

Richard III abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 7.2

Deception

Situation: “Playing the maid’s part,” Richard gently refuses Buckingham’s semi-public request that he become king, and it works. Catesby (Richard’s friend) and the mayor practically beg Richard to accept England’s crown, which he does, succumbing almost backhandedly by saying “I must have patience to endure the load.”

RICHARD: I answer you: your love deserves my thanks, but my desert unmeritable shuns your high request. First, so much is my poverty of spirit, so mighty and so many my defects, that I would rather hide me from my greatness. The royal tree hath left us royal fruit, which will well become the seat of majesty, and make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.

Buckingham to Richard, No. 2

**You say that the prince is your brother’s son,
As say we, but brought not forth by the one
Edward calls wife, his mother, fair Lucy,
Then under contract to Edward. Later
Betrothed he by substitute to Bonne,
Sister-in-law to the French king. Both were
Put off by a beauty-waning, distressed
Widow, even in the time of her best
Days, who of all his women deserved less.
I could expostulate more bitterly,
Save that for reverence to the Dutchess.
Good sir, give us the gift of dignity,
Lead this blessed land from your noble source,
Do bless us through a true lineal course.**

MAYOR: Do, good my lord. Your citizens entreat you.

BUCKINGHAM: Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffered love.

CATESBY: O, make them joyful. Grant their lawful suit.

RICHARD: Alas, why would you heap this care on me? I cannot nor I will not, yield to you.

BUCKINGHAM: If you refuse it, your brother’s son shall never reign our king, but we will plant some other in the throne, to the disgrace and downfall of your house.