

LIBRIS

We know
books

RICHARD II

William Shakespeare



WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

KING RICHARD II

[1. 1.] *A great scaffold within the castle at Windsor, with seats thereon, and a space of ground before it*

'Enter KING RICHARD, JOHN OF GAUNT, with the DUKE OF SURREY, other nobles and attendants.' They ascend the scaffold and sit in their places, the King in a chair of justice in the midst

K. Richard. Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,
 Hast thou according to thy oath and band
 Brought hither Henry Hereford thy bold son,
 Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,
 Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
 Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?
Gaunt. I have, my liege.

K. Richard. Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him,
 If he appeal the duke on ancient malice,
 Or worthily as a good subject should

10

On some known ground of treachery in him?
Gaunt. As near as I could sift him on that argument,
 On some apparent danger seen in him
 Aimed at your highness, no inveterate malice.

K. Richard. Then call them to our presence—face to face,
 And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
 The accuser and the accused freely speak:
 High-stomached are they both and full of ire,
 In grave, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

LBPRIS

We know
books

'Enter BOLINGBROKE and MOWBRAY'

- 20 *Bolingbroke.* Many years of happy days befall
My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!
Mowbray. Each day still better other's happiness,
Until the heavens, envying earth's good hap,
Add an immortal title to your crown!
K. Richard. We thank you both, yet one but
flatters us,
As well appeareth by the cause you come,
Namely, to appeal each other of high treason:
Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?
- 30 *Bolingbroke.* First—heaven be the record to
my speech
In the devotion of a subject's love,
Tend'ring 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,
40 Too good to be so, and too bad to live,
Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,
The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly:
Once more, the more to aggravate the note,
With a foul traitor's name stuff I thy throat,
And wish (so please my sovereign) ere I move,
What my tongue speaks my right drawn sword
may prove.
Mowbray. Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal.
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,

- The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,
Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain.
The blood is hot that must be cooled for this.
Yet can I not of such tame patience boast
As to be hushed 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,
And let him be no kinsman to my liege,
I do defy him, and I spit at him,
60 Call him a slanderous coward, and a villain,
Which to maintain I would allow him odds,
And meet him were I tied to run afoot,
Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,
Or any other ground inhabitable,
Where ever Englishman durst set his foot.
Mean time, let this defend my loyalty—
By all my hopes most falsely doth he lie.
Bolingbroke. Pale trembling coward there I throw
my gage, [*he casts it at Mowbray's feet*]
70 Disclaiming here the kindred of the king,
And lay aside my high blood's royalty,
Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except....
If guilty dread have left thee so much strength,
As to take up mine honour's pawn, then stoop.
By that, and all the rites of knighthood else,
Will I make good against thee, arm to arm,
What I have spoke, or thou canst worse devise.
Mowbray. I take it up, and by that sword I swear,
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,
80 I'll answer thee in any fair degree,
Or chivalrous design of knightly trial:

And when I mount, alive may I not light,
If I be traitor or unjustly fight!

K. Richard. What doth our cousin lay to
Mowbray's charge?

It must be great that can inherit us
So much as of a thought of ill in him.

Bolingbroke. Look what I speak, my life shall prove
it true,

That Mowbray hath received eight thousand nobles
In name of 'lendings' for your highness' soldiers,
The which he hath detained for lewd employments,
Like a false traitor, and injurious villain:
Besides I say, and will in battle prove,
Or here, or elsewhere to the furthest verge
That ever was 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,
Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,
And consequently like a traitor coward,
Sluced out his innocent soul through streams of blood,
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To me for justice and rough chastisement:
And by the glorious worth of my descent,
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

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

Mowbray. O, let my sovereign turn away his face,
And bid his ears a little while be deaf,
Till I have told this slander of his blood,

How God and good men hate so foul a liar.

K. Richard. Mowbray, impartial are our eyes
and ears,

Were he my brother, nay, my kingdom's heir,
As he is but my father's brother's son,
Now by my sceptre's awe I make a vow,
Such neighbour nearness to our sacred blood
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. 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
Disbursed I duly to his highness' soldiers,
The other part reserved I by consent,
For that my sovereign liege was in my debt,
Upon remainder of a dear account,
Since last I went to France to fetch his queen:
Now swallow down that lie....For Gloucester's death,
I slew him not, but to my own disgrace
Neglected my sworn duty in that case:
For you, my noble lord of Lancaster,
The honourable father to my foe,
Once did I lay an ambush for your life,
A trespass that doth vex my grievéd 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...
This is my fault—as for the rest appealed
It issues from the rancour of a villain,
A recreant and most degenerate traitor,
Which in myself I boldly will defend,
And interchangeably hurl down my gage

Upon this overweening traitor's foot,
 'To prove myself a loyal gentleman,
 Even in the best blood chambered in his bosom,
 In haste whereof most heartily I pray
 Your highness to assign our trial day.

K. Richard. 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.
 Our doctors say this is no month to bleed...
 Good uncle, let this end where it begun,
 We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

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

K. Richard. And, Norfolk, throw down his.

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

K. Richard. Norfolk, throw down we bid, there is
 no boot.

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

K. Richard. Rage must be withstood.
 Give me his gage; lions make leopards tame.

Mowbray. Yea, but not change his spots: take but
 my shame,

And I resign my gage. My dear dear lord,
 The purest treasure mortal times afford,
 Is spotless reputation—that away
 Men are but gilded loam, 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.

K. Richard. Cousin, throw up your gage, do
 you begin.

Bolingbroke. O God defend my soul from such
 deep sin!

Shall I seem crest-fallen in my father's sight?
 Or with pale beggar-fear impeach my height
 Before this out-dared dastard? ere my tongue
 Shall wound my honour with such feeble wrong,
 Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear
 The slavish motive of recanting fear,
 And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace,
 Where shame doth harbour, even in Mowbray's
 face.

K. Richard. We were not born to sue, but
 to command,

Which 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.
 Lord marshal, command our officers at arms
 Be ready to direct these home alarms.

[they go]

LIBRIS We know
[1. 2.] *A room in the Duke of Lancaster's house*

*'Enter JOHN OF GAUNT with the DUCHESS
OF GLOUCESTER'*

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

Duchess. Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?
10 Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root:
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
Some of those branches by the Destinies cut:
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is cracked, and all the precious liquor spilt,
20 Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded,
By envy's hand, and murder's bloody axe....

[*she weeps*]

Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! that bed,
that womb,
That mettle, that self mould, that 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,

In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,
Who was the model of thy father's life...
Call it not patience, Gaunt, it is despair.
30 In suff'ring thus thy brother to be slaught' red,
Thou showest the naked pathway to thy life,
Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee:
That which in mean men we intitle patience,
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts...
What shall I say? to safeguard thine own life,
The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

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

Duchess. Where then, alas, may I complain myself?

Gaunt. To God, the widow's champion and defence.

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

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

Duchess. Yet one word more—Grief boundeth where
it falls,
Not with the empty hollowness, but weight:

I take my leave before I have begun,
 For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done:
 Commend me to thy brother, Edmund York.
 Lo, this is all...nay, yet depart not so,
 Though this be all, do not so quickly go...
 I shall remember more...Bid him—ah, what?—
 With all good speed at Plashy visit me.
 Alack and what shall good old York there see
 But empty lodgings and unfurnished walls,
 Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?
 And what hear there for welcome but my groans?
 Therefore commend me, let him not come there,
 To seek out sorrow that dwells every where.
 Desolate, desolate, will I hence and die:
 The last leave of thee takes my weeping eye. [*they go*]

[1. 3.] *The lists at Coventry; to the side a platform, with a throne (richly hanged and adorned) for the king, and seats for his court; at either end of the lists chairs for the combatants; a great throng of spectators. Herald, &c. attending*

'Enter the Lord Marshal and the DUKE AUMERLE'

Marshal. My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford armed?

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

Marshal. The Duke of Norfolk, sprightly and bold,

Stays but the summons of the appellant's trumpet.

Aumerle. Why then, the champions are prepared and stay

For nothing but his majesty's approach.

The trumpets sound and the KING, bearing a truncheon, enters with his nobles (GAUNT among them): when they are set, enter the DUKE OF NORFOLK in arms defendant

K. Richard. 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. 10

Marshal. In God's name and the king's say who thou art,

And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms,
 Against what man thou com'st, and what thy quarrel.
 Speak truly, on thy knighthood, and thy oath,
 And so defend thee heaven and thy valour!

Mowbray. My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,

Who hither come engaged by my oath
 (Which God defend a knight should violate!)
 Both to defend my loyalty and truth,
 To God, my king, and my succeeding issue, 20
 Against the Duke of Hereford that appeals me,
 And by the grace of God, and this mine arm,
 To prove him, in defending of myself,
 A traitor to my God, my king, and me—
 And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

[*he takes his seat*]

The trumpets sound. Enter the DUKE OF HEREFORD appellant in armour

K. Richard. 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. 30