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King Richard III

William Shakespeare

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KING RICHARD III

by

William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae

EDWARD THE FOURTH

Sons to the King

EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES afterwards KING EDWARD V

RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK,

Brothers to the King

GEORGE, DUKE OF CLARENCE,

RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, afterwards KING RICHARD

III

A YOUNG SON OF CLARENCE (Edward, Earl of Warwick)

HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND, afterwards KING HENRY VII

CARDINAL BOURCHIER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THOMAS ROTHERHAM, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

JOHN MORTON, BISHOP OF ELY

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

DUKE OF NORFOLK

EARL OF SURREY, his son

EARL RIVERS, brother to King Edward's Queen

MARQUIS OF DORSET and LORD GREY, her sons

EARL OF OXFORD

LORD HASTINGS

LORD LOVEL

LORD STANLEY, called also EARL OF DERBY

SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF

SIR WILLIAM CATESBY

SIR JAMES TYRREL

SIR JAMES BLOUNT

SIR WALTER HERBERT

SIR WILLIAM BRANDON

SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY, Lieutenant of the Tower

CHRISTOPHER URSWICK, a priest

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

SHERIFF OF WILTSHIRE

HASTINGS, a pursuivant
TRESSEL and BERKELEY, gentlemen attending on Lady Anne
ELIZABETH, Queen to King Edward IV
MARGARET, widow of King Henry VI
DUCHESS OF YORK, mother to King Edward IV
LADY ANNE, widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, son to King
Henry VI; afterwards married to the Duke of Gloucester
A YOUNG DAUGHTER OF CLARENCE (Margaret Plantagenet,
Countess of Salisbury)
Ghosts, of Richard's victims
Lords, Gentlemen, and Attendants; Priest, Scrivener, Page,
Bishops,
Aldermen, Citizens, Soldiers, Messengers, Murderers, Keeper

SCENE: England

King Richard the Third

ACT I. SCENE 1.

London. A street

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, solus

GLOUCESTER. 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.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front,
And now, instead of mounting barbed 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 shap'd for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass—
I—that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph—
I—that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, 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,
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the King
In deadly hate the one against the other;
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up-
About a prophecy which says that G
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul. Here Clarence comes.

Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day. What means this armed guard
That waits upon your Grace?

CLARENCE. His Majesty,
Tend'ring my person's safety, hath appointed
This conduct to convey me to th' Tower.

GLOUCESTER. Upon what cause?

CLARENCE. Because my name is George.

GLOUCESTER. Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours:
He should, for that, commit your godfathers.

O, belike his Majesty hath some intent
That you should be new-christ'ned in the Tower.

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 from the cross-row plucks the letter G,
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.
These, as I learn, and such like toys as these

Hath mov'd his Highness to commit me now.
 GLOUCESTER. Why, this it is when men are rul'd by women:
 'Tis not the King that sends you to the Tower;
 My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
 That tempers him to this extremity.
 Was it not she and that good man of worship,
 Antony Woodville, her brother there,
 That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,
 From whence this present day he is delivered?
 We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.
 CLARENCE. By heaven, I think there is no man is secure
 But the Queen's kindred, and night-walking heralds
 That trudge betwixt the King and Mistress Shore.
 Heard you not what an humble suppliant
 Lord Hastings was, for her delivery?
 GLOUCESTER. Humbly complaining to her deity
 Got my Lord Chamberlain his liberty.
 I'll tell you what-I think it is our way,
 If we will keep in favour with the King,
 To be her men and wear her livery:
 The jealous o'er-worn widow, and herself,
 Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen,
 Are mighty gossips in our monarchy.
 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 your brother.
 GLOUCESTER. 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;
 We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
 A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;
 And that the Queen's kindred are made gentlefolks.
 How say you, sir? Can you deny all this?
 BRAKENBURY. With this, my lord, myself have naught to do.
 GLOUCESTER. Naught to do with Mistress Shore! I tell thee,
 fellow,

He that doth naught with her, excepting one,
Were best to do it secretly alone.

BRAKENBURY. What one, my lord?

GLOUCESTER. Her husband, knave! Wouldst thou betray me?

BRAKENBURY. I do beseech your Grace to pardon me, and
withal

Forbear your conference with the noble Duke.

CLARENCE. We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will
obey.

GLOUCESTER. We are the Queen's objects and must obey.

Brother, farewell; I will unto the King;

And whatsoever you will employ me in-

Were it to call King Edward's widow sister-

I will perform it to enfranchise you.

Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood

Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

CLARENCE. I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

GLOUCESTER. Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;

I will deliver or else lie for you.

Meantime, have patience.

CLARENCE. I must perforce. Farewell.

Exeunt CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and guard

GLOUCESTER. Go tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return.

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.

But who comes here? The new-delivered Hastings?

Enter LORD HASTINGS

HASTINGS. Good time of day unto my gracious lord!

GLOUCESTER. As much unto my good Lord Chamberlain!

Well are you welcome to the open air.

How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?

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

But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks

That were the cause of my imprisonment.

GLOUCESTER. No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;

For they that were your enemies are his,

And have prevail'd as much on him as you.
 HASTINGS. More pity that the eagles should be mew'd
 Whiles kites and buzzards prey at liberty.
 GLOUCESTER. What news abroad?
 HASTINGS. No news so bad abroad as this at home:
 The King is sickly, weak, and melancholy,
 And his physicians fear him mightily.
 GLOUCESTER. Now, by Saint John, that news is bad indeed.
 O, he hath kept an evil diet long
 And overmuch consum'd his royal person!
 'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.
 Where is he? In his bed?
 HASTINGS. He is.
 GLOUCESTER. Go you before, and I will follow you.
Exit HASTINGS
 He cannot live, I hope, and must not die
 Till George be pack'd with posthorse up to heaven.
 I'll in to urge his hatred more to Clarence
 With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;
 And, if I fail not in my deep intent,
 Clarence hath not another day to live;
 Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
 And leave the world for me to bustle in!
 For 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;
 The which will I-not all so much for love
 As for another secret close intent
 By marrying her which I must reach unto.
 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. Exit

SCENE 2.

London. Another street

Enter corpse of KING HENRY THE SIXTH, with halberds to guard it;

LADY ANNE being the mourner, attended by TRESSEL and BERKELEY

ANNE. Set down, set down your honourable load-
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse;
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
Th' untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
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 invoke thy ghost
To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son,
Stabb'd by the self-same hand that made these wounds.
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.
O, cursed be the hand that made these holes!
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it!
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
More direful hap betide that hated wretch
That makes us wretched by the death of thee
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!
If ever he have child, abortive be it,
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view,
And that be heir to his unhappiness!
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the death of him

Than I am made by my young lord and thee!
Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,
Taken from Paul's to be interred there;
And still as you are weary of this weight
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.
[The bearers take up the coffin]

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER. Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.

ANNE. What black magician conjures up this fiend
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

GLOUCESTER. Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys!

FIRST GENTLEMAN. My lord, stand back, and let the coffin
pass.

GLOUCESTER. Unmannerd dog! Stand thou, when I command.
Advance thy halberd higher than my breast,
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

[The bearers set down the coffin]

ANNE. What, do you tremble? Are you all afraid?

Alas, I blame you not, for you are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.
Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore, be gone.

GLOUCESTER. Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

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 exclams.

If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

O, gentlemen, see, see! Dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh.

Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity,
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veins where no blood dwells;
Thy deeds inhuman and unnatural

Provokes this deluge most unnatural.
 O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death!
 O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!
 Either, heav'n, with lightning strike the murd'rer dead;
 Or, earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,
 As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood,
 Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered.

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

ANNE. Villain, thou knowest nor law of God nor man:
 No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

GLOUCESTER. But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

ANNE. O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

GLOUCESTER. More wonderful when angels are so angry.
 Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
 Of these supposed crimes to give me leave
 By circumstance but to acquit myself.

ANNE. Vouchsafe, diffus'd infection of a man,
 Of these known evils but to give me leave
 By circumstance to accuse thy cursed self.

GLOUCESTER. Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have
 Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

ANNE. Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make
 No excuse current but to hang thyself.

GLOUCESTER. By such despair I should accuse myself.

ANNE. And by despairing shalt thou stand excused
 For doing worthy vengeance on thyself
 That didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

GLOUCESTER. Say that I slew them not?

ANNE. Then say they were not slain.
 But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee.

GLOUCESTER. I did not kill your husband.

ANNE. Why, then he is alive.

GLOUCESTER. Nay, he is dead, and slain by Edward's hands.

ANNE. In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw
 Thy murd'rous falchion smoking in his blood;
 The which thou once didst bend against her breast,
 But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

GLOUCESTER. I was provoked by her sland'rous tongue

That laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.
 ANNE. Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind,
 That never dream'st on aught but butcheries.
 Didst thou not kill this king?
 GLOUCESTER. I grant ye.
 ANNE. Dost grant me, hedgehog? Then, God grant me to
 Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!
 O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!
 GLOUCESTER. The better for the King of Heaven, that hath
 him.
 ANNE. He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.
 GLOUCESTER. Let him thank me that help to send him
 thither,
 For he was fitter for that place than earth.
 ANNE. And thou unfit for any place but hell.
 GLOUCESTER. Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.
 ANNE. Some dungeon.
 GLOUCESTER. Your bed-chamber.
 ANNE. Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!
 GLOUCESTER. So will it, madam, till I lie with you.
 ANNE. I hope so.
 GLOUCESTER. I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,
 To leave this keen encounter of our wits,
 And fall something into a slower method-
 Is not the causer of the timeless deaths
 Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
 As blameful as the executioner?
 ANNE. Thou wast the cause and most accurs'd effect.
 GLOUCESTER. Your beauty was the cause of that effect-
 Your beauty that did haunt me in my sleep
 To undertake the death of all the world
 So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.
 ANNE. If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,
 These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.
 GLOUCESTER. These eyes could not endure that 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.

ANNE. Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!
GLOUCESTER. Curse not thyself, fair creature; thou art both.
ANNE. I would I were, to be reveng'd on thee.
GLOUCESTER. It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be reveng'd on him that loveth thee.
ANNE. It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be reveng'd on him that kill'd my husband.
GLOUCESTER. He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband
Did it to help thee to a better husband.
ANNE. His better doth not breathe upon the earth.
GLOUCESTER. He lives that loves thee better than he could.
ANNE. Name him.
GLOUCESTER. Plantagenet.
ANNE. Why, that was he.
GLOUCESTER. The self-same name, but one of better nature.
ANNE. Where is he?
GLOUCESTER. Here. [She spits at him] Why dost thou spit
at me?
ANNE. Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!
GLOUCESTER. Never came poison from so sweet a place.
ANNE. Never hung poison on a fouler toad.
Out of my sight! Thou dost infect mine eyes.
GLOUCESTER. Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.
ANNE. Would they were basilisks to strike thee dead!
GLOUCESTER. 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,
Sham'd their aspects with store of childish drops-
These eyes, which never shed remorseful tear,
No, when my father York and Edward wept
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made
When black-fac'd Clifford shook his sword at him;
Nor 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.
I never sued to friend nor enemy;
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word;
But, now thy beauty is propos'd my fee,
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.

[She looks scornfully at him]

Teach not thy lip such scorn; for it was made
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
Which if thou please to hide in this true breast
And let the soul forth that adareth thee,
I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,
And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

[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.

[She falls the sword]

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

ANNE. Arise, dissembler; though I wish thy death,

I will not be thy executioner.

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

ANNE. I have already.

GLOUCESTER. That was in thy rage.

Speak it again, and even with the word

This hand, which for thy love did kill thy love,

Shall for thy love kill a far truer love;

To both their deaths shalt thou be accessory.

ANNE. I would I knew thy heart.

GLOUCESTER. 'Tis figur'd in my tongue.

ANNE. I fear me both are false.

GLOUCESTER. Then never was man true.

ANNE. well put up your sword.

GLOUCESTER. Say, then, my peace is made.

ANNE. That shalt thou know hereafter.

GLOUCESTER. But shall I live in hope?

ANNE. All men, I hope, live so.