

Richard II abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Pride

Situation: John of Gaunt, his life nearing its end, lets us know through a beautiful soliloquy how much he loves his country, a cry that has been heard and loved throughout England ever since.

GAUNT: Methinks I am a prophet new inspired, and thus expiring do foretell of him: his rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last, for violent fires soon burn out themselves; small showers last long, but sudden storms are short.

Gaunt to York, No. 2

**This land of such dear souls, known through the old
World for royal kings, this grand isle, is now sold
Out as a paltry farm. It hath made a
Shameful conquest of itself. This earth, bound
By the sea, whose rocky shore beats back the
Jealous siege of wat'ry Neptune, has found
Itself bound in with shame, itself most ill.
This scandal vanish with my life my will.
This precious stone set in the silver sea;
This fortress built by Nature that serves it
As a walled office against the envy
Of less happier lands. This Eden fit
For this happy breed of men loyal who stand
On this blessed plot, this realm, this England.**

The king and his entourage enter.

YORK TO GAUNT: The king is come. Deal mildly with his youth.

RICHARD II: How is 't with aged Gaunt?

GAUNT: Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old. I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

RICHARD II: Should dying men flatter with those that live?

GAUNT: No, no, men living flatter those that die.

RICHARD II: Thou, now a-dying, sayest thou flatterest me.

GAUNT: O, no, thou diest, though I the sicker be.

RICHARD II: I am in health, I breath, and see thee ill.

GAUNT: Now He that made me knows. Thy deathbed is no lesser than thy land, wherein thou liest in reputation sick. O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye seen now his son's son should destroy his sons, which art possessed now to depose thyself. Is it not more than shame to shame it so? Landlord of England art thou now, not king.