

1.1. London. A street.

[Enter *RICHARD*.]

RICHARD

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty,
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other.
[Enter *CLARENCE*, guarded, and *BRAKENBURY*]
Brother, good day; what means this armed guard
That waits upon your grace?

CLARENCE

His majesty

Tendering my person's safety, hath appointed
This conduct to convey me to the Tower.

RICHARD

Upon what cause?

CLARENCE

Because my name is George.

RICHARD

Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;
But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?

CLARENCE

Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest
As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,
He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;
And says a wizard told him that by G
His issue disinherited should be;
And, for my name of George begins with G,
It follows in his thought that I am he.

RICHARD

Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:
'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower:
Elizabeth his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
That tempers him to this extremity.

BRAKENBURY

I beseech your graces both to pardon me;
His majesty hath straitly given in charge
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with his brother.

RICHARD

Even so; an't please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of any thing we say:
We speak no treason, man: we say the king

Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous.

BRAKENBURY

I beseech your grace to pardon me, and withal
Forbear your conference with the noble duke.

CLARENCE

We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

RICHARD

We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king;
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

CLARENCE

I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

RICHARD

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;
Meantime, have patience.

CLARENCE

I must perforce. Farewell.

[Exeunt CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and Guard]

RICHARD

Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
If heaven will take the present at our hands.
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!
Now then, I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
What though I kill'd her husband and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father.
But yet I run before my horse to market:
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:
When they are gone, then must I count my gains.

SCENE II. A churchyard.

Enter the corpse/tomb of KING HENRY the Sixth; LADY ANNE being the mourner

LADY ANNE

Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
Be it lawful that I invocate thy ghost,
To hear the lamentations of Poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son,
Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!
Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!

[Seeing RICHARD]

Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore be gone.

RICHARD

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

LADY ANNE

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

RICHARD

Lady, you know no rules of charity,
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

RICHARD

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

RICHARD

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.

Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,

Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,

By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

LADY ANNE

Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,

For these known evils, but to give me leave,

By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

RICHARD

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have

Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

LADY ANNE

And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;

For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,

Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

RICHARD

Say that I slew them not?

LADY ANNE

Why, then they are not dead:

But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

RICHARD

I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE

Didst thou not kill this king?

RICHARD

I grant ye.

LADY ANNE

Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too

Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!

O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

RICHARD

The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

LADY ANNE

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

RICHARD

Let him thank me, that holp to send him thither;
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

LADY ANNE

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

RICHARD

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

LADY ANNE

Some dungeon.

RICHARD

[*Aside*] Your bed-chamber.

LADY ANNE

Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

RICHARD

So will it, madam till I lie with you.

LADY ANNE

I hope so.

RICHARD

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,

Your beauty was the cause of that effect;

Your beauty: which did haunt me in my sleep

To undertake the death of all the world,

So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

LADY ANNE

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,

These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

RICHARD

These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's wreck;
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:
As all the world is cheered by the sun,
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

LADY ANNE

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

RICHARD

Curse not thyself, fair creature thou art both.

LADY ANNE

I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

RICHARD

It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be revenged on him that loveth you.

LADY ANNE

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.

RICHARD

He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

LADY ANNE

His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

RICHARD

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

LADY ANNE

Name him.

RICHARD

Plantagenet.

[She spitteth at him]

LADY ANNE

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

RICHARD

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

LADY ANNE

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.
Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.

RICHARD

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

LADY ANNE

Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!

RICHARD

I would they were, that I might die at once;
For now they kill me with a living death.
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,
Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:

These eyes that never shed remorseful tear,
Not when thy warlike father, like a child,
Told the sad story of my father's death,
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks
Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;

[He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword]

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,

But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.

Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward,
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

[Here she lets fall the sword]

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

LADY ANNE

Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,
I will not be the executioner.

RICHARD

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

LADY ANNE

I have already.

RICHARD

Tush, that was in thy rage:
Speak it again, and, even with the word,
That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love,
Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love;
To both their deaths thou shalt be accessory.

LADY ANNE

I would I knew thy heart.

RICHARD

'Tis figured in my tongue.

LADY ANNE

I fear me both are false.

RICHARD

Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE

Well, well, put up your sword.

RICHARD

Say, then, my peace is made.

LADY ANNE

That shall you know hereafter.

RICHARD

But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE

All men, I hope, live so.

RICHARD

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE

To take is not to give.

RICHARD

Look, how this ring encompasseth finger.
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.

LADY ANNE

With all my heart; and much it joys me too,
To see you are become so penitent.

RICHARD

Bid me farewell.

LADY ANNE

'Tis more than you deserve;
But since you teach me how to flatter you,
Imagine I have said farewell already.

[*Exeunt LADY ANNE.*]

RICHARD

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.
What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
And I nothing to back my suit at all,
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!
Ha!

I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain some score or two of tailors,
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.

[*Exit*]

SCENE III. The palace.

[Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVERS, HASTINGS, and RICHMOND]

RIVERS

Have patience, madam: there's no doubt his majesty
Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

If he were dead, what would betide of me?

HASTINGS

No other harm but loss of such a lord.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The loss of such a lord includes all harm.

RIVERS

The heavens have bless'd you with a goodly son,
To be your comforter when he is gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh, he is young and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.

RICHMOND

Is it concluded that he shall be protector?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

It is determined, not concluded yet:
But so it must be, if the king miscarry.
Would all were well! but that will never be.
I fear our happiness is at the highest.

[Enter RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM.]

RICHARD

They do me wrong, and I will not endure it:
Who are they that complain unto the king,
That I, forsooth, am stern, and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.

Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

RIVERS

To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

RICHARD

To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.
When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.

RICHARD

I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch:

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Come, come, we know your meaning, brother Gloucester;
You envy my advancement and my friends':
God grant we never may have need of you!

RICHARD

Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:
My brother is imprison'd by your means,
Myself disgraced, and the nobility
Held in contempt; whilst many fair promotions
Are daily given to ennable those
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I never did incense his majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.

RICHARD

You may deny that you were not the cause--

RIVERS

She may, my lord, for--

RICHARD

She may, Lord Rivers! why, who knows not so?

She may do more, sir, than denying that:

She may help you to many fair preferments...

RIVERS

What, marry, may she?

RICHARD

What, marry, may she! marry with a king!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne

Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:

By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty

With those gross taunts I often have endured.

I had rather be a country servant-maid

Than a great queen, with this condition,

To be thus taunted, scorn'd, and baited at:

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

RICHARD

Ere you were queen, yea, or your husband king,

I was a pack-horse in his great affairs;

A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,

In all which time you and your husband Grey

Were factious for the house of Lancaster;

Let me put in your minds, if you forget,

What you have been ere now, and what you are;

Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

Poor Clarence did forsake his father, Warwick;

Yea, and forswore himself,--which Jesu pardon!--

To fight on Edward's party for the crown;

And for his meed, poor lord, he is mew'd up.

I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;

Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine.

I am too childish-foolish for this world.

RIVERS

My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days

Which here you urge to prove us enemies,

We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king:

So should we you, if you should be our king.

RICHARD

If I should be! I had rather be a pedlar:

Far be it from my heart, the thought of it!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

As little joy, my lord, as you suppose

You should enjoy, were you this country's king,

As little joy may you suppose in me.

That I enjoy, being the queen thereof.

[Enter CATESBY]

CATESBY

Madam, his majesty doth call for you,

And for your grace; and you, my noble lords.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Catesby, we come. Lords, will you go with us?

RICHMOND

Madam, we will attend your grace.

[Exeunt all but RICHARD and CATESBY]

RICHARD

I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,

She hath had too much wrong; and I repent

My part thereof that I have done to her.

CATESBY

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,

To pray for them that have done scathe to us.

RICHARD

So do I ever.
And thus I clothe my naked villany
With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.
[Enter a Murderer, TYRREL]

But, soft! here come my executioners.
How now, my hardy, stout resolved mates!
Are you now going to dispatch this deed?

CATESBY

We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant
That we may be admitted where he is.

RICHARD

Well thought upon; I have it here about me.
[Gives the warrant]

But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,
Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;
For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps
May move your hearts to pity if you mark him.

TYRREL

Fear not, my lord, we will not stand to prate;
Talkers are no good doers: be assured
We come to use our hands and not our tongues.

RICHARD

Your eyes drop millstones, when fools' eyes drop tears:
I like you, lads; about your business straight;
Go, go, dispatch.

CATESBY

We will, my noble lord.

[Exeunt]

SCENE IV. London. The Tower.

[Enter CLARENCE and BRAKENBURY (as jailer)]

CLARENCE

O, I have pass'd a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams.
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days.

BRAKENBURY

What was your dream?

CLARENCE

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches: thence we looked toward England,
And cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster
That had befall'n us. As we paced along
Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, in falling,
Struck me overboard,
Into the tumbling billows of the main.

Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,
As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,

And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.
And often did I strive
To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood
Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth
To seek the empty, vast and wandering air;
But smother'd it within my panting bulk,
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

[Sleeps. Enter the two Murderers]

CATESBY

Ho! who's here? I would speak with Clarence.

[Hands the commission to BRAKENBURY.]

BRAKENBURY

Yea, are you so brief?

[BRAKENBURY reads the commission.]

I am, in this, commanded to deliver
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands:
I will not reason what is meant hereby,
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.

CATESBY

Do so, it is a point of wisdom: fare you well.

[Exit BRAKENBURY]

TYRREL

What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

CATESBY

What, art thou afraid?

TYRREL

Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be
damned for killing him, from which no warrant can defend us.

CATESBY

I thought thou hadst been resolute.

TYRREL

So I am, to let him live.

CATESBY

Back to the Duke of Gloucester, tell him so.
How dost thou feel thyself now?

TYRREL

'Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet
within me.

CATESBY

Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

TYRREL

'Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

CATESBY

Where is thy conscience now?

TYRREL

In the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

CLARENCE *[waking]*

Where art thou, keeper?

In God's name, what art thou?

TYRREL

A man, as you are.

CLARENCE

But not, as I am, royal.

TYRREL

Nor you, as we are, loyal.

CLARENCE

Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

TYRREL

My voice is now the king's, my looks mine own.

CLARENCE

How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me: why look you pale?
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?
To, to, to--

Both

To, to, to--

CLARENCE

To murder me?

Both

Ay, ay.

CLARENCE

Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

CATESBY

Offended us you have not, but the king.

CLARENCE

I shall be reconciled to him again.

TYRREL

Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

CLARENCE

If you be hired for meed, go back again,
And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,
Who shall reward you better for my life
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

TYRREL

You are deceived, your brother Gloucester hates you.

CLARENCE

O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear:
Go you to him from me.

Both

Ay, so we will.

CLARENCE

Bid Gloucester think of this, and he will weep.

CATESBY

Ay, millstones; as be lesson'd us to weep.

CLARENCE

O, do not slander him, for he is kind.

CATESBY

Right,

As snow in harvest. Thou deceivest thyself:
'Tis he that sent us hither now to slaughter thee.

CLARENCE

It cannot be; for when I parted with him,
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labour my delivery.

[*Stabs/drowns him*]

TYRREL

Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee
From this world's thraldom to the joys of heaven.

[*Exit, with the body*]

ACT II

SCENE I. London. The palace.

[*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH, RICHMOND, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, and others (DUCHESS OF YORK)*]

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so: now have I done a good day's work:
You peers, continue this united league:
I every day expect an embassage
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;
And now in peace my soul shall part to heaven,
Since I have set my friends at peace on earth.
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;
Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

RIVERS

By heaven, my heart is purged from grudging hate:
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

HASTINGS

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!

KING EDWARD IV

Take heed you dally not before your king;
Lest he that is the supreme King of kings
Confound your hidden falsehood, and award
Either of you to be the other's end.

HASTINGS

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

RIVERS

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

KING EDWARD IV

Madam, yourself are not exempt in this,
Nor you, Buckingham;
You have been factious one against the other,
Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;
And what you do, do it unfeignedly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Here, Hastings; I will never more remember
Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

HASTINGS

And so swear I, my lord.

[They embrace]

KING EDWARD IV

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league
With thy embracements to my wife's allies,
And make me happy in your unity.

BUCKINGHAM

Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate
On you or yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!

KING EDWARD IV

A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,

To make the perfect period of this peace.

BUCKINGHAM

And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.
[Enter RICHARD and LADY ANNE]

RICHARD

Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen:
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

KING EDWARD IV

Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we done deeds of charity;
Made peace enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.

RICHARD

A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege:
Amongst this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence, or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe;
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my dutious service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,
If ever any grudge were lodged between us;
Of you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Hastings, of you;
That without desert have frown'd on me;
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen; indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born to-night.

I thank my God for my humility.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A holy day shall this be kept hereafter:
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your majesty
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

RICHARD

Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this
To be so bouted in this royal presence?
Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

[*They all start*]

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

RIVERS

Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

All seeing heaven, what a world is this!

BUCKINGHAM

Look I so pale, Lord Richmond, as the rest?

RICHMOND

Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

KING EDWARD IV

Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

RICHARD

But he, poor soul, by your first order died,
And that a winged Mercury did bear:
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too lag to see him buried.

KING EDWARD IV

O God, I fear thy justice will take hold
On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet.
Oh, poor Clarence!

Exeunt KING EDWARD IV, QUEEN ELIZABETH, RICHMOND, RIVERS, and HASTINGS.

DUCHESS OF YORK

O, Clarence, my unhappy son!

RICHARD

This is the fruit of rashness! Mark'd you not
How that the guilty kindred of the queen
Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
God will revenge it. But come, let us in,
To comfort Edward with our company.

BUCKINGHAM

We wait upon your grace.

[*Re-enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her ears; RIVERS, and RICHMOND after her. SCENE II. The palace.*]

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune, and torment myself?
I'll join with black despair against my soul,
And to myself become an enemy.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What means this scene of rude impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To make an act of tragic violence:
Edward, my lord, your son, our king, is dead.
Why grow the branches now the root is wither'd?
Why wither not the leaves the sap being gone?
If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's;
Or, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.

[*During this, exit RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM, and RICHMOND*]

DUCHESS OF YORK

Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband!
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And lived by looking on his images:
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass,
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:
But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms,
And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble limbs,
Edward and Clarence. O, what cause have I,
Thine being but a moiety of my grief,
To overgo thy plaints and drown thy cries!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What stays had I but they? and they are gone.

Alas, on me

Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse.

RIVERS

Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him,
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

[Re-enter RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM, HASTINGS, and

RICHMOND]

RICHARD

Madam, have comfort: all of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;
humbly on my knee I crave your blessing.

DUCHESS OF YORK

God bless thee; and put meekness in thy mind,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

[Exit DUCHESS OF YORK AND QUEEN ELIZABETH]

RICHARD

[Aside] Amen; and make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:
I marvel why her grace did leave it out.

BUCKINGHAM

You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers,
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,
Now cheer each other in each other's love
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,
But lately splinter'd, knit, and join'd together,
Must gently be preserved, cherish'd, and kept:
It seemeth good, that, with some little train,
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fetch'd
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

RIVERS

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM

Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out,
Which would be so much the more dangerous

By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd.

RICHARD

I hope the king made peace with all of us
And the compact is firm and true in me.

RIVERS

And so in me; and so, I think, in all:
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put
To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply by much company might be urged:
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,
That it is meet so few should fetch the prince.

HASTINGS

And so say I.

RICHARD

Then be it so; and go we to determine
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.
[*Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and RICHARD*]

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,
For God's sake, let not us two be behind;
For, by the way, I'll sort occasion,
As index to the story we late talk'd of,
To part the queen's proud kindred from the king.

RICHARD

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet! My dear cousin,
I, like a child, will go by thy direction.
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.
[*Exeunt*]

ACT III

SCENE I. London. A street.

[*The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD and his BROTHER, RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, and TYRREL*]

BUCKINGHAM

Welcome, sweet prince, to London, to your chamber.

RICHARD

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign.
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

PRINCE EDWARD

No, uncle; but our crosses on the way
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy.
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

RICHARD

Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit.
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;
Your grace attended to their sugar'd words,
But look'd not on the poison of their hearts :
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

PRINCE EDWARD

God keep me from false friends! but they were none.
I thank you, good my lord; and thank you all.
I thought my mother, and my brother York,
Would long ere this have met us on the way
Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not
To tell us whether they will come or no!

Say, uncle Gloucester,

Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

RICHARD

If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower:

Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.

PRINCE EDWARD

I do not like the Tower, of any place.

RICHARD

[*Aside*] So wise so young, they say, do never
live long.

BROTHER

What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

PRINCE EDWARD

My lord protector needs will have it so.

BROTHER

I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.

RICHARD

Why, what should you fear?

YORK

Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost:
My grandam told me he was murdered there.

PRINCE EDWARD

I fear no uncles dead.

RICHARD

Nor none that live, I hope.

[*Exeunt TYRREL with the princes.*]

Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.

Thou art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend
As closely to conceal what we impart:
Thou know'st our reasons urged upon the way;
What think'st thou? is it not an easy matter
To make William Lord Hastings of our mind,
For the instalment of this noble duke
In the seat royal of this famous isle?

CATESBY

He for his father's sake so loves the prince,
That he will not be won to aught against him.

BUCKINGHAM

What think'st thou, then, of Stanley? what will he?

CATESBY

He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

BUCKINGHAM

Well, then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,
And, as it were far off sound thou Lord Hastings,
How doth he stand affected to our purpose;
And summon him to-morrow to the Tower,
To sit about the coroation.

If thou dost find him tractable to us,
Encourage him, and show him all our reasons.

CATESBY

My good lords both, with all the heed I may.

[*Exit CATESBY*]

BUCKINGHAM

Now, my lord, what shall we do, if we perceive
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

RICHARD

Chop off his head, man; somewhat we will do:
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and the moveables
Whereof the king my brother stood possess'd.

BUCKINGHAM

I'll claim that promise at your grace's hands.

RICHARD

And look to have it yielded with all willingness.
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
We may digest our plots in some form.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. Before Lord Hastings' house.

[Enter CATESBY]

CATESBY

Many good morrows to my noble lord!

HASTINGS

Good Morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

CATESBY

It is a reeling world, indeed, my lord;
And I believe twill never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm.

HASTINGS

How! wear the garland! dost thou mean the crown?

CATESBY

Ay, my good lord.

HASTINGS

I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders
Ere I will see the crown so foul misplaced.
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

CATESBY

Ay, on my life; and hopes to find forward
Upon his party for the gain thereof:
And thereupon he sends you this good news,
That this same very day your enemy,
Lord Rivers, must die at Pomfret.

HASTINGS

Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,
Because he has been still mine enemy:
But, that I'll give my voice on Richard's side,
To bar my master's heirs in true descent,
God knows I will not do it, to the death.

CATESBY

God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!

HASTINGS

But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,
That he who brought me in my master's hate
I live to look upon his tragedy.

I tell thee, Catesby--

CATESBY

What, my lord?

HASTINGS

Ere a fortnight make me elder,
I'll send some packing that yet think not on it.

CATESBY

'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
When men are unprepared and look not for it.

HASTINGS

O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out
With Lord Rivers: and so 'twill do
With some men else, who think themselves as safe
As thou and I; who, as thou know'st, are dear
To princely Richard and to Buckingham.

CATESBY

The princes both make high account of you.

HASTINGS

I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. Pomfret Castle.

[*Dumbshow: execution of RIVERS.*]

SCENE IV. The Tower of London.

[Enter BUCKINGHAM, HASTINGS, RICHMOND, STANLEY, CATESBY, and TYRREL]

HASTINGS

My lords, at once: the cause why we are met
Is, to determine of the coronation.
In God's name, speak: when is the royal day?

BUCKINGHAM

Are all things fitting for that royal time?

STANLEY

It is, and wants but nomination.

RICHMOND

To-morrow, then, I judge a happy day.

BUCKINGHAM

Who knows the lord protector's mind herein?
Who is most inward with the royal duke?

RICHMOND

Your grace, we think, should soonest know his mind.

BUCKINGHAM

Who, I, my lord I we know each other's faces,
But for our hearts, he knows no more of mine,
Than I of yours;
Nor I no more of his, than you of mine.
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

HASTINGS

I thank his grace, I know he loves me well;
But, for his purpose in the coronation.
I have not sounded him, nor he deliver'd
His gracious pleasure any way therein:
But you, my noble lords, may name the time;
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice,
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.

[Enter RICHARD]

STANLEY

Now in good time, here comes the duke himself.

RICHARD

My noble lords and cousins all, good Morrow.
I have been long a sleeper; but, I hope,
My absence doth neglect no great designs,
Which by my presence might have been concluded.

BUCKINGHAM

Had not you come upon your cue, my lord
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part,--
I mean, your voice,--for crowning of the king.

RICHARD

Than my Lord Hastings no man might be bolder;
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.

HASTINGS

I thank your grace.

His grace looks cheerfully and smooth today;
There's some conceit or other likes him well,
When he doth bid good Morrow with such a spirit.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

RICHARD

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

HASTINGS

The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,
Makes me most forward in this noble presence
To doom the offenders, whatsoever they be
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

RICHARD

Then be your eyes the witness of this ill:
See how I am bewitch'd; behold mine arm
Is, like a blasted sapling, wither'd up:
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

HASTINGS

If they have done this thing, my gracious lord--

RICHARD

If I thou protector of this damned strumpet--
Tellest thou me of 'ifs'? Thou art a traitor:
Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul I swear,
I will not dine until I see the same.
Tyrrel and Catesby, look that it be done:
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

[*Exeunt all but HASTINGS, CATESBY, and TYRREL.*]

CATESBY

Dispatch, my lord; the duke would be at dinner:
Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE VII. Baynard's Castle.

[*Enter RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM.*]

RICHARD

How now, my lord, what say the citizens?

BUCKINGHAM

Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum and speak not a word.

RICHARD

Touch'd you the bastardy of Edward's children?

BUCKINGHAM

I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy,

And his contract by deputy in France;
The insatiate greediness of his desires,
And his enforcement of the city wives;
His tyranny for trifles; his own bastardy,
As being got, your father then in France,
His resemblance, being not like the duke;
Withal I did infer your lineaments,
Being the right idea of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility:
Indeed, left nothing fitting for the purpose
Untouch'd, or slightly handled, in discourse
And when mine oratory grew to an end
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

RICHARD

Ah! and did they so?

BUCKINGHAM

No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statues or breathing stones,
Gazed each on other, and look'd deadly pale.

RICHARD

What tongueless blocks were they! would not they speak?

BUCKINGHAM

No, by my troth, my lord.

RICHARD

Will not the mayor then and his brethren come?

BUCKINGHAM

The mayor is here at hand: intend some fear;
Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit:
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,

And be not easily won to our request:
Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.

RICHARD

I go; and if you plead as well for them
As I can say nay to thee for myself,
No doubt we'll bring it to a happy issue.

BUCKINGHAM

Go, go, up to the leads; the lord mayor knocks.

[*Exit RICHARD; Enter the Lord Mayor and Citizens*]

Welcome my lord; I dance attendance here;
I think the duke will not be spoke withal.

[*Enter CATESBY*]

How now, Catesby, what says he?

CATESBY

My lord: he doth entreat your grace;
To visit him to-morrow or next day:
He is within, with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation.

BUCKINGHAM

Return, good Catesby, to thy lord again;
Tell him, myself, the mayor and citizens,
In deep designs and matters of great moment,
Are come to have some conference with his grace.

CATESBY

I'll tell him what you say, my lord.

[*Exit*]

BUCKINGHAM

Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,
But meditating with two deep divines;
Happy were England, would this gracious prince

Take on himself the sovereignty thereof:
But, sure, I fear, we shall ne'er win him to it.

Lord Mayor

Marry, God forbid his grace should say us nay!

BUCKINGHAM

I fear he will.

[*Re-enter CATESBY*]

How now, Catesby, what says your lord?

CATESBY

My lord, he fears you mean no good to him.

BUCKINGHAM

By heaven, I come in perfect love to him;
And so once more return and tell his grace.

[*Exit CATESBY*]

When holy and devout religious men
Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them thence,
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

[*Enter RICHARD, with prayer book. CATESBY returns.*]

Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,
Lend favourable ears to our request;
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

RICHARD

My lord, there needs no such apology:
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Neglect the visitation of my friends.
But, leaving this, what is your grace's pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM

Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.

RICHARD

I do suspect I have done some offence

That seems disgracious in the city's eyes,
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.

BUCKINGHAM

You have, my lord: would it might please your grace,
At our entreaties, to amend that fault!

RICHARD

Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

BUCKINGHAM

Then know, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestical,
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,
The lineal glory of your royal house,
To the corruption of a blemished stock.
Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land,
Not as protector, steward, substitute;
But as successively from blood to blood,
Your right of birth, your empery, your own.

RICHARD

Your love deserves my thanks; but my desert
Unmeritable shuns your high request.
So much is my poverty of spirit,
So mighty and so many my defects,
As I had rather hide me from my greatness.
And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.
But, God be thank'd, there's no need of me;
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit.

BUCKINGHAM

You say that Edward is your brother's son:
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife;

Lord Mayor

Do, good my lord, your citizens entreat you.

BUCKINGHAM

Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffer'd love.

CATESBY

O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!

RICHARD

Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty;
I do beseech you, take it not amiss;
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.

BUCKINGHAM

Yet whether you accept our suit or no,
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:
And in this resolution here we leave you.--
Come, citizens: 'zounds! I'll entreat no more.

RICHARD

O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

[Exit *BUCKINGHAM* with the *Citizens*]

CATESBY

Call them again, my lord, and accept their suit.

ANOTHER

Do, good my lord, lest all the land do rue it.

RICHARD

Would you enforce me to a world of care?
Well, call them again. I am not made of stone,
But penetrable to your kind entreats,
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

[Re-enter *BUCKINGHAM* and the *rest*]

Cousin of Buckingham, and you sage, grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,

To bear her burthen, whether I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load:
For God he knows, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire thereof.

Lord Mayor

God bless your grace! we see it, and will say it.

RICHARD

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

BUCKINGHAM

Then I salute you with this kingly title:
Long live Richard, England's royal king!

Lord Mayor Citizens

Amen.

BUCKINGHAM

To-morrow will it please you to be crown'd?

RICHARD

Even when you please, since you will have it so.

BUCKINGHAM

To-morrow, then, we will attend your grace:
And so most joyfully we take our leave.

RICHARD

Come, let us to our holy task again.

Farewell, good cousin; farewell, gentle friends.

[*Exeunt*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. Before the Tower.

[*Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH and DUCHESS OF YORK; on the other, ANNE, Duchess of Gloucester*]

DUCHESS OF YORK

Who meets us here?

Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,
On pure heart's love to greet the tender princes.

Daughter, well met.

LADY ANNE

God give your graces both
A happy and a joyful time of day!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

LADY ANNE

No farther than the Tower; and, as I guess,
Upon the like devotion as yourselves,
To gratulate the gentle princes there.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Kind sister, thanks: we'll enter all together.

[*Enter BRAKENBURY*]

And, in good time, here the lieutenant comes.
Master lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the prince, and my young son of York?

BRAKENBURY

Right well, dear madam. By your patience,
I may not suffer you to visit them;
The king hath straitly charged the contrary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The king! why, who's that?

BRAKENBURY

I cry you mercy: I mean the lord protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!
Hath he set bounds betwixt their love and me?
I am their mother; who should keep me from them?

DUCHESS OF YORK

I am their father's mother; I will see them.

LADY ANNE

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame

And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

BRAKENBURY

No, madam, no; I may not leave it so:
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.
[Exit; Enter *LORD STANLEY* and *RICHMOND*]

LORD STANLEY

Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,
And I'll salute your grace of York as mother,
And reverend looker on, of two fair queens.

To LADY ANNE

Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O, cut my lace in sunder, that my pent heart
May have some scope to beat, or else I swoon
With this dead-killing news!

LADY ANNE

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!

RICHMOND

Be of good cheer: how fares your grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O Richmond, speak not to me, get thee hence!
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;
If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live beyond the reach of England's hell
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-houſe,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead;

LORD STANLEY

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

DUCHESS OF YORK

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!

O my accursed womb, the bed of death!

A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.

LORD STANLEY

Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

LADY ANNE

And I in all unwillingness will go.

I would to God that the inclusive verge
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,
And die, ere men can say, God save the queen!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory
To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.

LADY ANNE

No! why? When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse,
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands
Which issued from my other angel husband;
O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,
This was my wish: 'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed,
For making me, so young, so old a widow!
And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife--if any be so mad--
As miserable by the life of thee
As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Even in so short a space, my woman's heart
Grossly grew captive to his honey words
And proved the subject of my own soul's curse,
Which ever since hath kept my eyes from rest;
For never yet one hour in his bed

Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,
But have been waked by his timorous dreams.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

LADY ANNE

No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Farewell, thou woeful welcomer of glory!

LADY ANNE

Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

DUCHESS OF YORK

[To RICHMOND]

Go thou, good Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

[To LADY ANNE]

Go thou to Richard, and good angels guard thee!

[To QUEEN ELIZABETH]

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!

I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.

Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes

Whom envy hath immured within your walls!

Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!

Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow

For tender princes, use my babies well!

So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

[Exeunt]

SCENE II. London. The palace.

[*Sennet. Enter RICHARD, in pomp, crowned; BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, LADY ANNE, TYRREL, and others*]

RICHARD

Stand all apart Cousin of Buckingham!

BUCKINGHAM

My gracious sovereign?

RICHARD

Give me thy hand.

[*Here he ascendeth his throne*]

Thus high, by thy advice

And thy assistance, is King Richard seated;

But shall we wear these honours for a day?

Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

BUCKINGHAM

Still live they and for ever may they last!

RICHARD

O Buckingham, now do I play the touch,

To try if thou be current gold indeed

Young Edward lives: think now what I would say.

BUCKINGHAM

Say on, my loving lord.

RICHARD

Why, Buckingham, I say, I would be king,

BUCKINGHAM

Why, so you are, my thrice renowned liege.

RICHARD

Ha! am I king? 'tis so: but Edward lives.

BUCKINGHAM

True, noble prince.

RICHARD

Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull:

Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead;

And I would have it suddenly perform'd.
What sayest thou? speak suddenly; be brief.

BUCKINGHAM

Your grace may do your pleasure.

RICHARD

Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezeth:
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCKINGHAM

Give me some breath, some little pause, my lord
Before I positively herein:
I will resolve your grace immediately.

[*Exit*]

RICHARD

High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
Hath he so long held out with me untired,
And stops he now for breath?

[*Enter STANLEY*]

How now! what news with you?

STANLEY

I hear Lord Richmond's fled beyond the sea.

[*Stands apart*]

RICHARD

Catesby!

CATESBY

My lord?

RICHARD

Rumour it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is sick and like to die:

[*Exit CATESBY*]

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in

So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Signals to TYRREL

TYRREL

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

RICHARD

Art thou, indeed?

TYRREL

Prove me, my gracious sovereign.

RICHARD

Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

TYRREL

Ay, my lord;
But I had rather kill two enemies.

RICHARD

Why, there thou hast it: two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

TYRREL

Let me have open means to come to them,
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

RICHARD

There is no more but so: say it is done,
And I will love thee, and prefer thee too.

TYRREL

'Tis done, my gracious lord.

[*Exit; Re-enter BUCKINGHAM*]

BUCKINGHAM

My Lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late demand that you did sound me in.

RICHARD

Well, let that pass. Richmond is fled.

BUCKINGHAM

I hear that news, my lord.

RICHARD

Stanley, he is your wife's son well, look to it.

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd;
The earldom of Hereford and the moveables
The which you promised I should possess.

RICHARD

Stanley, look to your wife; if she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

BUCKINGHAM

What says your highness to my just demand?

RICHARD

Ay, what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM

I am thus bold to put your grace in mind
Of what you promised me.

RICHARD

Well, but what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM

Upon the stroke of ten.

RICHARD

Well, let it strike.

BUCKINGHAM

Why let it strike?

RICHARD

Because that, like a Jack, thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.
I am not in the giving vein to-day.

BUCKINGHAM

Why, then resolve me whether you will or no.

RICHARD

Tut, tut,

Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

[*Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM*]

BUCKINGHAM

Is it even so? rewards he my true service
With such deep contempt made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock, while my fearful head is on!

[*Exit*]

SCENE III. The same.

Dumbshow of princes' deaths.

Enter TYRREL

TYRREL

They could not speak; and so I left them both,
To bring this tidings to the bloody king.

[*Enter RICHARD*]

All hail, my sovereign liege!

RICHARD

Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

TYRREL

If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then,
For it is done, my lord.

RICHARD

But didst thou see them dead?

TYRREL

I did, my lord.

RICHARD

Come to me, Tyrrel, soon after supper,
And thou shalt tell the process of their death.
Meantime, but think how I may do thee good,

And be inheritor of thy desire.

Farewell till soon.

[Exit TYRREL]

The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
And, by that knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,
To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer.

[Enter CATESBY]

CATESBY

My lord!

RICHARD

Good news or bad, that thou comest in so bluntly?

CATESBY

Bad news, my lord: Ely is fled to Richmond;
And Buckingham, back'd with the hardy Welshmen,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

RICHARD

Come, muster men: my counsel is my shield;
We must be brief when traitors brave the field.

[Exeunt]

SCENE IV. Before the palace.

[Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and DUCHESS OF YORK]

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, my young princes! ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
Hover about me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation!
Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,

And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?

When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is.
If so, then be not tongue-tied: go with me.
And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
My damned son, which thy two sweet sons smother'd.
I hear his drum: be copious in exclaims.

[Enter RICHARD, marching, with drums and trumpets]

RICHARD

Who intercepts my expedition?

DUCHESS OF YORK

O, she that might have intercepted thee,
By strangling thee in her accursed womb
From all the slaughterers, wretch, that thou hast done!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Where are kind Hastings and Rivers?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Art thou my son?

RICHARD

Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Then patiently hear my impatience.

RICHARD

Madam, I have a touch of your condition,
Which cannot brook the accent of reproof.

DUCHESS OF YORK

O, let me speak!

RICHARD

Do then: but I'll not hear.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I prithee, hear me speak.

RICHARD

You speak too bitterly.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Hear me a word;
For I shall never speak to thee again.

RICHARD

So.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,
Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,
Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish
And never look upon thy face again.
Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;
Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

[*Exit*]

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse
Abides in me; I say amen to all.

RICHARD

Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I have no more sons of the royal blood
For thee to murder.

RICHARD

You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And must she die for this? O, let her live,
And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;
Throw over her the veil of infamy:
So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

RICHARD

Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To save her life, I'll say she is not so.

RICHARD

Her life is only safest in her birth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And only in that safety died her brothers.

RICHARD

Lo, at their births good stars were opposite.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

No, to their lives bad friends were contrary.

RICHARD

All unavoid'd is the doom of destiny.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My babes were destined to a fairer death,
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

RICHARD

You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.

RICHARD

Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise
As I intend more good to you and yours,
Than ever you or yours were by me wrong'd!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,
To be discover'd, that can do me good?

RICHARD

Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,
Will I withal endow a child of thine;
So in the Lethe of thy angry soul
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Be brief, lest that be process of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

RICHARD

Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.

RICHARD

What do you think?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

That thou dost love my daughter from thy soul:
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers;
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.

RICHARD

Be not so hasty to confound my meaning:
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,
And mean to make her queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Say then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?

RICHARD

Even he that makes her queen who should be else?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What, thou?

RICHARD

I, even I: what think you of it, madam?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How canst thou woo her?

RICHARD

That would I learn of you,
As one that are best acquainted with her humour.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And wilt thou learn of me?

RICHARD

Madam, with all my heart.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding-hearts; thereon engrave
Edward and York; then haply she will weep:
Therefore present to her--as sometime Margaret
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood,--
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.
If this inducement force her not to love,
Send her a story of thy noble acts;
Tell her thou madest away her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers; yea, and, for her sake,
Madest quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

RICHARD

Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way
To win your daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

There is no other way
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,
And not be Richard that hath done all this.

RICHARD

Say that I did all this for love of her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hate thee,
Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

RICHARD

Look, what is done cannot be now amended:
Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after hours give leisure to repent.
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, I'll give it to your daughter.
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase, I will beget
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter.
I cannot make you what amends I would,
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.
Again shall you be mother to a king,
And all the ruins of distressful times
Repair'd with double riches of content.
What! we have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,
Advantaging their loan with interest
Of ten times double gain of happiness.
Go, then my mother, to thy daughter go
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale
Put in her tender heart the aspiring flame
Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the princess

With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys
And when this arm of mine hath chastised
The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What were I best to say? her father's brother
Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?
Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee,
That God, the law, my honour and her love,
Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

RICHARD

Say, she shall be a high and mighty queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To wail the tide, as her mother doth.

RICHARD

Say, I will love her everlastingly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

RICHARD

Sweetly in force unto her fair life's end.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But how long fairly shall her sweet lie last?

RICHARD

So long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

So long as hell and Richard likes of it.

RICHARD

Say, I, her sovereign, am her subject love.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.

RICHARD

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O no, my reasons are too deep and dead;
Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave.

RICHARD

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.
Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

RICHARD

Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good..

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But thou didst kill my children.

RICHARD

But in your daughter's womb I bury them:
Where in that nest of spicery they shall breed
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

RICHARD

And be a happy mother by the deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I go. Write to me very shortly.

And you shall understand from me her mind.

RICHARD

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

[*Exit QUEEN ELIZABETH*]

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

[*Enter STANLEY; CATESBY following*]

How now! what news?

STANLEY

None good, my lord, to please you with the hearing;
Richmond is on the seas.

RICHARD

There let him sink, and be the seas on him!
White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

STANLEY

I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

RICHARD

Well, sir, as you guess, as you guess?

STANLEY

Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, there to claim the crown.

RICHARD

Is the chair empty? is the sword unsway'd?
Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then, tell me, what doth he upon the sea?

STANLEY

Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

RICHARD

Unless for that he comes to be your liege,
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.
Thou wilt revolt, and fly to him, I fear.

STANLEY

No, mighty liege; therefore mistrust me not.

RICHARD

Where is thy power, then, to beat him back?
Where are thy tenants and thy followers?
Are they not now upon the western shore.
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships!

STANLEY

No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.

RICHARD

Cold friends to Richard: what do they in the north,

When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

STANLEY

They have not been commanded, mighty sovereign:
Please it your majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends, and meet your grace
Where and what time your majesty shall please.

RICHARD

Ay, ay. thou wouldest be gone to join with Richmond:
I will not trust you, sir.

STANLEY

Most mighty sovereign,
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful:
I never was nor never will be false.

RICHARD

Well,
Go muster men; but, hear you, leave behind
Your son, George: look your faith be firm.
Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

STANLEY

So deal with him as I prove true to you.

[Exit; Re-enter CATESBY]

CATESBY

My liege, the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford.

RICHARD

Away! while we reason here,
A royal battle might be won and lost.
[Flourish. Exeunt]

ACT V

SCENE II. The camp near Tamworth.

[Enter RICHMOND and others with drum and colours]

RICHMOND

Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we march'd on without impediment;
And here receive we from our father Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
In your embowell'd bosoms, this foul swine
Lies now even in the centre of this isle.
In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings:
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.
[Exeunt]

SCENE III. Bosworth Field.

[Enter RICHARD in arms, with CATESBY and TYRREL].

RICHARD

Here pitch our tents, even here in Bosworth field.
Why Tyrrel, why look you so sad?

TYRREL

My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.

RICHARD

Catesby!

CATESBY

Here, most gracious liege.

RICHARD

Catesby, we must have knocks; ha! must we not?

CATESBY

We must both give and take, my gracious lord.

RICHARD

Up with my tent there! here will I lie tonight;

But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.

Who hath despaired the number of the foe?

TYRREL

Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

RICHARD

Why, our battalion trebles that account:

Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength,

Which they upon the adverse party want.

Up with my tent there! Valiant gentlemen,

Let us survey the vantage of the field

Call for some men of sound direction

Let's want no discipline, make no delay,

For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day.

[Exeunt all but RICHARD.]

What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:

Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.

Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:

Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:

Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?

Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good

That I myself have done unto myself?

O, no! alas, I rather hate myself

For hateful deeds committed by myself!

I am a villain: yet I lie. I am not.

Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,

And every tongue brings in a several tale,

And every tale condemns me for a villain.

Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree

Murder, stem murder, in the direst degree;

All several sins, all used in each degree,

Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!

I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;

And if I die, no soul shall pity me:

Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself

Find in myself no pity to myself?

[Enter CATESBY, armed]

CATESBY

My lord!

RICHARD

'Zounds! who is there?

CATESBY

Catesby, my lord; 'tis I.

Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.

RICHARD

O Catesby, I have dream'd a fearful dream!

What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true?

CATESBY

No doubt, my lord.

RICHARD

O Catesby, I fear, I fear,--

CATESBY

Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.

[TYRREL re-enters, armed.]

RICHARD

Go, gentleman, every man unto his charge

Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:

Conscience is but a word that cowards use,

Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:

Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.

March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.
[*His oration to his Army*]
What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?
Remember whom you are to cope withal;
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?

[*Drum afar off.*]
Hark! I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England!
What says Lord Stanley? will he bring his power?

TYRREL
My lord, he doth deny to come.

RICHARD
Off with his son George's head!
A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:
Advance our standards, set upon our foes
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!
Upon them! victory sits on our helms.

[*Exeunt*]
[*Alarum: excursions. Enter TYRREL and forces fighting; to him CATESBY*]

CATESBY
The king enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger:
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death.
[*Alarums. Enter RICHARD*]

RICHARD

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

CATESBY

Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.

RICHARD

Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die:
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

[*Exeunt*]

[*Alarum. Enter RICHARD and RICHMOND; they fight.*

RICHARD is slain. Retreat and flourish. Re-enter RICHMOND, LORD STANLEY bearing the crown, with divers other Lords.]

RICHMOND

God and your arms be praised, victorious friends,
The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead.
England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself;
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire:
All this divided York and Lancaster,
Divided in their dire division.

Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
That would reduce these bloody days again,
And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
Let them not live to taste this land's increase
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again:
That she may long live here, God say amen!

[*Exeunt*]