

# Richard Duke of York

## 3.2

*Enter King Edward, Richard Duke of Gloucester,  
George Duke of Clarence, and the Lady Gray*

**KING EDWARD**

Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Albans field  
This lady's husband, Sir Richard Gray, was slain,  
His lands then seized on by the conqueror.  
Her suit is now to repossess those lands,  
Which we in justice cannot well deny, 5  
Because in quarrel of the house of York  
The worthy gentleman did lose his life.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER**

Your highness shall do well to grant her suit±±  
It were dishonour to deny it her.

**KING EDWARD**

It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause. 10

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** (*aside to George*) Yea, is it so?

I see the lady hath a thing to grant  
Before the King will grant her humble suit.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE** (*aside to Richard*)

He knows the game; how true he keeps the wind!

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** (*aside to George*) Silence. 15

**KING EDWARD** (*to Lady Gray*)

Widow, we will consider of your suit;  
And come some other time to know our mind.

**LADY GRAY**

Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay.  
May it please your highness to resolve me now,  
And what your pleasure is shall satisfy me. 20

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** (*aside to George*)

Ay, widow? Then I'll warrant you all your lands  
An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.  
Fight closer, or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE** (*aside to Richard*)

I fear her not unless she chance to fall.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** (*aside to George*)

God forbid that! For he'll take vantages. 25

**KING EDWARD** *(to Lady Gray)*

How many children hast thou, widow? Tell me.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE** *(aside to Richard)*

I think he means to beg a child of her.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *(aside to George)*

Nay, whip me then—he'll rather give her two.

**LADY GRAY** *(to King Edward)* Three, my most gracious lord.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *(aside)*

You shall have four, an you'll be ruled by him. 30

**KING EDWARD** *(to Lady Gray)*

'Twere pity they should lose their father's lands.

**LADY GRAY**

Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it them.

**KING EDWARD** *(to Richard and George)*

Lords, give us leave—I'll try this widow's wit.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *[aside to George]*

Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave,  
Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch. 35

*Richard and George stand apart*

**KING EDWARD** *(to Lady Gray)*

Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?

**LADY GRAY**

Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.

**KING EDWARD**

And would you not do much to do them good?

**LADY GRAY**

To do them good I would sustain some harm.

**KING EDWARD**

Then get your husband's lands, to do them good. 40

**LADY GRAY**

Therefore I came unto your majesty.

**KING EDWARD**

I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.

**LADY GRAY**

So shall you bind me to your highness' service.

**KING EDWARD**

What service wilt thou do me, if I give them?

**LADY GRAY**

What you command, that rests in me to do. 45

**KING EDWARD**

But you will take exceptions to my boon.

**LADY GRAY**

No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.

**KING EDWARD**

Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.

**LADY GRAY**

Why, then, I will do what your grace commands.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *(to George)*

He plies her hard, and much rain wears the marble. 50

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE**

As red as fire! Nay, then her wax must melt.

**LADY GRAY** *(to King Edward)*

Why stops my lord? Shall I not hear my task?

**KING EDWARD**

An easy task±±'tis but to love a king.

**LADY GRAY**

That's soon performed, because I am a subject.

**KING EDWARD**

Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee. 55

**LADY GRAY** *(curtsies)*

I take my leave, with many thousand thanks.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *(to George)*

The match is made±±she seals it with a curtsy.

**KING EDWARD** *(to Lady Gray)*

But stay thee±±'tis the fruits of love I mean.

**LADY GRAY**

The fruits of love / mean, my loving liege.

**KING EDWARD**

Ay, but I fear me in another sense. 60

What love think'st thou I sue so much to get?

**LADY GRAY**

My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers±±

That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

**KING EDWARD**

No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

**LADY GRAY**

Why, then, you mean not as I thought you did. 65

**KING EDWARD**

But now you partly may perceive my mind.

**LADY GRAY**

My mind will never grant what I perceive

Your highness aims at, if I aim aright.

**KING EDWARD**

To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

**LADY GRAY**  
 To tell *you* plain, I had rather lie in prison. 70

**KING EDWARD**  
 Why, then, thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

**LADY GRAY**  
 Why, then, mine honesty shall be my dower;  
 For by that loss I will not purchase them.

**KING EDWARD**  
 Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.

**LADY GRAY**  
 Herein your highness wrongs both them and me. 75  
 But, mighty lord, this merry inclination  
 Accords not with the sadness of my suit.  
 Please you dismiss me either with ay or no.

**KING EDWARD**  
 Ay, if thou wilt say `ay' to my request;  
 No, if thou dost say `no' to my demand. 80

**LADY GRAY**  
 Then, no, my lord±±my suit is at an end.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** (*to George*)  
 The widow likes him not±±she knits her brows.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE**  
 He is the bluntest wooer in Christendom.

**KING EDWARD** (*aside*)  
 Her looks doth argue her replete with modesty;  
 Her words doth show her wit incomparable; 85  
 All her perfections challenge sovereignty.  
 One way or other, she is for a king;  
 And she shall be my love or else my queen.  
 (*To Lady Gray*) Say that King Edward take thee for his  
 queen?

**LADY GRAY**  
 'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord. 90  
 I am a subject fit to jest withal,  
 But far unfit to be a sovereign.

**KING EDWARD**  
 Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee  
 I speak no more than what my soul intends,  
 And that is to enjoy thee for my love. 95

**LADY GRAY**

And that is more than I will yield unto.  
I know I am too mean to be your queen,  
And yet too good to be your concubine.

**KING EDWARD**

You cavil, widow±±I did mean my queen.

**LADY GRAY**

'Twill grieve your grace my sons should call you father. 100

**KING EDWARD**

No more than when my daughters call thee mother.  
Thou art a widow and thou hast some children;  
And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,  
Have other some. Why, 'tis a happy thing  
To be the father unto many sons. 105

Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER** *(to George)*

The ghostly father now hath done his shrift.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE**

When he was made a shriver, 'twas for shift.

**KING EDWARD** *(to Richard and George)*

Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

*Richard and George come forward*

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER**

The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad. 110

**KING EDWARD**

You'd think it strange if I should marry her.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE**

To who, my lord?

**KING EDWARD** Why, Clarence, to myself.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER**

That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

**GEORGE OF CLARENCE**

That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER**

By so much is the wonder in extremes. 115

**KING EDWARD**

Well, jest on, brothers±±I can tell you both  
Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

*Enter a Nobleman*

**NOBLEMAN**

My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken  
And brought as prisoner to your palace gate.

**KING EDWARD**

See that he be conveyed unto the Tower±± 120

*(To Richard and George)*

And go we, brothers, to the man that took him,  
To question of his apprehension.

*(To Lady Gray)* Widow, go you along. *[To Richard and George]* Lords, use her honourably.

*Exeunt all but Richard*

**RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER**

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.

Would he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all, 125

That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring

To cross me from the golden time I look for.

And yet, between my soul's desire and me±±

The lustful Edward's title burieÁd±±

Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward, 130

And all the unlooked-for issue of their bodies,

To take their rooms ere I can place myself.

A cold premeditation for my purpose.

Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty

Like one that stands upon a promontory 135

And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,

Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,

And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,

Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way±±

So do I wish the crown being so far off, 140

And so I chide the means that keeps me from it,

And so I say I'll cut the causes off,

Flattering me with impossibilities.

My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,

Unless my hand and strength could equal them. 145

Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard±±

What other pleasure can the world afford?

I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,

And deck my body in gay ornaments,

And 'witch sweet ladies with my words and looks. 150

O, miserable thought! And more unlikely

Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns.

Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb,

And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,

She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe 155

To shrink mine arm up like a withered shrub,  
 To make an envious mountain on my back±±  
 Where sits deformity to mock my body±±  
 To shape my legs of an unequal size,  
 To disproportion me in every part, 160  
 Like to a chaos, or an unlicked bear whelp  
 That carries no impression like the dam.  
 And am I then a man to be beloved?  
 O, monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!  
 Then, since this earth affords no joy to me 165  
 But to command, to check, to o'erbear such  
 As are of better person than myself,  
 I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,  
 And whiles I live, t'account this world but hell,  
 Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head 170  
 Be round impale'd with a glorious crown.  
 And yet I know not how to get the crown,  
 For many lives stand between me and home.  
 And I±±like one lost in a thorny wood,  
 That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns, 175  
 Seeking a way and straying from the way,  
 Not knowing how to find the open air,  
 But toiling desperately to find it out±±  
 Torment myself to catch the English crown.  
 And from that torment I will free myself, 180  
 Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.  
 Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,  
 And cry `Content!' to that which grieves my heart,  
 And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,  
 And frame my face to all occasions. 185  
 I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;  
 I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;  
 I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,  
 Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,  
 And, like a Sinon, take another Troy. 190  
 I can add colours to the chameleon,  
 Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,  
 And set the murderous Machiavel to school.  
 Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?  
 Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down. 195

*Exit*