

Richard III

4.1

Enter Queen Elizabeth, the old Duchess of York, and Marquis Dorset at one door; Lady Anne (Duchess of Gloucester) with Clarence's daughter at another door

DUCHESS OF YORK

Who meets us here? My niece Plantagenet,
Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?
Now for my life, she's wand'ring to the Tower,
On pure heart's love, to greet the tender Prince.±±
Daughter, well met.

LADY ANNE God give your graces both 5
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. 10

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Kind sister, thanks. We'll enter all together±±
Enter from the Tower [Brackenbury] the Lieutenant
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?

BRACKENBURY

Right well, dear madam. By your patience, 15
I may not suffer you to visit them.
The King hath strictly charged the contrary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The King? Who's that?

BRACKENBURY I mean, the Lord Protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Lord protect him from that kingly title.
Hath he set bounds between their love and me? 20
I am their mother; who shall bar 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. 25

BRACKENBURY

No, madam, no; I may not leave it so.
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.

Exit

Enter Lord Stanley Earl of Derby

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. 30

(*To Anne*) Come, madam, you must straight to
Westminster,

There to be crowneÁd Richard's royal queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, cut my lace asunder, that my pent heart
May have some scope to beat, or else I swoon
With this dead-killing news. 35

LADY ANNE

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!

DORSET (*to Anne*)

Be of good cheer.±±Mother, how fares your grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O Dorset, speak not to me. Get thee gone.
Death and destruction dogs thee at thy heels.
Thy mother's name is ominous to children. 40

If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live with Richmond from the reach of hell.

Go, hie thee! Hie thee from this slaughterhouse,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead,
And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curses: 45

`Nor mother, wife, nor counted England's Queen'.

STANLEY

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
(*To Dorset*) Take all the swift advantage of the hours.

You shall have letters from me to my son
In your behalf, to meet you on the way. 50

Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

DUCHESS OF YORK

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
O my accurse! Ad womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatched to the world,
Whose unavowed eye is murderous. 55

STANLEY (to Anne)

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

LADY ANNE

And I in all unwillingness will go.
O would to God that the inclusive verge
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brains. 60
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 65
Came to me as I followed Henry's corpse,
When scarce the blood was well washed from his
hands,
Which issued from my other angel husband
And that dear saint which then I weeping followed±±
O when, I say, I looked on Richard's face, 70
This was my wish: 'Be thou', quoth I, 'accursed
For making me, so young, so old a widow,
And when thou wedd'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife±±if any be so mad±±
More miserable made by the life of thee 75
Than thou hast made me by my dear lord's death.'
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Within so small a time, my woman's heart
Grossly grew captive to his honey words
And proved the subject of mine own soul's curse, 80
Which hitherto hath held mine eyes from rest±±
For never yet one hour in his bed
Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,
But with his timorous dreams was still awaked.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick, 85
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Poor heart, adieu. I pity thy complaining.

LADY ANNE

No more than with my soul I mourn for yours.

DORSET

Farewell, thou woeful welcomer of glory.

LADY ANNE

Adieu, poor soul, that tak'st thy leave of it. 90

DUCHESS OF YORK

Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee.

[Exit Dorset]

Go thou to Richard, and good angels tend thee.

[Exeunt Anne, Stanley, and Clarence's daughter]

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee.

[Exit Elizabeth]

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

Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen, 95

And each hour's joy racked with a week of teen.

[Exit]