

Richard III abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 1

Introspection

Situation: Richard duke of Gloucester provides us with a continuing introduction to his devious plans, Richard having just learned that his brother George duke of Clarence has been sent to prison and that his brother Edward IV is “sickly, weak and melancholy.”

RICHARD: How hath your Lordship brooked imprisonment?

HASTINGS: With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must.

RICHARD: No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too, for they that were your enemies are his and have prevailed as much on him as you. What news abroad?

HASTINGS: No news so bad abroad as this at home: the king is sickly, weak, and melancholy.

RICHARD: O, he hath kept an evil diet long, and overmuch consumed his royal person. Where is he, in his bed?

HASTINGS: He is.

Hastings exits.

Richard to himself, No. 2

He must die, yet must not die till I forge
My well steeled lies for King Edward, and George
Is packed to heaven. Clarence hath a few
Hours to live, then God in His kind mercy
Can take brother Edward, leaving me to
Make commotion in the world. I'll marry
Warwick's daughter Anne, for she never saw
Me kill her husband or father-in-law.
To become her husband and his father
Is the quick way to make amends, which I
Will do, not for love but for another
Secret intent. Yet I run before my
Horse to market. Clarence breathes. Edward reigns.
Till they are gone I must not count my gains.