

Henry VIII abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

History

Situation: The stoic Duke of Buckingham, the son of the Buckingham in Richard III, the one so poorly treated by Richard III after he had run interference for Richard on his way to the crown, is led to his execution. Shakespeare has him conduct himself with the epitome of class, honor and grace.

LOVELL: To th' waterside I must conduct your Grace, then give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux, who undertakes you to your end.

Vaux calls to officers offstage.

VAUX TO OFFICERS: Prepare there! The Duke is coming. See the barge be ready, and fit it with such furniture as suites the greatness of his person.

BUCKINGHAM: Nay, Sir Nicholas, let it alone. My state now will but mock me.

Buckingham to All, No. 2

**When I came hither I was the Duke of
Buckingham; now Edward Bohun; above,
However, base accusers who ne'er
Knew what truth meant. My brave father, Henry
Of Buckingham, aiding his servant there
At Bosworth, was betrayed by the lowly
Wretch, and without a trial, fell. Succeeding
Richard, Henry the Seventh, pitying
My father's loss restored my honors. Now
At one stroke the Seventh's son hath taken
From this world my name, honor and all that
Made me happy; yet thus we are one in
Fortunes, both felled by servants, both remiss.
We loved these men, a most faithless service.**

BUCKINGHAM: Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels be sure you be not careless; for those you make friends and give your hearts to, when they once perceive the least weakness in your fortunes, fall away like water from you, never found again but where they mean to sink you. All good people pray for me; I must leave you entirely. When you would say something that is sad, speak how I fell. God forgive me.