

Richard II abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 3

Pleading

Situation: The duke of York and his Duchess, learning that their son Aumerle had been part of a plot to assassinate King Henry IV, both rush to the king; he to expose his son as a criminal; she to seek a pardon for her son.

DUCHESS: O king, believe not this man.

YORK: Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?

DUCHESS: Sweet York, be patient. Hear me, gentle liege. Forever will I walk upon my knees till thou give joy, by pardoning my transgressing boy.

AUMERLE: Upon my mother's prayers I bend my knee.

YORK: Against them both my true joints bended by. Ill mayst thou thrive if thou grant any grace.

Duchess to Henry IV

He is not earnest. O king, believe not
This hard-hearted man who doth not but ought
Love himself. Prays faintly he where we pray
With heart, soul and all besides. His joints would
Gladly rise where to earth our knees do stay.
Our prayers outpray his. Give mercy which good
Prayer ought to have. Say, not "stand up," king, say
"Pardon" first and afterwards "stand up." Nay
To my sour husband. Say "pardon" king,
A word not so short as sweet, to my son,
Who, to your piteous heart, my pleas bring
Hope for him. Twice saying "pardon" makes one
Pardon stronger. I do not sue to stand;
Pardon is all the suit I have in hand.

HENRY IV: Good aunt, stand up. I pardon him, as God shall pardon me. I pardon him with all my heart.

DUCHESS: A god on earth thou art.

HENRY IV: Good uncle, help to order several powers to Oxford, or where'er these traitors are. They shall not live within this world. Uncle, farewell. And cousin, adieu. Your mother well hath prayed; and prove you true.

DUCHESS: Come, my old son. I pray God make thee new.