

Henry VI Part 1 abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 5

Inspiration

Situation: Edmund Mortimer was a legitimate heir to England's throne and is now in jail, imprisoned by Henry V. Henry V had understandably considered him a threat. Mortimer learns that Richard Plantagenet plans to visit him, and in anticipation of the visit shares some history with us from his jail cell. Mortimer was the grandson of Philippa, Lionel's daughter, Lionel being Edward III's third son.

MORTIMER: Kind keepers of my weak decaying age, let dying Mortimer here rest himself. Even like a man new haled from the rack, so fare my limbs with long imprisonment.

Mortimer to himself

Since Henry Monmouth first began to reign
I have sequestered. And it's been the bane
Of Richard, since obscured and deprived of
Honor and his birthrights. Like a withered
Vine that droops its sapless branches above
The ground, these shoulders are weak and burdened
With grief. Yet do these numb and strengthless feet
Push on, swift-winged with base desire to meet
A grave. With these arms and gray locks one sees
The end of Edmund Mortimer. Yet you
Can wait Death, umpire of men's miseries,
Arbiter of despairs. If my nephew
Come, my soul shall be satisfied. Then whence
Willing come just Death to dismiss me hence.

JAILER: Richard Plantagenet, my lord, will come.

MORTIMER: Poor gentleman! His wrong doth equal mine.