

Richard II abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Father to Son

Situation: A seriously ill John of Gaunt offers his son Henry Bolingbroke his best wishes and some very good counsel, Bolingbroke having just been exiled, as we say, by King Richard II to France for six years.

GAUNT TO RICHARD II: Ere the six years that he hath to spend, my oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light shall be extinct with age and endless night; my inch of taper will be burnt and done, and blindfold death not let me see my son.

RICHARD II: Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.

GAUNT: But not a minute, king, that thou canst give. Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow, and pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow.

RICHARD II: Thy son is banished upon good advice.

GAUNT: Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour. You urge me as a judge, but I had rather you would have bid me argue like a father. A partial slander sought I to avoid, and in the sentence my own life destroyed.

RICHARD II TO BOLINGBROKE: Cousin, farewell. And uncle, bid him so.

The king exits.

GAUNT TO BOLINGBROKE: Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

BOLINGBROKE: Joy absent, grief is present for that time; grief makes one hour ten.

Gaunt to Bolingbroke

**What is six winters? They are quickly gone
In joy, but in grief, time moves slowly on.
Son, all places that the eye of heaven
Visits are to a wise man havens bright.
Gnarling sorrows hath less strength to bite when
A man mocks them with scorn and sets them light.
Think of the present crown as lightly worn.
Carry your woe as if but faintly borne.
Imagine each flower a fair lady;
Each step a measured dance. Suppose where you
Goest, not com'st. Suppose thy weary
Steps the firm setting wherein thou art to
Set the jewel of thy home. Be on thy way.
Had I thy youth and cause I would not stay.**

BOLINGBROKE: The apprehension of the good gives but the greater feeling to the worse.

GAUNT: Come, come my son.

BOLINGBROKE: Then, England's sweet soil, adieu. Where'er I wander, boast of this I can, though banished, yet a trueborn Englishman.