

Richard II abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 2.1

Despair

Situation: Soon after the king's return to England from his skirmishes in Ireland, having lost his heretofore support of the Welsh troops, the earl of Salisbury abruptly warns him of troubles ahead. Stephen Scroop practically terrifies him. The king decides to retreat to Flint Castle, famously saying "The worst is death, and death will have his day."

SALISBURY: Discomfort guides my tongue and bids me speak of nothing but despair. All the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead, are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled.

AUMERLE: Comfort, my liege. Why looks your Grace so pale? Remember who you are.

RICHARD II: I had forgot myself. Am I not king? Awake, thou coward majesty, thou sleepest!
Scroop enters.

SCROOP: More health and happiness betide my liege than can my care-tuned tongue deliver him.

RICHARD II: Mine ear is open, and my heart prepared. The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold. Say, is my kingdom lost? What loss is it to be rid of care? The worst is death, and death will have his day.

Scroop to Richard II

I am glad your Highness is so ready
To hear the tidings of calamity.
Like a torrentially stormy day spells
Trouble, as the rivers drown their shores, as
If the world is dissolved in tears, so swells
The growing rage of Bolingbroke, which has
Frighted the land with steel as he doth win
Their harder than steel hearts. Whitebeards with thin
And hairless scalps; boys speaking big, clap their
Unwieldy arms against the crown; beggars
Bend their bows even as they cry unfair;
And distaff women raise rusty halberds
Against thy seat. Both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have strength to tell.

RICHARD II: Too well, too well thou tell'st a tale so ill. What is become of Bushy? Where is Green, that they have let the dangerous enemy measure our confines with such peaceful steps? If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it! I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

SCROOP: Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord!

AUMERLE: Is Bushy, Green and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?

SCROOP: Ay, all of them at Bristow lost their heads.