my leave of *you*,” he tells his father, “when the tongue’s office should be prodigal to breathe the abundant dolour of the heart!”

Gaunt lays a hand on his shoulder. “Thy grief is but thine *absence* for a time.”

“Joy absent, grief is *present* for that time!”

“What is six *winters*? They are quickly gone.”

“To men in joy,” counters Henry, “but grief makes one hour *ten*!”

“Call it a *travel* that thou takest for pleasure,” says Gaunt.

“My *heart* will sigh when I miscall it so, finding it an *enforcèd* pilgrimage!”

“The sullen passage of thy weary steps esteem as *foil*,”—gold, pounded thin, “wherein thou art to set the precious jewel of thy home *return*.”

Bolingbroke shakes his head. “Nay, rather every tedious stride I make will but remember me what a deal of world I wander, far *from* the jewels that I love!

“Must I not serve a long apprenticeship in foreign passages?—and in the end, having my freedom, boast of nothing else but that I was a *journeyman* to *Grief*!”

Gaunt urges acceptance. “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 obtain honours*, and not that the king exilèd thee! Or suppose devouring *pestilence* hangs in our air, and thou art flying to a fresher clime!

“Look what thy soul holds dear—and 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*!”—royal court. “Construe the *flowers* fair *ladies*, and thy steps no more than a delightful measure in a *dance*!

“For snarling sorrow hath less power to bite the man who mocks at it, and sets it *alight*!”

Bolingbroke finds no comfort in sententious sentiments; he replies angrily, “Oh, who can hold *fire* in his hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus? Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite by bare *imagination* of a feast? Or wallow naked in December snow by thinking of a *fantasy summer’s* heat? Oh, *no!*—apprehending the good gives but greater *feeling* to the *worse*! Fell sorrow’s tooth doth never rankle more than when it bites, *but lanceth not the sore!*”

John of Gaunt looks toward their tent. “Come, come, my son, I’ll bring thee on thy way. Had I thy youth and cause, I would not *stay*!”

Henry looks around, mournfully. “Then, England’s ground, farewell, sweet soil, *adieu!*—my mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!

“Where’er I wander, boast of this I can: though banished, yet a trueborn *English* man!”

Chapter Three Gaunt's Prediction

King Richard, upon the throne, is conferring with two of his advisers when one of the Duke of Aumerle's attendants precedes him into the room. Bagot notes the newcomer with a raised eyebrow, then a cautioning glance in his direction. "We did observe," Richard tells him quietly.

"Cousin Aumerle, how far brought you high Hereford on his way?" asks the king.

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

"And say: what store of parting tears were shed?"

Aumerle shrugs. "Faith, none from *me*—except that the northeast wind, which then blew bitterly against our faces, awaked the sleeping rheum, and so by chance did grace our hollow parting with a tear."

"What said our cousin when you parted with him?"

"Farewell."

Young Aumerle perceives, in Green's expression, disapproval of such flippancy. "And, because my heart disdainèd that my tongue should so *profane* that word, it taught me craft to counterfeit *oppression*—such grief that words seemed burièd in my sorrow's grave!"

The nobles, Aumerle sees, seem satisfied. "Would the word 'farewell' have lengthened hours and added years to his *short banishment*, he should have had a *volume* of farewells! But since it would not, he had none from *me*."

Richard rises, fretful. "He is our *cousin*, Cousin; but when time shall call him home from banishment, 'tis in doubt whether our kinsman will come to see his *friends*"—accommodate himself to patricians of the ruling circle. "Ourself and Bushy, Bagot, here, and Green, observed his courtship of the *common* people."

The king paces, scowling. "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 misfortune—banishing, as 'twere, *their* affections *with* him!"

"*Off* goes his bonnet to an *oyster-wench*! A brace of *draymen* bid God to speed him well—and had the tribute of his supple knee, with, 'Thanks, my *countrymen*, my loving *friends*!'—as if *our* England were in reversion *his*, and he our subjects' next degree of hope!"

Aumerle is silent; his other uncle *is* in fact the favorite of many Englishmen.

"Well, he is *gone*," says Green firmly, "and with him go these thoughts.

"Now, as for the *rebels* who stand out in Ireland, *expedient manage* must be made, my liege, ere further leisure yield them further means for their advantage, and Your Highness' loss!"

King Richard nods, and returns to an urgent concern: a dangerous revolt. "We will go ourself in person to this war!"

"And, as our coffers with too great a court, and liberal largess, have grown somewhat light, we are enforced to *farm* our royal realm,"—sell leases for use of the crown's lands, "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, they shall subscribe them for large sums of gold, and send it after to supply our wants—for we will make for Ireland immediately."

He sees a gentleman hurrying into the hall. "Bushy, what news?"

The adviser is smiling. "Old John of Gaunt is suddenly taken grievously *sick*, my lord!—and hath sent post-haste to entreat Your Majesty to visit him!"

Richard is pleased. "Where lies he?"

"At Ely House." The bishop's palace is in Holborn, just outside London.

Richard rubs his hands together happily. “Now put it, God, in the sure physician’s mind”—that of Death—“to help him to his grave immediately! The lining of his coffers shall make coats to deck out soldiers for these Irish wars!” Gaunt is one of England’s richest men.

“Come, gentlemen, let’s all go visit him! Pray God we may make haste—and come too late!”
“*Amen!*” say the three older men heartily.

Will the king come, so that I may breathe my last in wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?” asks John of Gaunt, resting beside a large hearth in a drafty room. He sits on a dark, heavy chair with a blanket draped over his knees.

His brother, Aumerle’s father, the gray-bearded Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, replies: “Vex not yourself, nor strive not with your breath, for all in vain comes counsel to *his* ear.”

“Ah, 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 who breathe their words in pain. He that no more must say is listened to more than they whom youth and ease have taught to gloze.

“More are men’s ends markèd than their lives before; the *setting* sun and music at the *close* are as the taste of sweets—sweetest *last*, writ in remembrance more than things long past.

“Though Richard my life’s counsel would not hear, my *death*’s sad tale may yet undeaf his ear!”

“No,” says York, dragging a carved-oak chair nearer. “It is stopped up with other, *flattering* sounds—such as *praises*, of whose taste the wise are not fond; lascivious *metres*,”—new songs, “to whose vented rounds the open ear of youth doth always listen; report of *fashions* in proud Italy, whose manners our tardy nation still limps after in apish, base imitation!

“Where doth the world thrust forth a *vanity*—so it be *new*, there’s no regard how *vile*—that is not quickly buzzed into his ears? Then, all too late, when *will* doth mutiny from *wit*’s respect, comes *counsel* to be heard!

“Direct not him whose way *himself* will choose; ’tis breath thou lack’st—and *that* breath wilt thou lose.”

But Gaunt is still hopeful; he leans forward. “Methinks I am a *prophet* now, inspired, in expiring, to foretell thus of him: *this rash, fierce blaze of riot cannot last!* For violent fires soon burn themselves out; small showers last long, but sudden storms are short; he tires betimes that *spurs* too fast; with *too eager* feeding, food doth choke the feeder!

“Dissolute *Vanity*, insatiate cormorant, consuming its means soon preys upon *itself!*”

The tired old man sinks back to rest; his sapient saws expended, he ponders.

He thinks of his nation, and his eyes glisten. “This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle, this berth of majesty, this other Eden, demi-paradise!

“This seat of Mars, 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 happy lands!

“This nurse—this teeming *womb* of kings, famous by their royal birth, and feared for their breeding, renownèd for their deeds of Christian service and true chivalry as far from home as is the sepulchre of the *world*’s ransom, blessèd Mary’s Son, in stubborn Judea!”

“This blessèd plot, this *earth*, this *realm*, this *England!*”

But his love leads to concern. “This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land—dear for her reputation throughout the world—is now *leasèd* out!—I die *pronouncing* it!—like to a pelting tenement or *farm!*

“*England*, bounded by the triumphant sea, whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege of watery *Neptune*, is now bound *within!*—*shamed* by inky blots and rotten *parchment* bonds!” He shakes his head in disgust. “That England, that was wont to conquer others, hath made a shameful conquest of *itself!*

“Oh, would the *scandal* vanish with my life, how *happy* then were my ensuing death!”

York hears voices coming from the corridor. He rises, smoothes his silver-streaked hair and beard, and slides his chair aside. “The king is come.

“Deal *mildly* with this youth,” he urges quietly, “for young, hot colts being ragèd do range the more!”

Gaunt manages to stand as King Richard and Queen Isabelle enter the room, followed by Aumerle, then Bushy, Green, and Bagot, with Sir William Ross and Sir William Willoughby.

The queen touches the ancient’s blue-veined hand. “How fares our noble uncle Lancaster?”

“What comfort, man?” asks the king. “How is’t with agèd Gaunt?”

John’s laugh is bitter. “Oh, how that name befits my composition! *Old* Gaunt indeed; and *gaunt* in being old! For sleeping England a long time have I stood watch; watching breeds *keenness*—all *leanness* is Gaunt!”

He regards Richard. “Within me, grief hath kept a tedious *fast*; and who that abstains from meat is *not* gaunt? The pleasure that *some* fathers *feed* upon is my strict fast! I mean *seeing my child*! And by that fasting hast *thou* made me gaunt—gaunt as I am *grave*!

“Gaunt is a grave, whose hollow tomb nought but *bones* inhabit.”

Richard is annoyed. “Can *sick* men play so neatly with their names?”

“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.”

“Should *dying* men flatter those that live?”

Gaunt’s stare is intense. “No—nor men living flatter those who *die*.”

Richard is puzzled. “But thou, now a-dying, say’st thou flatterest me.”

“Oh *no*—*thou* diest, though I the sicker be!”

The king frowns. “I am in health, I breathe—and see thee *ill*.”

“Now He that made me knows I see *thee* ill, ill in *myself* to *see*—and seeing *all* in thee!

“Thy death-bed is no less than *thy land*, wherein thou liest in *reputation* sick!—and thou, too-careless patient as thou art, commit’st thine anointed body to the cure of those ‘physicians’ that first *wounded* thee!

”A *thousand* flatteries sit within thy crown, whose compass is no bigger than thy head; but engaged in so small a verge, the *waste* is yet no whit lesser than *thy land*!

“Oh, had thy *grandsire* with a prophet’s eye seen how his son’s son should destroy his *sons*, beyond thy *reach* he would have laid thy shame, *deposing* thee before thou wert possessèd,”—of the crown, “who art now *possessed* to *depose thyself*!

“Why, Cousin, wert thou regent of the *world* it were a shame to let out *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 laws is *bondslave* to the law!—and thou—”

“Lunatic lean-witted *fool*!” cries Richard, cutting him off angrily. “Presuming on an *ague*’s privilege, darest with thy frozen admonition make pale *our* cheek, chasing the *royal* blood with fury from its native residence?

“Now, by my seat’s rightly royal majesty, wert thou not brother to great Edward’s son, the tongue that runs so *roundly* in thy head should *run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders*!”

Gaunt is only provoked further. “Oh, *spare me not*, my brother’s son, for that I was *his* father Edward’s son! *That* blood hast thou already tapped out and drunkenly *quaffed*!

“My brother *Gloucester*—plain, well-meaning soul, whom fair befall in heaven ’mongst happy souls!—may be precedent good *witness* that thou art not averse to spilling *Edward’s* blood!

“*Join* thou in the present *sickness* that *I* have!—but may crookèd age not crop at once thy unkindness like a too-long withered flower; *live*—in thy *shame*!

“And die not shame *with* thee! *These words* hereafter thy *tormentors* be!”

The white-haired nobleman wavers, exhausted by anger and exertion. He motions to his attendants. "Convey me to my bed, then to my *grave*." As the servants help him away, he tells them, sadly, "Love they to live that *love* and *honour* have."

Richard watches as they go. "And let them *die* that *age* and *sullenness* have!—for both hast *thou*, and both *become* thy *grave*!"

Says the discomfited Duke of York. "I do beseech Your Majesty, impute his wayward words to *sickliness* and *age* in him! He loves you, on my life, and holds you dear as Harry, Duke of Hereford, were *he* here!"

Richard snorts. "Right!—you say *true*: as *Hereford's* love, so *his*!" He mutters, "And as theirs is, so be all of *mine*."

A servant returns and whispers to the nearest nobleman, the Earl of Northumberland.

That lord comes to Richard. "My liege, old Gaunt commends him to Your Majesty."

"What says he?"

"Nay, *nothing*. All is *said*; his tongue is now a stringless instrument: words, life and all, old Lancaster hath spent."

John's brother moans, tearfully, "Be *York* the next that must be bankrupt so! Though death be poor, it ends all mortal woe."

"The ripest fruit falls first" says Richard coldly, "and so doth he. His time is spent—as our pilgrimage must be. So much for that."

He turns to the queen and nobles. "Now for our Irish wars. We must supplant those rough, rug-headed kerns, which thrive like vermin where none else, but only *they*, have privilege to live!

"And, as these great affairs do call for some charges, towards our assistance we do seize unto us the plate, grain, revenues and moveables whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possessed."

York is shocked and appalled—the action effectively confiscates the vast inheritance of banished Henry Bolingbroke. *How long shall I be patient?* he wonders. *Oh, how long shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?*

Not Gloucester's death nor Hereford's banishment, not Gaunt's rebuke nor England's private wrongs, not the prevention of poor Bolingbroke about his marriage nor my own disgrace have ever made me sour my patient cheeks, nor bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face!

He must speak. "I am the *last* of noble Edward's sons!—of whom *thy father*, Prince of Wales, was *first*! In war was never lion ragèd more fierce, in peace was never gentle lamb more mild, than was *that* young and princely gentleman!"

York feels tears in his eyes, looking at Richard. "His *face* thou hast, for even so looked he, accomplishèd with the number of thy hours; but when *he* frowned, it was against the *French*, and not against his *friends*!—his noble hand did *win* 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!"

He sees the king's menacing frown. "Oh, *Richard*! York is too far gone with grief, or else he never would compare between..."

Richard is impatient. "Well, Uncle, what's the matter?"

"Oh, my liege, pardon me, if you please! If *not* pleasèd, *pardoned* I am content withal..."

Still, he must ask: "Seek you to seize and grip into your hands the royalties and rights of banished Hereford?"

"Was not Gaunt *just*, and is not Harry *true*? Is not Gaunt *dead*, and doth not Hereford *live*? Did not the one *deserve* to have an heir? Is not his heir a well-deserving *son*?"

"Take Hereford's *rights* away and thou takest from *Time* its charters and its customary rights!—let not *tomorrow* ensue *today*!—and be not *thyself*, for how art thou a *king* but by fair sequence and succession?"

"Now, afore God, and God forbid I say *but true*, if you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights—call in the letters-patent that he hath for his attorneys to sue in his livery, and deny his offered, gentle homage—you pluck *a thousand dangers* onto your head! You lose a thousand

well-disposed *hearts!*—prick even *my* tender patience to those thoughts which honour and allegiance cannot think!”

Richard has other business at hand. “Think what you will, we seize into our hands his plate, his goods, his money and his lands.”

“I’ll not be by the while,” moans the old duke, heading for the door. “My liege, farewell. What will ensue hereof, there’s none can tell; but *bad courses* may be understood in that their *events* can never fall out good!”

Richard turns to his advisers. “Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight! Bid him repair to Windsor and see to this business.” Wiltshire is Treasurer of England. “Tomorrow next we will for Ireland—and ’tis *time*, I trow!

“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! Tomorrow must we part; be *merry*, for our time of stay is short!”

The herald sounds a brief flourish, and the king and queen return to the castle for a sumptuous supper.

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Sir Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, twenty-five, addresses two other noblemen at a clandestine meeting in London. “Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.”

“And *living*, too, for now his *son* is duke,” notes Ross. They all admire Henry Bolingbroke.

Willoughby shakes his head. “Barely in *title*—not in *revenue*.”

“Richly in both, if *Justice* had her right!” says Northumberland.

“My heart is great,” says Ross, “but it must break from *silence* ere’t be unburdened by a liberal tongue...”

“Nay, speak thy mind,” urges Northumberland, “and let him ne’er speak more who speaks thy words again to do thee harm!”

“Portends this that thou wouldst speak to the Duke of Hereford?” asks Willoughby. “If it be so, out with it boldly, man!” he tells Ross. “Quick is mine ear to hear of good towards him!”

Ross responds glumly: “No good at all that I can *do* for him—unless you call it good to *pity* him, bereft, and gelded of his patrimony!”

Says Northumberland, “Now, afore God, ’tis *shameful* that such wrongs are borne by him—a *royal prince!*—and by 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, that will the king severely *prosecute*—’gainst *us*, our lives, our children, and our heirs!”

“The commoners he hath bled with grievous taxes, and quite lost their hearts,” Ross points out. “The nobles he hath fined for ancient quarrels, and quite lost *their* hearts!”

Willoughby nods; everyone pays heavily. “And new exactions are *daily* devised, as seizures, ‘borrowings’ and I wot not what! But what, in God’s name, doth *become* of this?”—how is the revenue used?

“*Wars* have not wasted it,” says Northumberland, “for warred he hath not, but basely *yielded* upon *compromise* that which his noble ancestors achieved with *blows!* More hath *he* spent in peace than they in *wars!*”

“The Earl of Wiltshire hath the *realm* in farm!” complains Ross.

“The king’s grown *bankrupt*, like a broken man!” says Willoughby.

Northumberland concurs. “Reproach in *dissolution* hangeth over him!”

“His burthenous taxations notwithstanding, he hath not money for these Irish wars but by the robbing of the banished duke!” charges Ross.

“His noble *kinsman!*” adds Northumberland. “Most *degenerate* king!

“But, lords, we *hear* this fearful tempest rising, yet seek no *shelter* to avoid the storm!—we *see* the wind set sore upon our sails, and yet we strike them not, but serenely *perish!*”

Says Ross sourly, “We see the very wrack that we must suffer! And *unavoidable* is the danger now, for so suffering”—enduring without challenge—“the causes of our wreck!”

“*Not so!*” cries Northumberland. “Even through the hollow eyes of Death I spy *life* peering!—but I dare not *say* how near the tidings of our comfort be...”

“Nay, let us *share* thy thoughts, as thou dost ours!” demands Willoughby.

“Be confident to speak, Northumberland,” says Ross. “We three are but *thymself*; and, heard so, thy words are but as *our thoughts*—therefore, be bold!”

“Then *thus*,” says Northumberland. “I have from Port le Blanc, a bay in Brittany, received intelligence: that Harry, Duke of Hereford; Rainold Lord Cobham; Thomas, son and heir to the Earl of Arundel, who late broke from the Duke of Exeter; his brother, Sir Thomas Erpingham, archbishop late of Canterbury—Sir John Ramston; Sir John Norbery; Sir Robert Waterton and Francis Quoint—all those, well furnished by the Duke of Bretagne with *eight tall ships* and *three thousand men of war!*—are making hither with all due expedience, and shortly mean to touch our northern shore!

“They had come ere this but that perhaps they waited for the king’s departure for Ireland.”

His determined look conveys a challenge. “If then we shall *shake off* our slavish yoke—splint up our drooping country’s broken wing, redeem from brokering palms the blemished crown, wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre’s gilt, and make high *majesty* look like *itself*—*away*, and ride with me to Ravenspurgh!”—the landing site. “But if you are faint, as fearing to do so, *stay* and *be secret!*—and *myself* will go!”

“To *horse*, to *horse!*” cries Ross. “Urge *doubts* to them that *fear!*”

Lord Willoughby is already dashing eagerly ahead of the other two. “If my *horse* hold out, I will *first* be there!”

Chapter Four Rebellion, Invasion

Madam, Your Majesty is too much *sad*,” chides Bushy gently. “You promised, when you parted from the king, to lay aside life-harming heaviness, and welcome a *cheerful* disposition!”

“To please the *king* I did; to please myself I cannot do it,” Isabelle replies. “But I know no cause why I should entertain such a guest as *Grief*, save bidding farewell to so sweet a host as my sweet Richard.

“Yet again methinks some unborn *sorrow*, ripe in Fortune’s womb, is coming toward me, and my inward soul trembles—at *nothing!*” She paces, wringing her hands. “At *something* it grieves, more than with parting from my lord the king...”

The gentleman, completely confident as one of the king’s chief counselors, sees foreboding as a female failing. “Each substance of a grief hath twenty *shadows* which show like grief itself, but are not *so*,” he tells her. “For sorrow’s eye, glazed with blinding tears, divides one thing entire into many objects—like perspectives”—pictures distorted deliberately for novelty—“which gazed straight upon show nothing but confusion, yet eyed *awry*”—aslant—“distinguish *form*.”

“So Your Sweet Majesty, looking awry upon your lord’s departure, finds a *shape* of grief to bewail more than itself—which, looked on as it *is*, is nought but shadow of what it is *not*. Then, thrice-gracious queen, for more than your lord’s departure weep not! *More*’s not *seen!*—or if it be, ’tis with false *Sorrow*’s eye, which weeps for things imaginary as things true.”

“It may be so,” says Isabelle, “but yet my inward soul persuades me it is otherwise. Howe’er it be, I cannot but be sad, so heavy sad as—though thinking on no thought I *think*—makes me with very *nothing* faint and shrink!”

Bushy tries to reassure her: “’Tis nothing but a conceit,”—an idea, “my gracious lady.”

“’Tis something *less!*” she counters, finding an irony in the charge, given his own extended metaphor. And he should hardly condescend to the queen, especially as regards her feelings. “A

conceit is ever derived from some *forefather* grief; mine is *not* so, for *nothing* has begot my something grief! *Something* hath the nothing that *I* grieve!

“’Tis in *reversion*,”—yet to be inherited, “that which I do possess; but what it *is*, that as yet I know not. What I cannot *name*, ’tis a nameless *woe*, I wot!”

Green hurries into Queen Isabelle’s outer chambers, and bows to her. “God save Your Majesty! And well met, gentleman. I hope the king is not yet shipped for Ireland....”

“Why hopest thou so?” asks Isabelle. “’Tis better to hope he *is*, for his designs crave *haste*, his haste good *hope*! Then wherefore dost thou hope he is not shipped?”

Green is distraught. “That he, *our* hope, might have *retired* his power,”—pulled back his forces, “and driven into despair an *enemy’s* hope!—one who hath *strongly set footing in this land*! The banished *Bolingbroke repeals himself*!—and, uplifted with *arms*, is safe arrivèd at Ravenspurgh!”

“Now God in heaven forbid!” she cries.

“Oh, madam, ’tis *too true*! And what is *worse*, the Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy, the Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby, with all their powerful friends, are *fled to him*!”

Bushy frowns. “Why have you not proclaimed Northumberland and all the rest of the revolted faction *traitors*?”

“We *have*!” says Green, irritated. “Whereupon the Earl of Worcester hath broken his staff, resigned his stewardship,”—here, of Windsor Castle, “and all the household servants fled *with* him to Bolingbroke!”

“So, Green, thou art the *midwife* to my woe,” says the queen, “and *Bolingbroke* my sorrow’s dismal heir! Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigy, and I, a gasping, new-deliverèd mother, have joined woe to *woe*, sorrow to *sorrow*!”

“Despair not, madam,” says Bushy.

“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 would gently *dissolve* the bands of life—while false Hope *lingers* in extremity!”

Green looks to the door. “Here comes the Duke of York....”

“With signs of *war* about his agèd neck!” groans the queen; the duke now wears a gorget; the emblem of military command is a piece of armor. “Oh, full of *care*-laden business are his looks! Uncle, for God’s sake, speak comforting words!”

“Should I do so, I should belie my thoughts,” says the York gravely. “Comfort’s in heaven, but 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*! Here am *I* left to underprop his land, who, weak with age, cannot support *myself*!” He glares at the aristocratic officials. “Now comes the sick hour that his *surfeit* made!—now shall he *try* his friends that flattered him!”

From the entrance, one of York’s servants runs to tell a him about a mission. “My lord, your son was *gone* before I came!” The young Duke of Aumerle, sensing opportunity, has accompanied King Richard to Ireland.

“He was? Why, so....” York sighs. “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!” He tells the man, “Sirrah, get thee to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester—bid her send me presently a thousand pound!” He knows she will demand confirmation: “Hold, take my ring.”

The servant, red-faced, turns his hat in his hands. “My lord, I had forgot to tell Your Lordship: today, as I came by, I callèd there—but I shall grieve you to report the rest....”

“What is’t, knave?”

“An hour before I came, the duchess died.”

“God in his mercy,” says York sadly. “What a tide of woes comes rushing on this woeful land at once! I know not *what to do!* I would to God that my untruth”—lack of unquestioning loyalty—“had so provoked him that the king had *cut off my head!*—with my *brother’s!*”

He glares at the astonished, silent gentlemen. “*What?*—are there no *posts* dispatched for Ireland? How shall we do for *money* for these wars?”

“*Come, Sister-in law! Cousin, I should say—pray, pardon me,*” he tells the queen; they must find safety away from the palace. He turns to his servant. “Go, fellow, get thee home, provide some carts, and bring away the *armour* that is there!” The man bows and runs.

“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!” The king has left his aged surrogate with no troops—and no money to raise an army.

York is dismayed that Henry Bolingbroke would thus defy Richard. “Both are my kinsmen! The one is my sovereign, whom both my oath and duty bid defend; the other *again* is my kinsman—whom the king hath *wronged!*—whom conscience and my kindred bid me do *right!*”

“Well, *something* we must do! Come, Cousin, I’ll find repose for you!”—locate a safe haven. Queen Isabelle nods and moves toward the door, and the duke follows. “Gentlemen, *go,* muster up your men and meet me presently at Berkeley!”—to the west, near Wales. Bolingbroke has landed on England’s eastern shore. “I should to Plashy, too, but time will not permit; all is uneven, and everything is left at six and seven!”—in jeopardy, as in deficient card-game hands.

Bushy watches, amazed, as King Richard’s queen and his deputy both flee from the royal castle. “The wind sits fair for news going *to* Ireland, but none for *returns!*” he moans. “For us to levy power proportionable to the enemy is all but impossible!”

“Besides,” says Green, “*our* nearness to the king in love is near the *hate* of those who love not the king!”

“And that’s the wavering commoners,” says Bagot, “for *their* love lies in their *purses!* And whoso empties them, by so much fills their hearts with deadly hate!”

Bushy pales. “Wherein the king stands generally *condemned!*”

Bagot tells the others fearfully, “Then so are *we,* if judgement lie in them, because we ever have been *near* the king!”

“Well, I will for refuge straight to Bristol Castle,” Green decides. “The Earl of Wiltshire is already there.”

“Thither will I *with* you,” says Bushy, “for little office will the hateful commons perform for *us* except, like *curs,* to *tear us all to pieces!*” He and Green start away. “Will you go along with us?”

“No; I will to Ireland to his majesty. Farewell,” says Bagot glumly. “If heart’s presages be not vain, we here are three that ne’er shall meet again.”

Bushy retains some hope: “That depends as *York* thrives to beat back Bolingbroke.”

Green shakes his head. “*Alas,* poor duke! The task he undertakes is *numbering sands* and drinking *oceans* dry!—where *one* on *his* side fights, thousands will *fly!*”

“Farewell at once—for once, for all, and ever!”

“Well, we *may* meet again,” says Bushy, hurrying after him out the doorway.

Bagot watches, morose. *I fear me, never.*

How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?” asks Henry Bolingbroke, riding with the Earl of Northumberland at the head of a massive—and growing—army of soldiers; the heavily armed troops brought by ship from Brittany have since been joined by the English forces now supporting the banished duke’s invasion.

They have already marched southwest 175 miles, and come to within ten miles of Wales.

“Believe me, noble lord,” says the earl, “I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire, and these high, wild hills’ rough, uneven ways draw out our miles and make them wearisome—yet *your* fair discourse hath been as *sugar,* making the hard way *sweet* and delectable!”

“But I bethink me what a weary way from Ravenspurgh to Cotswold will be found by Ross and Willoughby,”—who are following with other troops, “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—and hope to *joy* is little less in joy than hope *enjoyed!* By that the weary lords shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done by sight of what I have: *your noble company!*”

Bolingbroke laughs, enjoying the earl’s parody of King Richard’s shamelessly servile sycophants. “Of much less *value* is my company than your good *words*,” he says with wry modesty.

He signals for the marching columns behind them to halt. “But who comes here?” he asks, as they dismount at a crossroads.

“It is my son, young Harry Percy, sent from my brother Worcester, whencesoever.”

Northumberland calls to the young man as he rides up: “Harry, how fares your uncle?”

Harry dismounts to join them. “I had thought, my lord, to have learned his health from *you*.”

“Why?—is he not with the queen?” asks Northumberland.

“No, my good lord—he hath forsook the court, broken his staff of office, and dispersed the household of the king!”

The earl is pleased but surprised. “What was his reason? He was not so resolved when last we spake together.”

“Because Your Lordship was proclaimed *traitor!* But he, my lord, is gone toward Ravenspurgh”—the ships’ landing point—“to offer service to the Duke of Hereford, and sent *me* over toward Berkeley to discover what power the Duke of York had levied there, then with directions to repair to Ravenspurgh.”

An introduction is clearly in order. “Have you *forgot* the Duke of Hereford, boy?” asks Northumberland.

“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.”

“Then learn to know him *now*: this is the duke!”

Percy, beaming at Bolingbroke, kneels. “My gracious lord, I render 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!”

“I thank thee, gentle Percy,” Bolingbroke replies, smiling. “And be sure I count myself in nothing else so happy as in the *soul*, remembering my good friends! And, as my *fortune* ripens with thy love, it shall be ever thy true love’s *recompense!* My heart this covenant makes; my hand thus seals it!” Percy rises, and they shake hands warmly.

“How far is it to Berkeley?” asks Northumberland. “And what stir keeps good old York *there* with his men of war?”

Henry Percy turns and points. “Here stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees, manned 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.”

On the dry dirt road before them they see, fast approaching, two men on horseback. “Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby, bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste!” says Northumberland.

“*Welcome*, my lords!” cries Bolingbroke, as the noblemen dismount and walk their lathered steeds forward. “I wot your *love* pursues a banished traitor; all my *treasury* is yet but insubstantial *thanks*, which, more enriched, shall be your love and labour’s recompense!”

Ross bows. “Your *presence* makes us rich, most noble lord!”

Willoughby bows, adding, “And far surmounts our labour to attain it!”

“Ever more *thanks!*—the exchequer of the poor, which, till my infant fortune comes to years, stands for my bounty.”

He spots the kicked-up dust trailing another rider. “But who comes here?”

Northumberland frowns, peering under a flattened hand. "It is my lord of *Berkeley*, as I guess...."

A few moments later, the baron has reached them. He dismounts and bows curtly. "My lord of Hereford, my message is to you," he says—addressing Bolingbroke by his diminished title.

Bolingbroke, whose late father had been possessed of about a third of the nation's land, glares. "My lord, *my* answer is to '*Lancaster*'—and I am come to seek that name in *England*!

"And I must *find* that title in your tongue before I make reply to aught you say!"

Berkeley is unabashed. "Mistake me not, my lord; 'tis not *my* meaning to raze one title of your honour out. I come to you, my lord—what lord you will—from the most gracious *regent* of this land, the Duke of York, to know what pricks you on to take advantage of the king's absence, and fright our native peace with self-born arms!"

Bolingbroke sees another group of riders. "I shall not need to transport my words by you; here comes his grace in person."

The Duke of York rides to the exile's waiting forces, and one of his attendants helps him to dismount.

Bolingbroke kneels. "My noble uncle!"

"Show me thy humble *heart*!—and not thy knee, whose 'duty' is *deceptive* and *false*!" cries indignant York.

"My gracious uncle—"

"*Tsk, tsk!* 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 banished and forbidden legs dared to touch once again the dust of *England's* ground? And then, *more* why—why have they dared to march so many miles upon her peaceful bosom, frightening her pale-faced villages with *war* by ostentation of despised *arms*?"

"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 now but the lord of such hot *youth* as when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself rescued the Black Prince, that young *Mars* of men, from forth the ranks of many thousand French, *oh* then how quickly should this arm of mine, now prisoner to the palsy, *chastise thee!*—and minister *correction* to thy fault!"

Bolingbroke rises. "My gracious uncle, let me know my fault: on what condition stands it, and wherein?"

"Even in condition of the *worst degree!*—in gross *rebellion*, and detested *treason!* Thou art a *banished man!*—and here art come before the expiration of thy time, braving *arms* against thy sovereign!"

"As I was banished, I was banished Hereford; but as I *come*, I come for *Lancaster*."

"And, noble uncle, I beseech Your Grace to look on my wrongs with an impartial eye." He touches York's arm. "You are my *father*, for methinks in you I see old Gaunt alive! O my father, will you then permit that I shall *stand* condemnèd?—a wandering *vagabond!*—my rights and royalties plucked from my arms *perforce!*—and *given away* to upstart *unthrifths!*"

"Wherefore was I *born*? If my *cousin* can be King of England, it must be granted I am *Duke of Lancaster!*"

"You have a son!—Aumerle, my noble cousin. Had *you* first died, and *he* been thus trod down, he should have found his uncle Gaunt a *father!*—to rouse his wrongers and *chase them to the bay!* I am denied to sue *my livery* here"—exert hereditary rights, "but my letters-patents yet give me leave!"

"My father's goods are distrainèd and sold!—and those and *all* are employed *amiss!* What would you have me *do*? I am a subject, but I *challenge law* if attorneys are *denied* me!"

"And therefore *personally* I lay claim to my inheritance's free descent!"

Northumberland defends the invasion to his old friend York. "The noble duke hath been too much *abused!*"

“It stands upon Your Grace to do him right!” adds Ross.

“Base men by *his* endowments are made *great!*” argues Willoughby.

York scoffs. “My lords of England, let me tell you this: I *have* had feeling of my cousin’s wrongs, and laboured all I could to do him right; but in *this* kind to come—braving *arms* to be his own carver and *cut out* his way!—to find out *right* with *wrongs*—*it may not be!*”

“And you that do *abet* him in this manner cherish *rebellion*, and are *rebels* all!”

“The noble duke hath sworn his coming is but for his *own!*” insists Northumberland, “and for the *right* of that we all have strongly sworn to give him aid! And let him ne’er see joy who *breaks* that oath!”

Old York is already weary. “Well, well, I see what will 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, I would *arrest 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 *neutral*. So, fare you well,” he tells his nephew. He turns as if to go. “Unless you please to enter into the castle, and there repose you for this night....”

“An offer, Uncle, that we will *accept!*” says Bolingbroke. “But we must win Your Grace to go with us to Bristol Castle, which they say is held by Bushy, Bagot and their ’complices—the *caterpillars* of the commonwealth which I have sworn to *weed*—and *pluck them away!*”

“It may be I will go with you,” mumbles York. “But yet I’d pause, for I am loath to break our country’s laws.” He would prefer that certain unpleasantness not take place in his presence. Still, taking the reins from the attendant, he climbs unsteadily onto his horse.

He sighs. “Neither friends nor foes, to me well come you are.

“Things past redress are now with me past care.”

Chapter Five The King Returns

Above a military encampment in Wales, at the edge of a high bluff facing seaward toward Ireland, an English nobleman watches in dismay as the Welsh forces below dwindle: the last of some forty thousand troops are taking down their tents and packing their gear.

Their commander approaches, anger in his voice. “My lord of Salisbury, we have stayed *ten days*, and hardly kept our countrymen together—and *yet* we hear no tidings from the king!

“Therefore we will disperse ourselves. Farewell.”

The earl pleads: “Stay yet another *day*, thou trusty Welshman! The king reposes all his confidence in thee!”

The captain regards him coldly. “’Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay.” He looks inland gloomily. “The bay-trees in our country are all withered, and *meteors* fright the fixed stars of heaven; the pale-faced moon looks boldly on the earth, and lank prophets whisper fearful *change!* Rich men walk *sadly*, and *ruffians* dance and leap, the one in fear to lose what they enjoy, the other, in rage, by war to *destroy!*”

“These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.

“Farewell. Our countrymen are gone and fled, well assured their King Richard is dead.”

Salisbury stands alone on the rocky heights, looking out, again in vain, over the sea.

Ah, Richard, with the eyes of heavy mind I see thy glory like a shooting star 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!

Bring forth these men!" Bolingbroke tells a sergeant. The castle at Bristol has been taken after only brief skirmishes.

He frowns as the two, arms bound behind them, are led to him. "Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls—since presently your souls must part your bodies—with too much citing of your pernicious lives, 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.*

The charges, he is well aware, can imply more than is known. He confronts the condemned knights. "You have *misled a prince!*—a *king*, a *royal* gentleman happy in blood and lineaments, by you *unhappied* and clean *disfigured!*

"You have, in a manner, with your *sinful* hours made a divorce betwixt his *queen* and him—broken the possession of a *royal bed*, and stained the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks with tears drawn from her eyes by your *foul wrongs!*" The accusation both condemns the king and implicates any male close to him.

Bolingbroke continues: "Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth, near to the king in *blood*—and near in love till *you* did make him *misinterpret* me! I have stooped my neck under your injuries, and sighed my English breath into *foreign* clouds, eating the bitter bread of *banishment!*—whilst *you* have fed upon my signories, despoiled my parks and felled my forest woods!—from my own windows torn my household coat, razed out my emblems, 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!"

He turns to his companions. "See them delivered over to execution, and the hand of Death."

"More *welcome* is the stroke of *death* to me than Bolingbroke to *England!*" cries Bushy as he is dragged off. He sneers at the rebels: "Lords, *fare well!*"

Green mutters, "My comfort is that Heaven will take our souls!—and plague injustice with the pains of Hell!"

Bolingbroke waves the prisoners away. "My lord Northumberland, see them dispatched."

Briskly he turns to the Duke of York. "Uncle, you say the queen is at your house; for God's sake, let her be treated kindly! Tell her I send to her my kind commends; take special care my greetings be delivered." Isabelle is popular with the people, despite their dissatisfaction with her husband.

The neutral noble is nodding. "A gentleman of mine I have dispatched, with letters of your love to her at large."

"Thank, gentle uncle!" Bolingbroke regards Ross, Willoughby and young Henry Percy as he mounts his stallion. "Come, lords! Away to fight with Glendower and his 'complices!"—the Welsh forces.

"A while to *work*—and after, *holiday!*"

On the coast of Wales, the royal party has finally arrived and disembarked. King Richard looks up the steep hillside. "Barkloughly Castle call they this at hand?"

"Yea, my lord," says young Duke of Aumerle, walking with him among the courtiers. Ahead of them, a steady drumbeat accompanies soldiers of the monarch's guard. "How brooks Your Grace the air, after your late tossing on the breaking seas?" asks Aumerle, still nauseous after a rough voyage.

"Needs must *I* like it *well!*" says the king. "I weep for joy to stand upon my kingdom once again!" He stops, kneels, and reaches down to touch the loam. "Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand, though *rebels* wound thee with their horses' *hoofs!* As a long-parted mother meeting her child plays fondly between *tears* and *smiles*, 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, nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous senses—but let thy *spiders*, that suck up thy venom, and heavy-gaited *toads* lie in their way, doing detriment to the treacherous feet which with *usurping* steps do trample thee! Yield *stinging*

nettles to mine enemies!—and when they from thy bosom pluck a flower, guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking *adder* whose double tongue may, with a mortal touch, throw *death* upon thy sovereign's enemies!"

Those returning with Richard from Ireland had expected to be met by a ready, eager army of loyal supporters; he sees the older nobles' frowns. "Mock not my conjuring the insensible earth, lords; this *shall* have feeling, and these stones prove *armed soldiers* ere her native king shall falter under foul *rebellion's* arms!"

The Bishop of Carlisle concurs; doctrine supports kings' divinely authorized right to rule. "Fear not, my lord: that Power that made you king hath power to *keep* you king in spite of all!" Still, he adds, carefully, "The means that Heaven yields must be *embraced*, and not neglected; else, if Heaven would and *we* will not, Heaven's offer we *refuse*, and the proffered means of succor and redress—"

"He means, my lord, that we are too *remiss*," interjects Aumerle, "whilst Bolingbroke, through our calm assurance, grows strong and great, in substance and in *power*!"

Richard scoffs at the youth's concern. "Uncomforting cousin, know'st thou not? When the searching eye of *Heaven*"—the sun—"is hid behind the globe, and lights the world below the horizon, then here *thieves* and *robbers* range abroad boldly, unseen in murders and in outrage; but when from under this terrestrial ball it fires the proud tops of the eastern pines, and darts its light through every guilty hole, then *murders*, *treasons* and detested *sins*, the cloak of night being plucked from off their backs, stand *bare* and *naked*, *trembling* at themselves!"

"So, too, when this *thief*, this *traitor* Bolingbroke, who all this while hath revelled in the *night* whilst we were wandering with the antipodes, shall see *us* rising on our throne to 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*!"

The nobles around them are silent, doubting that the mere sight of ever-resplendent Richard will daunt Lancaster—or his invading troops.

But the king continues, supremely assured: "Not all the water in the rough, rude *sea* can wash the balm from off an *anointed king*! The breath of worldly *men* cannot depose the deputy elected by *the Lord*! For every man that Bolingbroke hath pressed to lift cruel steel against our golden crown, *God* for his Richard hath in heavenly pay a glorious *angel*!"

"Weak *men* must *fall* if angels fight, for Heaven ever guards the right!"

They have reached the front of the castle. A royal flourish of trumpets echoes back from the dark stone walls to herald the king's arrival. Among the few coming out to greet him is the Earl of Salisbury.

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

Salisbury removes his hat and bows. "Neither nearer, my gracious lord, nor farther off than this weak arm," he says. "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! Oh, call back *yesterday*—bid Time return!—and thou shalt have *twelve thousand fighting men*!"

"Today, *today*, 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!"

Aumerle is watching Richard. "*Comfort*, my liege! Why looks Your Grace so *pale*?"

"Just now the blood of *twenty* thousand men did triumph in my face,"—brought a glow of expectation, "but they are *fled*!" The king is stunned. "And, till so much blood thither come *again*, have I not *reason* to look pale and dead?" He moans. "All souls that would be safe, *fly from my side*, for Time hath set a *blot* upon my pride!"

The young duke is alarmed by his show of dismay. "*Comfort*, my liege!—remember *who you are*!"

Richard stares down for a moment. “I had forgot my self. Am I not *king*?” He straightens. “*Awake*, thou coward *majesty*—thou *sleepest*! 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*!” he cries to the sullen lords around him. “Are we not high? High be our *thoughts*! I know my uncle *York* hath power enough to serve our turn!”

He sees a rider. “But who comes here?”

Sir Stephen Scroop dismounts, hurries forward, and bows. “More health and happiness betide my liege than can my *care*-tuned tongue deliver him.”

“Mine ear is open, and my heart prepared,” Richard tells him. “The worst thou canst unfold is *worldly* loss. Say: is my kingdom lost?—why, ’twas my *care*—and what *loss* is it to be rid of care?”

“Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as *we*? *Greater* he shall *not* be: if he serve *God*, we’ll serve Him, too—and be his *fellow* so!

“Revolt our subjects? That *we* cannot mend; they break their obligation to *God* as well as to us.” He faces the knight sadly. “Cry woe, destruction, ruin and decay, the *worst* is death; and Death will have his day.”

Says Scroop, “Glad am I that Your Highness is so armed to bear the tidings of calamity.” But he doesn’t look relieved. “Like an unseasonably stormy day which makes the silver rivers drown their shores as if the world were all dissolved to tears, so *high above limits* swells the rage of *Bolingbroke*, covering your fearful land with hard, bright *steel*!—and hearts *harder* than steel!

“White beards and hairless scalps have armed their thin hands against thy majesty; boys with women’s voices strive to speak big, and clap their female joints into stiff, unwieldy armor against thy crown! The very beadsmen”—paupers paid to pray for others—“learn to bend bows of doubly lethal yew against thy state—yea, distaff *women* manage rusty bills”—wield hooked-blade spears—“against thy seat!

“Both young and old *rebel*, and all goes worse than I have power to tell!”

“*Too* well, *too well* thou tell’st a tale so ill!” groans Richard. “Where is the Earl of *Wiltshire*?” he demands furiously. “Where is Bagot?—what is become of Bushy?—where is Green?—that they have let the dangerous enemy measure our confines with such peaceful steps! If we prevail, their *heads* shall pay for it!” The *if* further worries his followers. “I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke!” mutters Richard angrily.

Says Scroop, “*Peace* have they made with him, indeed; my lord—”

“Oh, *villains*, *vipers*, *damned* without redemption!” cries the king. “*Dogs*, easily won to fawn on *any* man! *Snakes*, by my *heart*-blood *warmèd*, that *sting* my heart! Three *Judas*es, each one thrice *worse* than Judas! Would they make *peace*?—O terrible *Hell*, make *war* upon their spotted souls for this offence!”

Scroop regards him sadly. “Sweet *love*, I see, in changing its property, turns to the sourest and most deadly *hate*! Again *uncurse* their souls: their peace is made with *heads*, and not with hands! Those whom you curse have felt the *worst* of Death’s destroying wounds, and lie full low, gravèd in the hollow ground.”

Aumerle now pales, aghast. “Are Bushy, Green, and the Earl of *Wiltshire* *dead*?”

The knight eyes the fop. “Aye. All of them at Bristol lost their heads,” he says bluntly.

Aumerle blinks. “Where is the duke my father with his *power*?”

“No *matter* where!” groans King Richard, relinquishing hope. “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*!

“And yet *not* so!—for what can *we* bequeath, save our deposèd *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 mantle of the barren earth which serves as crusting cover to our bones!”

For a moment he stares out over the sea; if heaven has forsaken him, he will protest. “For the sake of *God*, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the *death of kings*—how some have been deposed, some slain in war, some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed; some poisoned by their wives; some sleeping killed—all *murderèd!*”

Richard realizes, now, that his warning is futile; divine protection has often failed. “For within the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a king keeps Death *his* court! And there the buffoon sits, scoffing at his realm, and grinning at his pomp—allowing him a breath, a little scene to ‘monarchize’—to be feared, and kill with looks—infusing him with *self* and vain *conceit*, as if this flesh which walls about our life were *brass, impregnable!*”

And, amused thus, comes at the last, and with a little *pin* bores through his castle wall—then ‘*Farewell, king!*’”

He tells the noblemen, who respectfully hold their hats before them, “Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood with solemn *reverence!* Throw away *respect, tradition, form* and ceremonious *duty!*—for you have but *mistook* me all this while! I live with *bread*, like you!—feel want, taste grief—need *friends!* How can you say to me I, *subjected* thus, am a *king?*”

The bishop steps forward, disturbed. “My lord, *wise* men ne’er sit and wail their woes, but presently *prevent the ways* to wailing!

“Since *fear* oppresseth *strength*, your weakness in fearing the foe gives strength unto your *foe*—and so do your follies, dreading to be slain, fight against yourself! No *worse* can come from *fighting!*—in ‘*Fight and die!*’ is a dread-destroying death, while *fear* of dying pays Death servile breath!”

“My *father* hath a power!” says Aumerle hopefully. “Inquire of him, and learn to make a *body of a limb!*”

Richard nods. “Thou chidest me well.” He looks east. “Proud Bolingbroke, I come to exchange *blows* with thee for our day of doom! This agued fit of fear is over-blown! An easy task it is to win our *own!*”

“Say, Scroop: where lies our uncle with his power?” He now wants to regain command of the forces under his regent, the Duke of York. “Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.”

“Men judge by the complexion of the sky the state and inclination of the day,” says the knight. “So may you, by my dull and heavy eye, that my tongue hath but a *heavier* tale to say. I play the torturer, by small and small to lengthen out the worst that must be spoken. . . .

“Your uncle York is *joined with Bolingbroke!*—all your northern castles are yielded up!—and all your southern gentlemen in arms upon *his* party!”

Wincing, Richard raises a hand. “Thou hast said enough!”

He glares at Aumerle, who is staring, open-mouthed. “*Beshrew* thee, Cousin, who didst lead me forth from that sweet way I was in toward despair!

“What say you *now?* What comfort have *we* now? By heaven, I’ll hate him everlastingly that bids me be of *comfort* any more!” he warns the bishop.

Richard tells the others, “Go to Flint Castle. There I’ll pine away: a king, woe’s slave, shall kingly woe *obey.*”

“That power I have,” the royal troops with him, “discharge, and let them go to till the land that hath some hope to *grow*—for *I* have *none!*”

He waves off the nobles. “Let no man speak again to alter this, for counsel is but vain!”

Aumerle pleads, “My liege, one word—”

“He does me *double wrong* that wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue!” cries Richard. “Discharge my followers!”

He looks toward England. “Let them *hence,*” he mutters gloomily, “away from Richard’s night to Bolingbroke’s fair day.”

Chapter Six Confrontation

As his army's drums fall silent, colors of the banished English lord are unfurled, waving in a Welsh breeze. After their long march westward, his forces have just arrived at the decrepit Flint Castle.

In front of the fortress, Bolingbroke finishes briefing Northumberland: "...so that by this intelligence, we learn the Welshmen are dispersèd, and Salisbury is gone to meet the king, who lately landed with some few private friends upon this coast."

"The news is very fair and good, my lord! Richard not far from hence hath hid his head!"

York is angered. "It would beseem the Lord Northumberland to say '*King Richard!*' *Alack* the heavy day when such a sacred king should '*hide his head!*'"

"Your Grace mistakes," says Northumberland. "Only to be *brief* left I his title out."

"The time hath been," fumes York, "had you been so brief with him, he would have been so brief with *you* as to *shorten* you, for talking so to his head, by *your* head's *whole length!*"

Bolingbroke's voice is soothing: "Mistake not, Uncle, taking it further than you should."

"*Take* not, good cousin, further than *you* should!" warns York hotly, "lest *you* mistake! The *heavens* are o'er our heads!"

Bolingbroke tells the old man. "I *know* it, Uncle!—and oppose not myself against their will." He sees an armored warrior returning from Flint Castle. "But who comes here?" A young nobleman reaches him and bows. "Welcome, Harry! What?—will not this castle *yield?*"

"The castle is mannèd royally, my lord, against thine entrance," Percy reports.

"Royally? Why, it contains no king."

"Yes, my good lord, it *doth* contain a king!—King *Richard* lies 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."

"Oh, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle," Northumberland tells them.

Bolingbroke is elated. "Noble lords, go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle!—through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley into its ruined ears!" He steps forward and speaks—loudly, to be heard clearly by York and his captains. "And deliver thus:

"Henry Bolingbroke 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 be repealed, and my lands restored again, freely granted.

"If *not*, I'll *use* the advantage of my power—and lay the summer's dust with *showers of blood*, rained from the wounds of *slaughtered Englishmen!*"

He is well aware of the many troops watching and listening. "My *duty*, tendered *stooping*, shall show how far off from the mind of *Bolingbroke* is that such crimson tempest should bedrench the fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land!

"Go, signify as much, while here we march upon the grassy carpet of this plain."

He turns to the captains. "Let's march without the noise of threatening *drum*, so that from this castle's tattered battlements our fair appointments may be well perused." As they go to set the soldiers in motion, York feels better: Bolingbroke has offered Richard a way out, and tension may be lessening.

But seen from atop the high walls, the silent, deliberate movement forward of massive formations of troops and cannon grows ever more ominous.

Bolingbroke draws Northumberland and young Percy aside and tells them, privately, "Methinks King Richard and myself should meet with no less *terror* than the elements of *fire* and *water* when the thundering shock of their 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”—tears. He sees a mischievous grin; the firebrand is thinking *make water*. “On the *earth*,” adds Bolingbroke dryly, “not on him.” Percy chuckles.

A parle is sounded by the besieger’s trumpet, and an answering call comes from within the castle.

“March on, and mark *King Richard*—how he *looks*,” Bolingbroke tells his emissaries.

Soon, under a royal flourish of horns, Richard and the few lords still with him appear on a parapet atop a high stone wall; they look down at the forces ranging before them and far beyond.

- Some distance away, Bolingbroke tells York, “See, see!—*King Richard* doth *himself* appear!—as doth the red-faced, discontented sun from out the fiery portal of the East, when he perceives that the envious clouds are bent to *dim* his glory, and to *stain* the track of his bright passage to the Occident.”

- Richard is clearly angry. “Yet looks he like a *king*,” insists York. “Behold: his *eye*; bright as the eagle’s, it beams forth controlling majesty! *Alack, alack* for woe, that any harm should stain so fair a show!”

Richard leans forward and calls, past the empty space of the “commoners’ courtyard” just below, to address Northumberland indignantly. “We are *amazed*!—and thus long have we stood to watch for the respectful bending of thy knee, because we thought ourself *thy king*!

“If we *be*, how dare thy joints forget to pay their lawful duty to our presence?

“And if we be *not*, show us *the hand of God* that hath dismissèd us from our stewardship!—for, well we know, no hand of blood and bone can grip the sacred handle of our sceptre unless he do *profane, steal, or usurp*!

“And though you think that *all* have done as *you*—have *torn their souls* by turning them from *us*!—and that we are barren and bereft of *friends*—yet *know: my master, God omnipotent*, is mustering in his clouds on our behalf *armies of pestilence*!—and they shall *strike you*—and your *children* yet unborn and unbegot!—who lift your vassal hands against my head, and threaten the glory of my precious crown!

“Tell Bolingbroke—for yond methinks he stands—that *every stride* he makes upon *my land* is a dangerous *treason*!

“He is come to open the crimson testament of bleeding *war*!—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 maiden-pale peace to scarlet *indignation*, and bedew her pastures’ grass with *loyal English blood*!”

Northumberland kneels. “The King of Heaven *forbid* that our lord the king should so with civil but *uncivil* arms be rushed upon!

“Thy thrice-noble cousin Harry Bolingbroke doth humbly kiss thy hand!

“And he swears by the honourable tomb that stands upon your royal *grandsire’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*, comprising all that *may* be sworn or said: his coming hither hath *no further scope* than for his lineal royalties, and to beg, *on his knees*, enfranchisement immediate.

“Which by thy royal party once granted, his glittering arms he will commend to rust, his barbèd steeds to stables, and his heart to faithful service of Your Majesty! This *swears* he—as he is a *prince*, is *just*!

“And, as I am a gentleman, I credit him!”

After a moment, Richard calls down, “Northumberland, say the king returns this: his noble cousin is right welcome hither, and all the number of his fair demands shall be accomplishèd without contradiction.

“With all the gracious utterance thou hast, speak to his gentle hearing kind commends.”

Northumberland bows; he and Percy go to report to Bolingbroke.

Richard regards Aumerle; he speaks quietly. "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."

"No, good my lord; let's fight with gentle words till time lend *friends*—and friends their helpful *swords!*" Richard may ponder a lamentable demise, but the young duke, aware of the summary treatment of Bushy and Green, wants to live.

Richard looks upward. "O God, *O God!* That e'er this tongue of mine, that laid the sentence of dread banishment on yon proud man, should take it off again with words that *soothe!* Oh that I were as great as is my *grief!*—or lesser than my *name!* Oh, that I could forget what I have been—or not remember what I must now be!

"Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee *scope* to beat, since *foes* have scope to beat—both thee and me!"

Aumerle points toward the scene below. "Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke...."

"What must the king do now? Must he *submit?*" murmurs Richard. "The king shall *do it*."

"Must he be *deposed?* The king shall be contented."

"Must he lose the name of *king?* It's *God's* name; let it go."

"I'll give my jewels for a set of beads, my magnificent palace for a hermitage, my beautiful apparel for an almsman's gown, my figured goblets for a wooden dish, my sceptre for a palmer's walking staff, my subjects for a pair of carved saints—and my large *kingdom* for a little *grave*."

"A little, little grave, an *obscure* grave." Tears wet his cheeks. "Or I'll be buried in the king's highway, some path of common trade, where subjects' feet may hourly trample on their sovereign's head."

"For on my *heart* they tread now, whilst I live; why not upon my head, once buried?"

"Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin." Richard smiles. "We'll make *foul weather* with despised *tears!*—our *sighs* and they shall dislodge the summer grain, and make a *dearth* in this revolting land!"

"Or shall we play the *wantons* with our woes, make up some pretty *match?*—as thus: *contest* in shedding tears, dropping them ever upon one place till they have fretted out a pair of *graves* within the earth—and we therein laid!" He laughs tearfully. "'Here two noble kinsmen lie; digged their graves with weeping eyes!' Would not this ill do well?"

Aumerle offers a weak smile; he is very fearful.

"Well, well, I see I talk but idly, and you laugh at me," says Richard softly.

He looks down at the stone-faced nobleman who has returned below. "Most mighty *prince*, my Lord Northumberland, what says *King Bolingbroke?* Will *his majesty* give Richard leave to live till Richard die?—to make a leg"—kneel—"when Bolingbroke says aye!"—says anything.

The earl ignores the sarcasm. "My lord, in the base court he doth attend, to speak with you, may it please you to come down."

"Down, *down* I come!" cries Richard, "like glistening *Phaethon*, unable to manage the unruly jades!"—like the god who lost control of his horses' heavenly flight. "In the base court? *Base* court—where kings grow base, to come at *traitors'* calls, and do them grace!"

"In the base court!" he laughs bitterly. "Come *down!* *Down*, court! *Down*, king!—for *night-owls* shriek where mounting larks should *sing!*" He turns away, and disappears from the view of those below.

Bolingbroke strides forward to stand beside Northumberland. "What says his majesty?"

"Sorrow and grief of heart make him speak foolishly, like a frantic man." They see the castle doors swing open. "Yet he is come."

King Richard and his attendants emerge.

Bolingbroke orders, "Stand all apart, and show fair duty to his majesty!" He kneels. "My gracious lord—"

"Fair cousin," scowls Richard, "you *debase* your princely knee to make the base earth proud with kissing it! As for me, I had rather my *heart* might feel your *love* than my unpleasèd eye see

your *courtesy*. Up, Cousin, *up*—your *heart* is up, I know, *thus* high at least!” he says, touching his crown, “although your knee be low.”

“My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.”

“Your own is yours—and *I* am yours—and *all*.”

Says Bolingbroke, as his supporters listen, “So far be mine, my most redoubted lord, as my true *service* shall deserve your *love*.”

“*Well* you deserve!” says Richard sourly. “They well deserve to *have* that know the strong’st and surest way to *get!*”

He faces the miserable old Duke of York, who is deeply troubled by the monarch’s humiliation. “Uncle, give me your hand.” York stands still, mortified as the anointed king reaches forward, lifts his hand, and shakes it. “Nay, dry your eyes; tears show their love, but lack *remedies*.”

Richard turns to Bolingbroke. “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 we must do what *force* will have us do.

“Set on towards *London*, Cousin—is it not so?” He knows that Bolingbroke, despite his rhetoric, will march, with the crown in custody, to the throne.

“Yea, my good lord.”

“Then I must not say no.”

What sport shall we devise here in this garden, to drive away the heavy thought of care?” asks Queen Isabelle, walking with two waiting-gentlewomen at the Duke of York’s London dwelling, a mansion just northwest of the capital.

“Madam, we’ll play at bowls!”

The dejected queen declines. “’Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,”—impediments, “and that my fortune runs against the bias.”

“Madam, we’ll *dance*.”

“My legs can keep no measure in delight when my poor *heart* no measure keeps in grief! Therefore, no dancing, girl; some other sport.”

The lady thinks. “Madam, we’ll tell tales.”

“Of sorrow or of joy?”

“Of either, madam.”

“Of *neither*, girl! For if joy be altogether wanting, it doth remember me the more of sorrow; or if grief be altogether *had*, more sorrow to my lack of joy it adds. As for what I have, I need not repeat it; and what I *want*, it boots not to complain.”

“Madam, I’ll sing,” the other lady offers.

“’Tis well that *thou* hast cause; but thou shouldst please *me* better wouldst thou *weep*.”

“I *could* weep, madam, would it do you good....”

The sad queen smiles wanly; she has wept much. “If weeping would do me any good, *I* could sing, and never borrow any tear from *thee!*”

“But stay, here come the gardeners. Let’s step into the shadow of these trees. My wretchedness to a row of pins,” she wagers, “they’ll talk of *state*, for everyone doth so against a change; woe is forerun with woe.”

She and the other ladies move out of sight, unobserved by the white-haired chief gardener, who has brought his two helpers. He tells the taller man, “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,” he tells the other, “and like an executioner, cut off the heads of too-fast growing sprays, that look lofty in our commonwealth. All must be *even* in *our* government.

“You thus employed, I will go root away the noisome weeds, which without profit suck the soil’s fertility from wholesome flowers.”

The shorter man ponders, frowning. “Why should we in the compass of a *pale*”—an enclosure—“keep law and form and due proportion, showing as in a *model* our finest state, when our *sea-walled* garden—*the whole land!*—is full of *weeds!*—her fairest flowers choked up, her fruit-trees all upturned, her hedges ruined, her designs disordered, and her wholesome herbs swarming with *caterpillars!*”—parasites.

“Hold thy peace,” says the gardener: “He that hath permitted this disorderèd *spring* hath now himself met with the *fall* of leaves!”—autumn. “The *weeds* which his broad-spreading leaves”—permissiveness—“did shelter, that seemed to hold him up when *eating* him, are *plucked up*, root and all, by Bolingbroke!—I mean the *wilt-shire, bushy and green!*”

The helper laughs too, but he is surprised. “What, are they *dead?*”

“They are; and Bolingbroke hath seized the wasteful *king!* Oh, what a pity is it that he had not so trimmed and dressed his land as we this garden!

“We at a time of year do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees, lest being over-proud of sap—as of blood—with too much richness it confound itself! Had he done so to great and growing *men*, they might have lived to bear, and he to taste, the fruits of *duty!*”

“Superfluous branches we lop away, so that bearing boughs may live. Had he done so, himself had *borne* the crown, which waste of idle hours hath quite *thrown down!*”

“What?—think you then the king shall be *deposed?*”

“Depressed he is *already*, and deposèd ’tis suspected he *will* be; letters came last night to a dear friend of the good Duke of York’s that tell black tidings.”

Cries Isabelle, “Oh, I am *pressed to death* through want of speaking!” She comes forward from arbor. “*Thou*, old *Adam*’s likeness, sent to dress this garden, how dares thy harsh, rude tongue sound this unpleasing news? What *Eve*, what *serpent*, hath urgèd thee to make a second Fall of cursèd 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 these ill tidings! *Speak*, thou wretch!”

The gardener bows awkwardly, holding his cap. “*Pardon* me, madam! Little joy have I to breathe this news; yet what I say is true! King Richard, he is in the hold of mighty Bolingbroke!

“Their fortunes both are thus *weighèd*: in your lord’s scale is nothing but *himself*—and some few vanities that make him *lighter*; but in the balance of great Bolingbroke, besides himself are *all the English peers!*”

“And with *that* odds, he weighs King Richard *down!*”

“Post you to London and you will find it so! I speak no more than *everyone* doth know.”

The queen is weeping. “O nimble *Mischance*, that art so light of foot, doth not this embassy belong to *me?*—and am I *last* that knows it? Oh, thou think’st to serve me last so I may longest *keep* thy sorrow in my breast!

“Come, ladies, now we’ll go to meet, at London, England’s *king of woe!* *What*, was I born to *this?*—that my sad look should grace the triumph of ‘*great Bolingbroke!*’”

Isabelle turns as they leave. “Gardener, for telling me these news of woe,” she sobs, “pray God the plants thou graftest may never *grow!*”

The gardener and his men watch, sadly, as the ladies hurry into the building. “Poor queen! So that thy state might be no worse, I would my skill were *subject* to thy curse.”

He kneels to touch the English soil. “Where did she fall a tear; there in this place I’ll set a bank of rue, the sour herb of grace. Rue, even for *ruth*, here shortly shall be seen, in remembrance of a weeping queen.”

Chapter Seven Defiance, Dejection

Parliament has been called, urgently, into session at Westminster Hall in London, following a startling revelation: the widely disfavored king has agreed to relinquish the crown. The king's tall chair here stands empty this morning.

"Call forth Bagot," Bolingbroke tells the attending officers. Richard's surviving favorite is brought to the center. "Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind: what thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death, who wrought it with the king, and who performed the bloody office of his untimely end."

"Then set before my face the lord Aumerle," demands Bagot.

Just before the Lords and Commons are to affirm Richard's abdication, his successor intends to bolster awareness that the king was behind the Duke of Gloucester's demise. Bolingbroke motions to the beardless duke. "Cousin, stand forth and look upon that man."

Bagot faces the youth. "My lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue scorns even to *deny* what once it hath *deliverèd*."

"In that deadly time when Gloucester's death was plotted, I heard you say, 'Is not *my arm* of a length that reacheth from the restful English court as far as Calais, to mine uncle's head?'"

"Amongst much other talk, that very time, I heard you say that you had rather refuse the offer of *an hundred thousand crowns* than see Gloucester return to England!—adding withal how *blest* this land would be in this your cousin's *death!*"

Aumerle is scornful. "Princes and noble lords, what answer shall I make to this base man? Shall I so much dishonour my fair stars, to give him chastisement *on equal terms*? Either I must, or have mine *honour* soiled with the attainder of his slanderous lips!"

Hoping to bully his way through, he throws down a glove before Bagot. "There is my gage!—the manual *seal of death* that marks thee out for Hell!" he cries. "I say thou *liest!*—and will *maintain* that what thou hast said is false in *thy heart-blood*, though it be all too *base* to stain the temper of my knightly sword!"

"Bagot, forbear," Bolingbroke tells the graybeard, "*thou shalt not take it up.*"

Aumerle, still obsequious, tells Bolingbroke, "Excepting *one*, I would he were the *best* in all this presence that hath angered me so!" Bagot is not a nobleman.

Lord Fitzwater steps forward. "If that thy valour depend upon *station*, there is *my* glove, 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 return thy falsehood to thy heart, where it was forgèd, with my *rapier's* point!"

"Thou darest not, coward, *live* to see *that* day!" Aumerle throws down his other glove.

"Now by my soul, I would it were *this hour!*" shouts the angry lord, matching the youth's bluster.

"Fitzwater, thou art damned to Hell for this!"

"Aumerle, thou *liest!*" cries Henry Percy. "His honour is as *true* in this charge 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!"

"An if I do *not*, may my *hands rot off*, and never more brandish revengeful steel over the glittering helmet of my foe!" retorts the other young duke.

Drawls an older lord, calmly, "I'll likewise task the ground, forsworn Aumerle, and spur thee on with full as many 'Lies!' as may be holloed in thy treacherous ear from sun to sun." He throws down a glove. "There is my honour's pawn; engage it to the *trial*, if thou darest."

Aumerle, who has excelled in training with the rapier, glowers. “Who sets upon me *else*? By heaven, I’ll throw down at all!”—meet every challenge. “I have a *thousand* spirits in one breast, to answer *twenty* thousand such as you!”

The Duke of Surrey now moves toward the center of the chamber. “My Lord Fitzwater, I do remember well the very time Aumerle and you did talk.”

“’Tis true: you were in presence then; and you can witness with me this is true.”

“As *false*, by heaven, as heaven *itself* is true!”

“Surrey, thou *liest!*” cries Fitzwater.

“Dishonourable *boy!*” replies Surrey. “*That* lie shall lie so heavy on my sword that it shall render *vengeance*—and revenge till thou, the lie’s 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!”

Fitzwater gladly snatches up the glove. “How foolishly dost thou *spur a forward horse!* 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,” he says, dropping his other glove, “to tie thee to my strong correction! As I intend to thrive in this new world, Aumerle is *guilty* of my true accusation!”

“I heard besides the banished *Norfolk* say that thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men to *execute* the noble duke at Calais!” During his permanent exile, Mowbray has apparently spoken more frankly.

Aumerle’s face turns scarlet. “Some honest Christian, trust me with a gage that *Norfolk lies!*” A lord hands him a glove. “Here do I throw down this, if he may be repealed”—Mowbray, recalled to England—“to try his honour!”

Bolingbroke raises a hand imperiously. “These differences shall all rest under gage till Norfolk be repealed,” he rules. “And repealed he *shall be!*—though mine enemy, restored again to all his lands and signories!” Unlike Richard, he will not prevent his enemies and rivals from fighting each other; and Parliament is pleased with his apparent magnanimity. “When he has returned, against Aumerle we will enforce his trial.”

“*That* honourable day shall ne’er be seen,” says the Bishop of Carlisle gravely. “Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought for Jesu Christ in glorious field, streaming the ensign of the Christian cross against pagans, Turks, and Saracens; then, toiled with works of war, retired himself to Italy—and there at Venice gave his body to that pleasant country’s earth, and his pure soul unto his captain, Christ, under whose colours he had fought so long.”

Bolingbroke seems surprised. “Why, bishop, is Norfolk *dead?*”

“As surely as I live, my lord.”

“Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom of good old Abraham,” says Bolingbroke reverently. “Lords appellants,”—accusers, “your differences shall all rest under gage till we assign you to your days of trial.”

He nods toward the doors. The Parliament now pauses, watching in high expectation as the Duke of York and his attendants enter the hall.

York bows to Bolingbroke. “Great *Duke of Lancaster*,” he says, pointedly, “I come to thee from plume-plucked 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!”

As his many supporters applaud, Bolingbroke bows. “In God’s name,” he says humbly, “I’ll ascend the regal throne.”

“Marry, *God forbid!*” protests the bishop. “Worst in this *thus*-royal presence may I speak,” the churchman tells the patrician lords, “yet best beseeming *me* to *speak the truth!*”

“Would God that any in this noble presence *were* noble enough to be upright judge of noble *Richard!*—then true *noblesse* would teach 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 that they are *present to hear*, although obvious guilt be seen in them—and shall the figure of *God’s majesty*—his *captain, steward, deputy-elect—anoined, crownèd*, planted many years!—be judged by subject and inferior breath, and he himself *not present*?”

“Oh, *forfend* it, God, that in a Christian climate souls refinèd should show so heinous, dark, *obscene* a deed!

“I speak to *subjects*, and a subject *speaks*, stirred 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, blood of the 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 *war* shall kin with kin and kind with kind *confound*! Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny shall *here* inhabit!—and *dead men’s* skulls!—and this land be called a *field of golgotha*!

“Oh, if you raise this house *against* this house, it will the woefullest division prove that ever fell upon this cursèd earth! *Prevent* it, *resist* it!—*let it not be so!*—lest child, child’s *children*, cry against you ‘*Woe!*’”

“Well, you have *argued*, sir,” growls Northumberland. “And for your pains, for *capital treason* we arrest you here!” He turns to the abbot. “My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge to keep him safely till his day of trial.”

Northumberland now steps forward to address the Parliament. “May it please you, lords, to grant the commons’ suit?”—that Richard’s abdication be done publicly.

Bolingbroke nods. “Fetch hither Richard, that in common view he may surrender; so we shall proceed without suspicion.”

Says the Duke of York, flushing, “I will be his conduct.” He goes to *fetch* the King of England.

“Lords, you that here are under our arrest,” Bolingbroke tells several nobles who have opposed him, “procure your sureties for your days of answer; little are we beholding to your love, and little look for at your helping hands.” Their lands will be lost soon, and some of their lives, at Bolingbroke’s leisure.

York returns with Richard—and with two officers carrying, on red cushions, the crown and scepter.

Richard looks around the huge hall, which still smells of fresh timber used for the new roof he ordered several years ago. He is bitter. “*Alack*, why am I sent for to a *king* before I have shook off the regal thoughts wherewith *I* reigned? I hardly yet have learned to *insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs!* Give *Sorrow* leave awhile to tutor me to this submission!”

He regards the gathered lords. “Yet I well remember the faces 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, found *truth* in all but one—I, in twelve *thousand, none!*”

“God save the king!” he cries out to the watching peers and commoners. “Will no man say *Amen*?—am I both priest and *clerk*?”—speaking both parts in liturgy. “Well then, ‘*Amen.*’ God save the king, although *I* be not he—and *yet* ‘*Amen*’ if *Heaven* do think him *me!*”

He regards Bolingbroke with contempt, and addresses him curtly: “To do what service am I sent for hither?”

York says, gently, “To do that office, of thine own good will, which tirèd majesty did make thee offer: the resignation of thy state and crown to Henry Bolingbroke.”

Richard turns to an officer. “Give me the crown.” He strides to Bolingbroke and thrusts it forward. “*Here, Cousin, seize* the crown!”

“Here, Cousin: on this side *my* hand, and on that side *yours*.” Bolingbroke reaches to grasp it. “Now is this golden crown like a deep well that uses two buckets, filling one after 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!”

Bolingbroke frowns; Richard has not let go. “I thought you had been willing to resign.”

“My crown I am, but my *griefs* are mine! You may my glories and my state depose, but not my griefs; still am I *king of those*.”

“Part of your *cares* you give me with your crown.”

“Your *cares set up* do not pluck my *cares down*! My care is *loss* of cares, my old care done; your care is *gain* of care, thy new cares won. The cares I give I *have*, though given away, they ’tend the crown, yet still with me they *stay*.”

Bolingbroke is impatient. “Are you contented to resign the crown?”

“Ay, no!” cries Richard—then, “No, aye. For I must *nothing* be; therefore no ‘No,’ for I resign to *thee*.”

He releases the crown—with a shudder. “Now mark me, how *well* I *undo* myself! I give this heavy weight from off my head, this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,” he says, picking it up and passing it to Bolingbroke, “and the pride of kingly sway from out my *heart*!”

“With *mine own tears* I wash away my balm”—the daub of consecrated oil that anointed him king. “With *mine own hands* I give away my crown; with *mine own tongue* deny my sacred state; 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 were broken to *me*; God keep unbroken all vows that are sworn to thee.

“Make me, that nothing *have*, with nothing *grievèd*, and thou with all pleased, who hast all achievèd.

“Long mayst thou live, in *Richard’s* seat to sit; and soon lie Richard in an earthly *pit*.”

“God save King Harry, unkingèd Richard says, and send *him* many years of sunshine days.”

Bolingbroke alone is now holding the crown.

Richard wipes his eyes. “What more remains?”

Northumberland brings him a document. “No more but that you read aloud these accusations, and these grievous crimes committed by your person and your followers against the state and profit of this land—so that, by confessing them, the souls of men may deem that you are worthily deposèd.”

“Must I do so?—must I *ravel out* 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* wouldst do so, there shouldst thou find one *heinous* article—containing the *deposing of a king*, and *cracking* the strong warrant of an *oath*!—markèd with a *blot*, *damnèd* in the *book of heaven*!”

“Nay, *all* of you who stand and look on, whilst my wretchedness doth *bait* my self—though some of you with *Pilate* wash your hands, showing an *outward* pity, you have here delivered me to *my sour cross*!—and water cannot wash away your *sin*!”

Northumberland hands him the paper brusquely. “My lord, dispatch! Read o’er these articles.”

“Mine eyes are full of tears; I cannot see,” says Richard. “And yet salt water blinds them not so much but they can see a court of *traitors* here!”

“Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself, I find *myself* a traitor with the rest!—for I have given here my soul’s consent to undeck the pompous body of a *king*!—made glory *base*, and sovereignty a *slave*, proud majesty a *subject*, state a *peasant*!”

“My lord—”

“No lord of *thine*, thou haught, insulting man,” Richard tells Northumberland. “Nor *no* man’s lord! I have no name nor title—no, not that name”—King Richard—“that was given me at the *font*,”—upon his anointing, “but ’tis *usurpèd!* *Alack* the heavy day, that I have worn so many winters out, but know not now what name to call myself!

“Oh, that I were a mockery-king of *snow*, standing before the sun of Bolingbroke to melt myself away in water-drops!”

He faces Bolingbroke. “Good king, great king—and yet not greatly *good*.”

“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 majesty.”

Richard’s rebuking of himself serves Bolingbroke well; he will indulge it further. “Go, some of you, and fetch a looking-glass.” An attendant bows and hurries away.

“Read o’er this paper while the glass doth come,” says Northumberland.

“*Fiend*,” cries Richard, “thou torment’st me *ere I come to Hell!*”

Henry motions his lieutenant away. “Urge it no more, my lord Northumberland.”

“The commons will not then be satisfied,” the nobleman warns.

“They shall be satisfied,” says Richard. “I’ll read *enough* when I do see the very book where *all* my sins are writ indeed—and that’s *my self*.”

The attendant returns with a small mirror.

“Give me the glass, and therein will I read.” Richard holds it before his face. “No *deeper* wrinkles yet?—hath Sorrow struck so many blows upon this face of mine, and made no deeper wounds? O *flattering* glass, like my followers in prosperity, thou dost *beguile* me!

“Was this the face that every day under his household roof did keep *ten thousand men*? Was this the face that like the *sun* did make beholders blink?

“Was this the face that faced down so many *follies*?—and was at last out-faced by *Bolingbroke!*”

“Little *glory* shineth in this face—and as brittle as the glory is the *face!*” he cries, dashing the glass to the floor. “For there it is, cracked in a hundred slivers! Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport: how soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face!”

Bolingbroke shakes his head; Richard still lives in illusions. “The *shadow* of your sorrow hath destroyed the shadow of your face.”

“Say that again!—the *shadow* of my sorrow! *Hmm...* Let’s see: ’tis very true my grief lies all *within*; and these external manners of lament are merely shadows of 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 me *cause* to wail, but teachest me the way *how* to lament the cause!”

He looks at the new sovereign. “I’ll beg one boon, and then be gone, and trouble you no more. Shall I obtain it?”

“Name it, fair cousin.”

“*Fair* cousin!” Richard laughs harshly. “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, as my *flatterer!*”

“Being so *great*, I have no need to *beg...*”

“Yet ask.”

“And shall I have?”

“You shall.”

“Then give me leave to *go*.”

“Whither?”

“Whither you will, so I were *from your sight!*” shouts Richard to the assembled Parliament.

Bolingbroke has precisely that in mind. “Go.” He motions to attendants. “Some of you convey him to the Tower.”

“Oh, *good!*—*convey!*” cries Richard; the word implies *steal*. “Conveyers are you *all*, that *rise* thus nimbly by a *true* king’s *fall!*”

Under guard, he is escorted away.

Bolingbroke, holding the crown in his hands, announces to the Parliament, “Wednesday next we solemnly set down for our coronation.

“Lords, prepare yourselves.”

As the chamber gradually clears, clusters of men linger to discuss the historic deposing of a monarch—and what the rule of King Henry IV will mean for them.

“A woeful pageant have we here beheld!” moans the Abbot of Westminster.

The Bishop of Carlisle is even more gloomy. “The woe’s *to come!*—the children yet unborn shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn!”

The Duke of Aumerle feels intense frustration. “You holy clergymen, is there no plot to rid the realm of this pernicious blot?”

The old abbot looks around cautiously. “My lord,” he says, almost whispering, “before I freely speak my mind therein, you shall take the Sacrament”—swear—“not only to *conceal* mine intents, but also to *effect* whatever I shall happen to devise!”

He regards his companions. “I see your brows are full of *discontent*, your hearts of *sorrow*, and your eyes of *tears*.

“Come home with me to supper, and I’ll lay a plot that shall show us all a *merry* day....”

Chapter Eight Treachery Discovered

On a London street near the Tower—a royal residence, but also one in which patricians can be held in a confinement comporting with noble station—Queen Isabelle walks, with her waiting-gentlewomen and several servants.

She stops. “This way the king will come!” she tells them, wringing her hands. “This is the way to Julius Caesar’s ill-erected tower, to whose flint bosom my condemnèd lord is doomed a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke.

“Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth have any resting for her *true* king’s queen.”

Her hand flies to her heart when she spots Richard. “But soft, but *see!*... or rather do *not* see!—my fair rose *withers*,” she moans. “Yet look up—behold, that you in pity may dissolve to dew, and wash him fresh again with true-love tears!”

Watching her husband tread forward, she thinks, *Ah, thou model of how old Troy did stand, the very map of honour!*

The soldiers have led Richard nearer. She speaks to him, tearfully: “Thou, King Richard’s *tomb* and not King Richard, O thou most beauteous *inn*, why should hard-favoured *Grief* be lodged in thee, when Triumph has become an *alehouse* guest?”

He smiles bravely. “Join not *with* Grief, fair woman!—do not so 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 shows us but this. I am, sweet, a sworn brother to grim Necessity, and he and I will keep a league till death.” He touches her hand. “Hie thee to France, and cloister thee in some *religious* house. Our *holy* lives must win anew the world’s crown, which our profane hours here have stricken down.”

“*What?*—is my Richard both in shape and *mind* transformèd and weakened? Hath Bolingbroke deposèd thine *intellect*? Hath he been into thy *heart*?”

“The *lion*, dying, thrusteth forth his paw and *wounds the earth*, if nothing else, with *rage* at being o’erpowered!—and wilt thou *pupil*-like take thy correction *mildly*—*kiss* the rod, and *fawn* with base humility, who art a *lion*, the *king of beasts*?”

“A king of *beasts*, indeed! If not for 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.

“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 quiet *their* griefs, tell thou the lamentable tale of *me*—and send the hearers *weeping* to their beds.” His own tears flow. “Why, the senseless *logs* will sympathize the heavy accent of thy moving tongue, and in compassion *weep* the fire out; and some will mourn in ashes, some in coal black for the deposing of a *rightful king!*”

Northumberland, arriving with a captain, has come after Richard. “My lord, the mind of Bolingbroke is changèd: you must to *Pomfret*, not unto the Tower.” Pomfret Castle lies sixty leagues to the north, in Yorkshire. He bows to Isabelle. “And madam, there is order ta’en for *you*: with all swift speed you must away to France.”

Richard growls, “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!*”

“Though he divide the realm and give thee *half*, thou shalt think it is *too little*, having helped him to *all!*”

“And *he* shall think that thou, who know’st the way to plant unrightful kings, being ne’er so little urged unto another way, wilt *know again!*—and pluck *him* headlong from the usurpèd throne!

“The love of wicked men converts to *fear*; that fear to *hate*, and hate brings one or both to worthy *danger*—and deservèd *death!*”

Northumberland shrugs; he won’t bother arguing. “My guilt be on my head, and there’s an end. Take leave and *part*,” he tells them, “for you must depart *forthwith*.”

“*Doubly* divorced!” cries Richard. “Bad men, you violate a *twofold* marriage: ’twixt my crown and me, and then betwixt me and my married *wife!*”

He turns to Isabelle. “Let me with a kiss undo the oath ’twixt thee and me,” he says, tenderly. “And yet not so,” he sobs, “for with a kiss ’twas *made!*”

“Part us, Northumberland: I toward the north, where shivering cold and sickness paint the clime; my wife to France, from whence, set forth in pomp, she came adorned hither like sweet *May*—sent back like Halloween or *short ’st* of day!”

She embraces him. “Then *must* we be divided? Must we part?”

“Aye, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.”

She turns to Northumberland. “Banish us *both*, and send the king with me!”

“That were some love, but little *policy*.”

“Then whither he goes, thither let *me* go!”

Richard gently objects: “So two, together weeping, make *one woe!* Weep thou for me in France, I for thee here; better off far than near—and be ne’er the *nearer!* Go, count thy way with sighs; I, mine with groans!”

“So *longest* way shall have the longest *moans!*” she protests.

Despite the tears, Richard smiles. “*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! One kiss shall stop our mouths; and in silence, part. Thus give I *mine*,”—he kisses her, “and thus take I thy *heart!*”

“Give me mine *own* again!” she sobs. “’Twere no good parting to take from me, to keep and kill, *thy* heart!” They kiss again. She steps back. “So now I have again mine *own*; be gone, that I might strive to kill it with a groan!”

“We make woe wanton with this fond delay,” says Richard, pressing her hand in both of his—then releasing it. “Once more, *Adieu!*—the rest let *Sorrow* say!”

The Duchess of York has waited for her white-haired husband to regain his composure. “My lord, you told me you would tell the rest, when weeping made you break the story,

of our two cousins' coming into London...."

He wipes his eyes. "Where did I leave off?"

"At that sad stop, my lord, where rude, misgoverned hands from buildings' tops threw dust and rubbish *on King Richard's head!*"

York groans again, remembering. "Then, as I said, the duke, 'great Bolingbroke,' mounted upon a hot and fiery steed which seemed to know its aspiring rider, 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 lookers, 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, bared head lower than his proud steed's neck, bespake them thus: '*I thank you, countrymen!*' And thus ever doing, thus he passed along."

"*Alack, poor Richard!* Where rode he the whilst?"

York shakes his head. "As in a theatre, when the eyes of men, after a *well-gracèd actor* leaves the stage, are idly bent on him that enters next, thinking his prattle will be tedious, even thus, or with much *more* contempt, did men's eyes 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 ever combating, with tears and smiles, the badges of his grief and patience, such that, had not God, for some strange purpose, *steeled* 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 bend *our* qualms, content." He adds, solemnly, "To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now, whose state and honour I for aye"—henceforth—"allow."

The duchess hears footsteps in the corridor. "Here comes my son, Aumerle."

"He *was* Aumerle," notes her husband. "But that is *lost* for being *Richard's* friend!—and, madam, you must call him *Rutland* now. I am in Parliament pledged for his truth and lasting fealty to the new-made king." The younger duke has been reduced in rank to earl.

"Welcome, my son!" She craves word of Henry's favorites. "Who are the violets now, that strew the green lap of the new-come spring?"

"Madam, I know not, nor greatly care not!" mutters the young man, much distraught. "God knows *I* had as lief be *none* as one!"

"Well, bear you *well* in this new spring of time," warns the duke, "lest you be *cropped* before you come to prime!"

"What news from *Oxford*? Hold, those jousts and triumphs?" The earl still faces trial by combat under the lords' deadly challenges; the duels are scheduled to be held there, followed by Henry's coronation and its celebrations.

"For aught I know, my lord, they do," says the sullen youth.

"You will be there, I know."

Aumerle seems pensive. "If God prevent not, I purpose so."

His suspicion aroused, York points to the end of a rolled document in the earl's coat. "What seal is that, that hangs without thy bosom?" The reaction is nor reassuring. "Yea, look'st thou *pale*? Let me see the writing."

"My lord, 'tis nothing."

"No matter, then, who see it! *I will* be satisfied; let me see the writing!"

"I do beseech Your Grace to pardon me! It is a matter of small consequence, which for some reasons I would not have seen...."

"Which 'for some reasons,' sir, *I mean to see!*" says York angrily. "I fear, *I fear*—"

The duchess is annoyed. "*What* should you fear? 'Tis nothing but some bond that he is entered into for bright apparel 'gainst the triumph day."

"Bound to *himself*?—what doth *he* with a bond that he is *bound* to? Wife, thou art a fool!"

“Boy, let me see the writing!”

“I do beseech you, pardon me; I may not show it!”

“I will be satisfied! Let me *see* it, I say!” cries York, reaching to grab the paper.

He reads—and his eyes widen. “*Treason! Foul treason! Villain! Traitor! Slave!*”

The duchess is startled. “What is the *matter*, my lord?”

The Duke of York is nearly frantic. He rushes to the door and shouts, “*Ho! Who is within there?*” to servants in a room down the corridor. “*Saddle my horse!*” he orders one of the men who emerge; the servant heads for the stable—running. “God’s mercy, what *treachery* is here!”

“Why, what *is* it, my lord?”

“Give me my *boots*, I say!—*saddle my horse!*” cries the duke. He glares at his son. “Now, by mine honour, by my life, by my troth, I will arraign the villain!”

“What is the matter?”

“*Peace*, foolish woman!”

“I will *not* peace!” cries the duchess. “What is the matter, Aumerle?”

“Good mother, be content,” says the earl, watching his father fearfully. “It is no more than my poor *life* must answer!”

“Thy *life* answer!”

“Bring me my *boots!* I will unto the *king!*”

As an old serving man comes to York with tall black boots, the duchess fails to wave him away. “*Strike him, Aumerle!*” she says—but he is motionless. “Poor boy, thou art *perplexed!*”

“*Hence, villain!*” she tells the servant. “Never more come in my sight!”

“Give me my *boots*, I say!” cries the duke; and he begins struggling in a chair to pull one on.

“Why, York, what wilt thou *do?*” demands his wife. “Wilt thou not *hide* the trespass of *thine own*? Have we *more* sons? Or are we likely 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*?”

“Thou *foolish, mad woman!*” The duke shakes the paper in her face. “Wilt thou conceal *this* dark conspiracy? *A dozen* of them here have ta’en the Sacrament, and interchangeably set down their hands, at Oxford to *kill the king!*”

The duchess pales, but remains resolute. She puts a hand on the young earl’s shoulder. “*He* shall be none of it!—we’ll keep him *here!* Then what is that to *him?*”

“*Away*, foolish woman! Were he *twenty times* my son, I would impeach him!”

“Hadst thou *groaned* for him as *I* have done, thou wouldst be more pitying! 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!” she sobs.

York pushes past her. “Make way, unruly woman!” He hurries away toward the stable.

“*After*, Aumerle!” cries the duchess. “Mount thee upon *his* horse!—*spur post-haste*, 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 till Bolingbroke have *pardoned* thee!

“*Away!*—*be gone!*”

Chapter Nine Wayward Sons

At the palace, Henry paces in vexation. “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!

“Inquire at London ’mongst the *taverns*, for those, they say, he daily doth frequent, with unrestrained, loose companions—even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes and beat our watchmen, and rob our passengers—while he, young wanton and effeminate boy, takes it as a point of honour to *support* so dissolute a crew!”

“My lord, some two days since I saw the prince,” reports young Lord Percy, “and told him of the triumphs to be held at Oxford.”

“And what said the gallant?”

“His answer was: he would unto the *stews*,” whorehouses, “and from the common’st creature pluck a glove and wear it as a favour,” an emblem of devotion, “and that he would unhorse ‘the *lustiest* challenger!’”

Henry shakes his head. “As *dissolute* as desperate! Yet through both I see some sparks of *better* hope, which elder years may perhaps bring forth.”

He looks to the far door as a young nobleman bursts in, hair flying as he sweeps off a long-plumed hat. “But who comes here?”

The disheveled Earl of Rutland, nearly out of breath, is clutching at a servant’s arm. “Where is the king?” he demands.

Henry calls to him: “What *means* our cousin, that he stares and looks so wildly?”

“God save Your Grace!” cries the youth, running forward. “I do beseech Your Majesty to have some conference with Your Grace alone!”

Henry motions the other lords away. “Withdraw yourselves, and leave us here.

“What is the matter with our cousin now?” he asks, once Percy and the others have gone.

Rutland kneels and looks up, beseeching. “*Forever* may my *knees* grow to the earth, my *tongue* cleave to my roof within my mouth, unless under *pardon* I rise or speak!”

“Intended or *committed* was this fault? If on the first, how heinous e’er it be, to win thy after-love I pardon thee.”

“Then give me leave that I may turn the key, so that no man enter till my tale be done!”

“Have thy desire.”

Rutland locks the door—just before it rattles, and a man’s voice calls urgently from outside: “My liege, *beware!* Look to thyself!—thou hast a *traitor* in thy presence there!”

Henry draws his sword. “Villain, I’ll make thee *safe!*”

“Stay thy vengeful hand!” cries Rutland, backing away. “Thou hast no cause to fear!”

The Duke of York calls from the corridor: “*Open the door!* Foolhardy king, I shall securely, for *love*, speak of *treason!*—to thy *face!* Open the door, or I will *break* it open!”

Motioned to do so by the king’s blade, the tremulous earl unlocks the door, and old York rushes in, sweating and panting—and locks the door behind him.

Henry stands amazed. “What is the *matter*, Uncle? *Speak!* Recover breath!—tell us how near is *danger*, that we may arm us to counter it!”

York hands him the conspirators’ agreement. “Peruse this *writing* here!” he gasps, “and thou shalt know the treason that my haste forbids *me* show!”

The earl, again on his knees, pleads, “*Remember*, as thou read’st, thy promise passèd! I do *repent* me!—read not *my name* there!—my *heart* is not confederate with my *hand!*”

“It was, *villain*, ere thy hand did set it down!” cries York angrily. “I *tore* it from the traitor’s bosom, king! *Fear*, and not love, begets his penitent *art!* Forget pitying *him*, lest thy pity prove a *serpent* that will sting thee to the heart!”

Henry looks up from the document, aghast. “Oh, *heinous*, strong and bold *conspiracy!*”

He stares at York. “O *loyal* father of a *treacherous* son! Thou sheer, immaculate and silver fountain, from whence”—he points his blade at Rutland—“*this* stream through *muddy* passages hath held its current, but defiled *himself!*”

But as the pathetic youth quavers before him, the king regards the duke kindly. “Thy overflow of good *converts* the bad, and *thy* abundant goodness shall excuse this deadly blot in thy digressing son.”

Fiery old York protests: “Then 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 shamèd life in his dishonour lies!

“Thou kill’st *me* in his *life!*—giving *him* breath, the traitor lives, the true man’s put to *death!*”

And now another frenzied call is heard from outside: “*What ho*, my *liege!* For God’s sake, let me in!”

Henry looks at the door. “What shrill-voiced supplicant makes this eager cry?”

“A *woman*, and thine *aunt*, great king; ’tis *I!* *Speak* with me, *pity* me!—open the door! A beggar begs that never begged before!”

Henry sheathes his sword. “Our scene is altered from a serious thing, and now changes to ‘The Beggar and the King,’” he says wryly, referring to a popular ballad. “My dangerous cousin, let your mother in; I know she is come to pray, for *your* foul sin.” The youth rises and unlocks the door to admit the lady.

York, red-faced, tells the king, “If thou do *pardon* whosoever *pray*, *more* sins for this forgiveness prosper may!” He points to his son. “*This* festered joint *cut off*, the *rest* rest sound; this let alone will all others *confound!*”

The duchess rushes to Henry and sinks to one knee, “O king, believe not this hard-hearted man! *Love*, loving not *its own*, none *other* can!”

The duke scowls. “Thou frantic woman, what dost thou *make* here? Shall thy old dug once *more* a traitor rear?”

“Sweet York, be patient,” says she. “*Hear* me, gentle *liege!*” she pleads to the king.

“Rise up, good aunt.”

“Not yet, I thee beseech! *Forever* will I walk upon my knee, and never see day that the *happy* see, till thou give me blessing—until thou bid *joy*, by pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy!”

The earl moves to her side. “Unto my mother’s prayers, I bend *my* knee!”

York falls to his knees. “Against them both my *true* joints bended be! Ill thou mayst thrive, if thou grant any *grace!*” he warns.

“Pleads *he* in earnest?” counters the duchess. “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 should be denied; we pray with *heart and soul*, and all beside! His weary joints would gladly rise, I know; *our* knees shall kneel till to the *ground* they grow!

“His prayers are full of false hypocrisy; ours of true zeal and deep integrity. *Our* prayers do out-pray his! Then let them derive that mercy which *true* prayer ought to have!”

Henry suppresses his amusement. “Good aunt, stand up.”

“Nay, do not say ‘Stand up’—say ‘*Pardon!*’ first, and *afterwards* ‘Stand up!’ An if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach, ‘*pardon*’ should be the first word of thy speech! I never *longed* to hear a *word* till now; say ‘*Pardon,*’ king!—let *pity* teach thee how! The word is short, but not so short as *sweet*; no word like ‘*pardon*’ for kings’ mouths so meet!”

Says York dryly, “Speak it in *French*, king: say, ‘*Pardonne moy*’”—*pardonnez moi*, as a demurrer.

“Dost thou *teach* pardon, pardon to *destroy*?” demands the duchess. “*Ah*, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord, who set’st the word itself *against* the word!

“Speak ‘pardon’ as ’tis current in *our* land,” she urges Henry. “The choppèd *French* we do not understand!” She sees the hint of a smile. “Thine *eye* begins to speak!—set thy *tongue* there!—or in thy pitying *heart* plant thou thine *ear*, that hearing how our complaints and prayers do pierce, *pity* may move thee ‘*pardon*’ to rehearse!”

“Good aunt, stand up!” laughs Henry.

“I do not *sue* to stand—*pardon* is all the suit I have in hand!”

“I *pardon* him, as God shall pardon me!” cries Henry—intending no irony. He is eager to move forward, to deal with the truly dangerous conspirators.

The gray-haired duchess struggles to her feet. “Oh, 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* . . .”

“With all my heart I *pardon* him!” cries the impatient ruler.

She kisses his hand. “A god on earth thou art!”

Says Henry grimly, as York rises, “But as 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!

“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 that I will *have* them, if I once know where!”

He heads for the door. “Uncle, farewell; and, Cousin, too, adieu! Your *mother* well hath prayed—and prove *you* true!”

The duchess turns to Rutland as he stands up. “Come, my *old* son; I pray God make thee *new*!”

Chapter Ten Richard Reflects

Sir Piers of Exton, pacing, asks a burly man, one of his servants, about something Henry said. “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?”

“These were his very words.”

“‘Have I no *friend*?’ quoth he. . . . He spake it *twice*!—and *urged* it twice together, did he not?”

“He did.”

“And speaking it, he wistly looked on *me*—as if to say, ‘I would thou wert the man that would divorce this terror from my heart!’—meaning the king at Pomfret.”

He stops; he has decided. “Come, let’s go.

“I *am* the king’s friend—and will rid his foe!”

Sitting, stooped forward on a plain, scuffed chair in his dreary detention quarters at Pomfret Castle, several leagues south of the city of York, Richard ruminates.

I have been studying how I may compare this prison where I live unto the world; but because the world is populous, and here is not a creature but myself, I cannot do it.

Yet I’ll hammer it out! My brain I’ll prove a female to my soul, my soul the father—and these two beget a generation of ever-breeding thoughts—and these same thoughts people this little world—in disposition like the people of the world, for no thought is contented!

The better sort, such as thoughts of things divine, are intermixèd with qualms—and do set the Word itself against the Word—as thus: ‘Come, little ones,’ but 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!

He looks at his soft hands, slender fingers. *How may these vain, weak nails 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 contentment flatter themselves that they are not the first of Fortune’s slaves, nor shall not be the last—like silly beggars who, sitting in the stocks, refute their shame in that many have and others must sit there; and in that thought they find a kind of ease, bearing their own misfortune on the backs of such as have before endured the like.

Thus play I in one person many people—and none contented!

Sometimes am I king; then treasons make me wish myself a beggar—and so I am. Then crushing penury persuades me I was better when a king; then am I kinged again!

*And, by and by, think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke—and straight am nothing.
But whate'er I be, neither I nor any man that is but man shall with nothing be pleased till he
be eased—by being nothing!*

He sits up, listening. *Music do I hear?* He laughs, amused by the piper's attempt. *Keep time!* he chides silently. *How sour sweet music is, when time is broke, and no proportion kept! So is it
in the music of men's lives....*

He reflects, mournfully: *And here have I the daintiness of ear to chide time broken by a
disordered song—but for the concord of my state, had not an ear to hear, in time, my true time
broken!*

*I wasted time, and now doth Time waste me; for now hath Time made me his numbering
clock: my thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar their marches on, unto mine eyes—the
outward watch, whereto my finger, like a dial's point, is pointing near—in cleansing them of
tears. Now the sound that tells the hour is a clamorous groan that strikes upon my heart, which is
the bell. So sighs and tears and groans show minutes, times of ours.*

He rises, disturbed. *But Time runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy, while I stand
fooling here, his jack o' the clock!*

*This music mads me!—let it sound no more; for though it have help madmen to their wits, in
me it seems it will make wise men mad!*

Listening to the soft, earnest strain, he softens. *Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me—for
'tis a sign of love—and love to Richard is a strange breach in this all-hating world!*

A smiling old man, a commoner, comes into the room, still holding the homely pipe he
carved long ago. "*Hail, royal prince!*"

Richard smiles. "Thanks, noble peer!" he says wryly. "The cheapest of *us*"—princes—"is ten
groats too *dear!*"—costly. "What art thou? And how comest thou hither?—where no man ever
comes but that sad dog who brings me food to make *misfortune* live."

The man puts the instrument into a pocket of his dusty coat. "I was a poor groom of thy
stable, king, when thou *wert* king. Now, travelling towards York, with much ado at length have
gotten leave to look upon my sometime royal master's face.

"Oh, how it grieved my heart when I beheld in London streets, that coronation-day, when
Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary—that horse that *thou* so often hast bestrid, that horse that I so
carefully have dressèd!"

"Rode he on *Barbary*? Tell me, gentle friend, how went he under him?"

"So proudly as if he disdained the ground," says the groom.

Richard is indignant. "So proud that *Bolingbroke* was on his back! That *jade* hath eat bread
from *my royal hand!*—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* of that proud man that
did *usurp* his back?"

"Forgiveness, horse," he murmurs. "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, spurred,
galled and tirèd by jouncing *Bolingbroke!*"

His dour reverie is interrupted by the arrival of the keeper, bringing a bowl.

The man frowns at the groom. "Fellow, give place; here no longer stay."

Richard, turning pale, warns the old man: "If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away."

The groom nods, tearfully. "What my tongue dares not, that my *heart* shall say." He goes.

The keeper sets the food and a spoon on the table. "My lord, will't please you to fall to?"

Richard smiles, but his voice is harsh. "Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do." The custom
reassures prisoners fearful of poison.

"My lord, I dare not. Sir Pierce of Exton, who lately came from the king, commands the
contrary."

"The *devil* take Henry of Lancaster—and *thee!*" cries Richard. "Patience is *stale*, and I am
weary of it!" He hurls the bowl at the keeper, and with fists drives him back.

“Help, help, *help!*” calls the man.

Exton hurries into the room—with two heavy henchmen, each carrying a bare sword.

Richard cries, indignantly, “*How now?*—what means Death in *this* rude assault?”

Suddenly he grabs the taller man’s weapon, swings it up, and with a heavy blow to the neck cuts him down. “Villain, thine own hand yields thy death’s instrument!” he cries, striking again with the bloody blade. “Go *thou!*—and fill *another* room in Hell!” he shouts, felling the other.

And then from behind the knight pierces Richard with a broadsword, sending him groaning to the floor.

Gasps the dying monarch, trying to rise, “That hand shall burn in *never-quenching fire* that staggers thus my person! Exton, thy fierce hand hath with *the king’s blood* stained the king’s own *land!*”

In great pain, he stares at the barred window. “Mount, *mount*, my *soul!* Thy seat is up on *high!*—whilst my gross flesh sinks downward... here to die...” He falls back, eyes staring upward.

Richard is dead.

Exton ruefully regards the carnage in the room. *As full of valour as of royal blood! Both have I spilled!*

Oh, would the deed were good! For now the devil that told me I did well says that this deed is chronicled in Hell!

He tells the keeper, who is shaking with horror and gagging at the pungent smell of blood, “This dead king to the living king I’ll bear; take hence the rest, and give them burial here.”

King Henry IV is holding a crisis council at Windsor Castle. “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.”

Northumberland hurries in.

“Welcome, my lord! What is the news?” asks the king.

“First, to thy sacred state wish I all happiness!” says the earl, bowing. “The next is *news*: I have to London sent the *heads* of Oxford, Salisbury, Blunt, and Kent!” He proffers a document. “The manner of their taking may appear at large discoursèd in this paper here.”

Henry accepts it. “We thank thee, gentle Percy, for thy pains—and to thy worth will add right worthy gains!” Northumberland—Sir Henry Percy, long ago knighted by King Richard—bows.

Lord Fitzwater arrives and quickly bows. “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 overthrow!”

“Thy pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgot. Right noble is thy merit, well I wot!”

Young Harry Percy now joins the lords, bringing with him a guarded prisoner, the Bishop of Carlisle. “The *grand* conspirator, Abbot of Westminster, with clog of conscience and sour melancholy, hath yielded up his body to the *grave*,” Percy reports. “But here is Carlisle, living, to abide thy kingly doom and sentence on his pride!”

Henry, triumphant—and mindful of the need to begin some healing—regards the cleric. “Carlisle, this is your doom: choose out some secret place—some more *reverend* room than thou hast!—and with it enjoy thy life. 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.”

Silently, the bishop bows.

The lords all turn as Sir Piers of Exton comes into the hall, followed by four men bearing a black casket.

The knight bows to Henry. “Great king, within this coffin I present thy burièd fear!—herein all breathless lies the mightiest of thy greatest enemies, Richard of Bordeaux—by me hither brought!” He raises the coffin’s lid.

Henry stares, aghast, at the corpse and the blood. “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 protests: “From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed!”

“They love not *poison* that do poison *need!*” growls Bolingbroke, exasperated; he had wanted a quiet, remote and natural-seeming death for Richard. “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, 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!”

He tells his ministers. “Lords, I protest my soul is full of *woe*, that *blood* should sprinkle me to make me grow!”

“Come, mourn with me for what I *do* lament, and put on sullenness, black raiment.” He thinks for a moment; a gesture is needed. “I’ll make a voyage to the Holy Land, to wash this blood from off my hand.”

He motions for the coffin to be taken away. “March sadly after,” he tells Exton.

King Henry IV turns briskly to the nobles. “Grace my mourning *here*, in weeping about this untimely bier.” They have urgent business.