

Richard III

2.1

Flourish. Enter King Edward, sick, Queen Elizabeth, Lord Marquis Dorset, Lord Rivers, Lord Hastings, Sir William Catesby, the Duke of Buckingham [and Lord Gray]

KING EDWARD

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

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RIVERS

By heaven, my soul is purged from grudging hate,
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.
[He takes Hastings' hand]

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LORD HASTINGS

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like.

KING EDWARD

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.

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LORD HASTINGS

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love.

RIVERS

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart.

KING EDWARD *(to Elizabeth)*

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

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QUEEN ELIZABETH *(giving Hastings her hand to kiss)*

There, Hastings. I will never more remember
Our former hatred: so thrive I, and mine.

KING EDWARD

Dorset, embrace him. Hastings, love Lord Marquis. 25

DORSET

This interchange of love, I here protest,
Upon my part shall be inviolable.

LORD HASTINGS And so swear I.

They embrace

KING EDWARD

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league
With thy embracements to my wife's allies, 30
And make me happy in your unity.

BUCKINGHAM *(to Elizabeth)*

Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate
Upon your grace, but with all duteous love
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love. 35
When I have most need to employ a friend,
And most assureÁd that he is a friend,
Deep, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile
Be he unto me. This do I beg of heaven,
When I am cold in love to you or yours. 40

They embrace

KING EDWARD

A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,
To make the blesseÁd period of this peace.
Enter Sir Richard Ratcliffe and Richard Duke of Gloucester

BUCKINGHAM And in good time, 45

Here comes Sir Richard Ratcliffe and the Duke.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Good morrow to my sovereign King and Queen.±±
And princely peers, a happy time of day.

KING EDWARD

Happy indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we have done deeds of charity, 50
Made peace of enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incenseÁd peers.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

A blesseÁd labour, my most sovereign lord.

Among this princely heap if any here,
By false intelligence or wrong surmise, 55
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. 60
'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 duteous service.±±
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham, 65
If ever any grudge were lodged between us.±±
Of you, Lord Rivers, and Lord Gray of you,
That all without desert have frowned on me.±±
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen, indeed of all!
I do not know that Englishman alive 70
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born tonight.
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.±± 75
My sovereign lord, I do beseech your highness
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Why, madam, have I offered love for this,
To be so flouted in this royal presence?
Who knows not that the gentle Duke is dead? 80
The others all start

You do him injury to scorn his corpse.

[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 Dorset, as the rest?

DORSET

Ay, my good lord, and no one in the presence 85
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

KING EDWARD

Is Clarence dead? The order was reversed.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

But he, poor man, by your first order died,
And that a winged Mercury did bear;
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too late to see him buried.
God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,
Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,
Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,
And yet go current from suspicion.

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Enter Lord Stanley Earl of Derby

STANLEY *(kneeling)*

A boon, my sovereign, for my service done.

KING EDWARD

I pray thee, peace! My soul is full of sorrow.

STANLEY

I will not rise, unless your highness hear me.

KING EDWARD

Then say at once, what is it thou requests?

STANLEY

The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life,
Who slew today a riotous gentleman,
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

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KING EDWARD

Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,
And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?
My brother slew no man; his fault was thought;
And yet his punishment was bitter death.
Who sued to me for him? Who in my wrath
Kneeled at my feet, and bid me be advised?
Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
The mighty Warwick and did fight for me?
Who told me, in the field at Tewkesbury,
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,
And said, 'Dear brother, live, and be a king'?
Who told me, when we both lay in the field,
Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me
Even in his garments, and did give himself
All thin and naked to the numb-cold night?
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath

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Sinfully plucked, and not a man of you 120
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
But when your carters or your waiting vassals
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced
The precious image of our dear redeemer,
You straight are on your knees for `Pardon, pardon!'±± 125
And I, unjustly too, must grant it you.
But, for my brother, not a man would speak,
Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself
For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
Have been beholden to him in his life, 130
Yet none of you would once beg for his life.
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.
Ah, poor Clarence! 135

Exeunt some with King and Queen

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

This is the fruits of rashness. Marked you not
How that the guilty kindred of the Queen
Looked pale, when they did hear of Clarence' death?
O, they did urge it still unto the King.
God will revenge it. Come, lords, will you go 140
To comfort Edward with our company?

BUCKINGHAM We wait upon your grace.

Exeunt