

# Richard III

## 5.5

*[A table brought in.] Enter King Richard, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, the Duke of Norfolk, Sir William Catesby, and others*

**KING RICHARD** What is't o'clock?

**CATESBY**

It's supper-time, my lord. It's nine o'clock.

**KING RICHARD**

I will not sup tonight. Give me some ink and paper.

What, is my beaver easier than it was?

And all my armour laid into my tent?

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**CATESBY**

It is, my liege, and all things are in readiness.

**KING RICHARD**

Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge.

Use careful watch; choose trusty sentinels.

**NORFOLK** I go, my lord.

**KING RICHARD**

Stir with the lark tomorrow, gentle Norfolk.

10

**NORFOLK**

I warrant you, my lord.

*Exit*

**KING RICHARD** Catesby.

**CATESBY**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD**

Send out a pursuivant-at-arms

To Stanley's regiment. Bid him bring his power

Before sun-rising, lest his son George fall

Into the blind cave of eternal night.

15

*[Exit Catesby]*

Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a watch.

Saddle white Surrey for the field tomorrow.

Look that my staves be sound, and not too heavy.

Ratcliffe.

**RATCLIFFE** My lord?

20

**KING RICHARD**

Saw'st thou the melancholy Lord Northumberland?

**RATCLIFFE**

Thomas the Earl of Surrey and himself,  
Much about cockshut time, from troop to troop  
Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.

**KING RICHARD**

So, I am satisfied. Give me some wine. 25  
I have not that alacrity of spirit,  
Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.  
*The wine is brought*  
Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?

**RATCLIFFE**

It is, my lord.

**KING RICHARD** Leave me. Bid my guard watch.

About the mid of night come to my tent, 30

Ratcliffe, and help to arm me. Leave me, I say.

*Exit Ratcliffe [with others. Richard writes, and  
later sleeps]*

*Enter Lord Stanley Earl of Derby to Henry Earl of  
Richmond and the lords in his tent*

**STANLEY**

Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!

**HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND**

All comfort that the dark night can afford

Be to thy person, noble father-in-law.

Tell me, how fares our loving mother? 35

**STANLEY**

I, by attorney, bless thee from thy mother,  
Who prays continually for Richmond's good.

So much for that. The silent hours steal on,

And flaky darkness breaks within the east.

In brief±±for so the season bids us be±± 40

Prepare thy battle early in the morning,

And put thy fortune to th'arbitrement

Of bloody strokes and mortal-sharing war.

I, as I may±±that which I would, I cannot±±

With best advantage will deceive the time, 45

And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms.

But on thy side I may not be too forward±±

Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,

Be executed in his father's sight.

Farewell. The leisure and the fearful time 50

Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love  
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,  
Which so long sundered friends should dwell upon.  
God give us leisure for these rights of love.  
Once more, adieu. Be valiant, and speed well. 55

**HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND**

Good lords, conduct him to his regiment.  
I'll strive with troubled thoughts to take a nap,  
Lest leaden slumber peise me down tomorrow,  
When I should mount with wings of victory.  
Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen. 60

*Exeunt Stanley and the lords*

*[Richmond kneels]*

O thou, whose captain I account myself,  
Look on my forces with a gracious eye.  
Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,  
That they may crush down with a heavy fall  
Th'usurping helmets of our adversaries. 65

Make us thy ministers of chastisement,  
That we may praise thee in the victory.  
To thee I do commend my watchful soul,  
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.  
Sleeping and waking, O defend me still! 70

*He sleeps*

*Enter the Ghost of young Prince Edward [above]*

**GHOST OF PRINCE EDWARD (to Richard)**

Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow,  
Prince Edward, son to Henry the Sixth.  
Think how thou stabbedst me in my prime of youth  
At Tewkesbury. Despair, therefore, and die.  
(To Richmond) Be cheerful, Richmond, for the wronged  
souls 75

Of butchered princes fight in thy behalf.  
King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

*[Exit]*

*Enter [above] the Ghost of King Henry the Sixth*

**GHOST OF KING HENRY (to Richard)**

When I was mortal, my anointed body  
By thee was puncheÁd full of deadly holes.  
Think on the Tower and me. Despair and die. 80

Harry the Sixth bids thee despair and die.  
(*To Richmond*) Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror.  
Harry that prophesied thou shouldst be king  
Comforts thee in thy sleep. Live and flourish!

[*Exit*]

*Enter [above] the Ghost of George Duke of Clarence*

**GHOST OF CLARENCE** (*to Richard*)

Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow, 85  
I that was washed to death with fulsome wine,  
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betrayed to death.  
Tomorrow in the battle think on me,  
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair and die.  
(*To Richmond*) Thou offspring of the house of

Lancaster, 90

The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee.  
Good angels guard thy battle. Live and flourish!

[*Exit*]

*Enter [above] the Ghosts of Lord Rivers, Lord Gray,  
and Sir Thomas Vaughan*

**GHOST OF RIVERS** (*to Richard*)

Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow,  
Rivers that died at Pomfret. Despair and die.

**GHOST OF GRAY** (*to Richard*)

Think upon Gray, and let thy soul despair. 95

**GHOST OF VAUGHAN** (*to Richard*)

Think upon Vaughan, and with guilty fear  
Let fall thy pointless lance. Despair and die.

**ALL THREE** (*to Richmond*)

Awake, and think our wrongs in Richard's bosom  
Will conquer him. Awake, and win the day!

[*Exeunt Ghosts*]

*Enter [above] the Ghosts of the two young Princes*

**[GHOSTS OF THE PRINCES]** (*to Richard*)

Dream on thy cousins, smothered in the Tower. 100  
Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,  
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death.  
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die.  
(*To Richmond*) Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace and  
wake in joy.

Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy. 105

Live, and beget a happy race of kings!  
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

*[Exeunt Ghosts]*

*Enter [above] the Ghost of Lord Hastings*

**GHOST OF HASTINGS** *(to Richard)*

Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,  
And in a bloody battle end thy days.  
Think on Lord Hastings, then despair and die. 110  
*(To Richmond)* Quiet, untroubled soul, awake, awake!  
Arm, fight, and conquer for fair England's sake.

*[Exit]*

*Enter [above] the Ghost of Lady Anne*

**GHOST OF LADY ANNE** *(to Richard)*

Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,  
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,  
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations. 115  
Tomorrow in the battle think on me,  
And fall thy edgeless sword. Despair and die.  
*(To Richmond)* Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet  
sleep.

Dream of success and happy victory.  
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee. 120

*[Exit]*

*Enter [above] the Ghost of the Duke of Buckingham*

**GHOST OF BUCKINGHAM** *(to Richard)*

The first was I that helped thee to the crown;  
The last was I that felt thy tyranny.  
O in the battle think on Buckingham,  
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!  
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death; 125  
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath.  
*(To Richmond)* I died for hope ere I could lend thee aid.  
But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismayed.  
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side,  
And Richard falls in height of all his pride. 130

*[Exit]*

*Richard starteth up out of a dream*

**KING RICHARD**

Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds!  
Have mercy, Jesu!±±Soft, I did but dream.

O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me?  
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh. 135  
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. Myself upon myself? 140  
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. 145  
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! 150  
Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st 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 will pity me. 155  
Nay, wherefore should they?±±Since that I myself  
Find in myself no pity to myself.  
Methought the souls of all that I had murdered  
Came to my tent, and every one did threat  
Tomorrow's vengeance on the head of Richard. 160

*Enter Ratcliffe*

**RATCLIFFE** My lord?

**KING RICHARD** 'Swounds, who is there?

**RATCLIFFE**

My lord, 'tis I. The early village cock  
Hath twice done salutation to the morn.  
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour. 165

**KING RICHARD**

O Ratcliffe, I have dreamed a fearful dream.  
What thinkest thou, will all our friends prove true?

**RATCLIFFE**

No doubt, my lord.

**KING RICHARD** Ratcliffe, I fear, I fear.

**RATCLIFFE**

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

**KING RICHARD**

By the Apostle Paul, shadows tonight 170

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard

Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers

Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.

'Tis not yet near day. Come, go with me.

Under our tents I'll play the eavesdropper, 175

To see if any mean to shrink from me.

*Exeunt Richard and Ratcliffe*

*Enter the lords to Henry Earl of Richmond, sitting  
in his tent*

**[LORDS]** Good morrow, Richmond.

**HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND**

Cry mercy, lords and watchful gentlemen,

That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.

**[A LORD]** How have you slept, my lord? 180

**HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND**

The sweetest sleep and fairest boding dreams

That ever entered in a drowsy head

Have I since your departure had, my lords.

Methought their souls whose bodies Richard murdered

Came to my tent and cried on victory. 185

I promise you, my soul is very jocund

In the remembrance of so fair a dream.

How far into the morning is it, lords?

**[A LORD]** Upon the stroke of four.

**HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND**

Why then, 'tis time to arm, and give direction. 190

*His oration to his soldiers*

Much that I could say, loving countrymen,

The leisure and enforcement of the time

Forbids to dwell on. Yet remember this:

God and our good cause fight upon our side.

The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls, 195

Like high-reared bulwarks, stand before our forces.

Richard except, those whom we fight against

Had rather have us win than him they follow.

For what is he they follow? Truly, friends,  
A bloody tyrant and a homicide; 200  
One raised in blood, and one in blood established;  
One that made means to come by what he hath,  
And slaughtered those that were the means to help  
him;  
A base, foul stone, made precious by the foil  
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set; 205  
One that hath ever been God's enemy.  
Then if you fight against God's enemy,  
God will, in justice, ward you as his soldiers.  
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,  
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain. 210  
If you do fight against your country's foes,  
Your country's foison pays your pains the hire.  
If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,  
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors.  
If you do free your children from the sword, 215  
Your children's children quites it in your age.  
Then, in the name of God and all these rights,  
Advance your standards! Draw your willing swords!  
For me, the ransom of this bold attempt  
Shall be my cold corpse on the earth's cold face; 220  
But if I thrive, to gain of my attempt,  
The least of you shall share his part thereof.  
Sound, drums and trumpets, bold and cheerfully!  
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!  
*[Exeunt to the sound of drums and trumpets]*