

Richard III

1.3

Enter Queen Elizabeth, Lord Rivers, [Marquis Dorset], and Lord Gray

RIVERS *(to Elizabeth)*

Have patience, madam. There's no doubt his majesty
Will soon recover his accustomed health.

GRAY *(to Elizabeth)*

In that you brook it ill, it makes him worse.
Therefore, for God's sake entertain good comfort,
And cheer his grace with quick and merry eyes.

5

QUEEN ELIZABETH

If he were dead, what would betide on me?

[RIVERS]

No other harm but loss of such a lord.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The loss of such a lord includes all harms.

GRAY

The heavens have blessed you with a goodly son
To be your comforter when he is gone.

10

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, he is young, and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me±±nor none of you.

RIVERS

Is it concluded he shall be Protector?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

It is determined, not concluded yet;
But so it must be, if the King miscarry.

15

*Enter the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Stanley
Earl of Derby*

GRAY

Here come the Lords of Buckingham and Derby.

BUCKINGHAM *(to Elizabeth)*

Good time of day unto your royal grace.

STANLEY *(to Elizabeth)*

God make your majesty joyful, as you have been.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Countess Richmond, good my lord of Derby,

20

To your good prayer will scarcely say `Amen'.
Yet, Derby±±notwithstanding she's your wife,
And loves not me±±be you, good lord, assured
I hate not you for her proud arrogance.

STANLEY

I do beseech you, either not believe 25
The envious slanders of her false accusers
Or, if she be accused on true report,
Bear with her weakness, which I think proceeds
From wayward sickness, and no grounded malice.

[RIVERS]

Saw you the King today, my lord of Derby? 30

STANLEY

But now the Duke of Buckingham and I
Are come from visiting his majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

With likelihood of his amendment, lords?

BUCKINGHAM

Madam, good hope: his grace speaks cheerfully.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

God grant him health. Did you confer with him? 35

BUCKINGHAM

Ay, madam. He desires to make atonement
Between the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,
And between them and my Lord Chamberlain,
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Would all were well! But that will never be. 40
I fear our happiness is at the height.

Enter Richard Duke of Gloucester and Lord Hastings

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

They do me wrong, and I will not endure it.
Who are they that complain unto the King
That I forsooth am stern and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly 45
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.
Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy. 50
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,

But thus his simple truth must be abused
With silken, sly, insinuating jacks?

[RIVERS]

To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace. 55
When have I injured thee? When done thee wrong?
Or thee? Or thee? Or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all! His royal grace±±
Whom God preserve better than you would wish±±
Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing while 60
But you must trouble him with lewd complaints.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.
The King±±on his own royal disposition,
And not provoked by any suitor else±±
Aiming belike at your interior hatred, 65
That in your outward action shows itself
Against my children, brothers, and myself,
Makes him to send, that he may learn the ground
Of your ill will, and thereby to remove it.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

I cannot tell. The world is grown so bad 70
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch.
Since every jack became a gentleman,
There's many a gentle person made a jack.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Come, come, we know your meaning, brother
Gloucester.
You envy my advancement, and my friends'. 75
God grant we never may have need of you.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Meantime, God grants that I have need of you.
Our brother is imprisoned by your means,
Myself disgraced, and the nobility
Held in contempt, while great promotions 80
Are daily given to ennoble those
That scarce some two days since were worth a noble.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By him that raised me to this care-full height
From that contented hap which I enjoyed,

I never did incense his majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.
My lord, you do me shameful injury
Falsely to draw me in these vile suspects. 85

RICHARD GLOUCESTER
You may deny that you were not the mean 90
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

RIVERS She may, my lord, for±±

RICHARD GLOUCESTER
She may, Lord Rivers; why, who knows not so?
She may do more, sir, than denying that.
She may help you to many fair preferments, 95
And then deny her aiding hand therein,
And lay those honours on your high desert.
What may she not? She may±±ay, marry, may she.

RIVERS What `marry, may she'?

RICHARD GLOUCESTER
What marry, may she? Marry with a king: 100
A bachelor, and a handsome stripling, too.
Iwis your grandam had a worser match.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
My lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs.
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty 105
Of those gross taunts that oft I have endured.
I had rather be a country servant-maid
Than a great queen, with this condition:
To be so baited, scorned, and stormeÁd at.
Enter old Queen Margaret, unseen behind them
Small joy have I in being England's queen. 110

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)
And lessened be that small, God I beseech him.
Thy honour, state, and seat is due to me.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER (*to Elizabeth*)
What? Threat you me with telling of the King?
Tell him, and spare not. Look what I have said,
I will avouch't in presence of the King. 115
I dare adventure to be sent to th' Tower.
'Tis time to speak; my pains are quite forgot.

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)

Out, devil! I remember them too well.
Thou killed'st my husband Henry in the Tower,
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewkesbury.

120

RICHARD GLOUCESTER (*to Elizabeth*)

Ere you were queen±±ay, or your husband king±±
I was a packhorse in his great affairs,
A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,
A liberal rewarder of his friends.
To royalize his blood, I spent mine own.

125

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)

Ay, and much better blood than his or thine.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER (*to Elizabeth*)

In all which time you and your husband Gray
Were factious for the house of Lancaster;
And Rivers, so were you.±±Was not your husband
In Margaret's battle at Saint Albans slain?
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,
What you have been ere this, and what you are;
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

130

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)

A murd'rous villain, and so still thou art.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Poor Clarence did forsake his father Warwick±±
Ay, and forswore himself, which Jesu pardon±±

135

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*) Which God revenge!

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

To fight on Edward's party for the crown,
And for his meed, poor lord, he is mewed up.
I would to God my heart were flint like Edward's,
Or Edward's soft and pitiful like mine.
I am too childish-foolish for this world.

140

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)

Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave this world,
Thou cacodemon; there thy kingdom is.

RIVERS

My lord of Gloucester, in those busy days
Which here you urge to prove us enemies,
We followed then our lord, our sovereign king.
So should we you, if you should be our king.

145

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

If I should be? I had rather be a pedlar.
Far be it from my heart, the thought thereof. 150

QUEEN ELIZABETH

As little joy, my lord, as you suppose
You should enjoy, were you this country's king,
As little joy may you suppose in me,
That I enjoy being the queen thereof.

QUEEN MARGARET (*aside*)

Ah, little joy enjoys the queen thereof, 155
For I am she, and altogether joyless.
I can no longer hold me patient.

She comes forward

Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out
In sharing that which you have pill'd from me.
Which of you trembles not that looks on me? 160
If not that I am Queen, you bow like subjects;
Yet that by you deposed, you quake like rebels.
(*To Richard*) Ah, gentle villain, do not turn away.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Foul wrinkled witch, what mak'st thou in my sight?

QUEEN MARGARET

But repetition of what thou hast marred: 165
That will I make before I let thee go.
A husband and a son thou ow'st to me,
(*To Elizabeth*) And thou a kingdom; (*to the rest*) all of
you allegiance.

This sorrow that I have by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine. 170

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

The curse my noble father laid on thee±±
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper,
And with thy scorns drew'st rivers from his eyes,
And then, to dry them, gav'st the duke a clout
Steeped in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland±±± 175
His curses then, from bitterness of soul
Denounced against thee, are all fall'n upon thee,
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (*to Margaret*)

So just is God to right the innocent.

LORD HASTINGS *(to Margaret)*

O 'twas the foulest deed to slay that babe, 180
And the most merciless that e'er was heard of.

RIVERS *(to Margaret)*

Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

DORSET *(to Margaret)*

No man but prophesied revenge for it.

BUCKINGHAM *(to Margaret)*

Northumberland, then present, wept to see it.

QUEEN MARGARET

What? Were you snarling all before I came, 185
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?

Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment, 190
Should all but answer for that peevish brat?

Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
Though not by war, by surfeit die your king,
As ours by murder to make him a king. 195

(To Elizabeth) Edward thy son, that now is Prince of
Wales,

For Edward my son, that was Prince of Wales,
Die in his youth by like untimely violence.

Thyself, a queen, for me that was a queen,
Outlive thy glory like my wretched self. 200

Long mayst thou live±±to wail thy children's death,
And see another, as I see thee now,
Decked in thy rights, as thou art 'stalled in mine.

Long die thy happy days before thy death,
And after many lengthened hours of grief 205
Die, neither mother, wife, nor England's queen.±±

Rivers and Dorset, you were standers-by,
And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son
Was stabbed with bloody daggers. God I pray him,
That none of you may live his natural age, 210
But by some unlooked accident cut off.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Have done thy charm, thou hateful, withered hag.

QUEEN MARGARET

And leave out thee? Stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.
If heaven have any grievous plague in store
Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee, 215
O let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
And then hurl down their indignation
On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace.
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul.
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st, 220
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends.
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils.
Thou elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog, 225
Thou that wast sealed in thy nativity
The slave of nature and the son of hell,
Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,
Thou loatheÁd issue of thy father's loins,
Thou rag of honour, thou detested±± 230

RICHARD GLOUCESTER Margaret.

QUEEN MARGARET

Richard.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER Ha?

QUEEN MARGARET I call thee not.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

I cry thee mercy then, for I did think
That thou hadst called me all these bitter names.

QUEEN MARGARET

Why so I did, but looked for no reply. 235
O let me make the period to my curse.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

'Tis done by me, and ends in `Margaret'.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (*to Margaret*)

Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

QUEEN MARGARET

Poor painted Queen, vain flourish of my fortune,
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider 240
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
Fool, fool, thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.
The day will come that thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-backed toad.

LORD HASTINGS

False-boding woman, end thy frantic curse, 245
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

QUEEN MARGARET

Foul shame upon you, you have all moved mine.

RIVERS

Were you well served, you would be taught your duty.

QUEEN MARGARET

To serve me well you all should do me duty.
Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects: 250
O serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty.

DORSET

Dispute not with her: she is lunatic.

QUEEN MARGARET

Peace, master Marquis, you are malapert.
Your fire-new stamp of honour is scarce current.
O that your young nobility could judge 255
What 'twere to lose it and be miserable.
They that stand high have many blasts to shake them,
And if they fall they dash themselves to pieces.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Good counsel, marry!±±Learn it, learn it, Marquis.

DORSET

It touches you, my lord, as much as me. 260

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Ay, and much more; but I was born so high.
Our eyrie buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.

QUEEN MARGARET

And turns the sun to shade. Alas, alas!
Witness my son, now in the shade of death, 265
Whose bright outshining beams thy cloudy wrath
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.
Your eyrie buildeth in our eyrie's nest.±±
O God that seest it, do not suffer it;
As it was won with blood, lost be it so. 270

[RICHARD GLOUCESTER]

Peace, peace! For shame, if not for charity.

QUEEN MARGARET

Urge neither charity nor shame to me.
Uncharitably with me have you dealt,

And shamefully my hopes by you are butchered.
My charity is outrage; life, my shame; 275
And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage.

BUCKINGHAM Have done, have done.

QUEEN MARGARET

O princely Buckingham, I'll kiss thy hand
In sign of league and amity with thee.
Now fair befall thee and thy noble house! 280
Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,
Nor thou within the compass of my curse.

BUCKINGHAM

Nor no one here, for curses never pass
The lips of those that breathe them in the air.

QUEEN MARGARET

I will not think but they ascend the sky 285
And there awake God's gentle sleeping peace.
O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog.

She points at Richard

Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle to the death.
Have naught to do with him; beware of him; 290
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

What doth she say, my lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM

Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.

QUEEN MARGARET

What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel, 295
And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?
O but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say, 'Poor Margaret was a prophetess'.±±
Live each of you the subjects to his hate, 300
And he to yours, and all of you to God's.

Exit

[HASTINGS]

My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.

RIVERS

And so doth mine. I muse why she's at liberty.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

I cannot blame her, by God's holy mother.
She hath had too much wrong, and I repent
My part thereof that I have done to her. 305

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I never did her any, to my knowledge.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Yet you have all the vantage of her wrong.
I was too hot to do somebody good,
That is too cold in thinking of it now. 310
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid:
He is franked up to fattening for his pains.
God pardon them that are the cause thereof.

RIVERS

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us. 315

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

So do I ever±± (*speaks to himself*) being well advised:
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

Enter Sir William Catesby

CATESBY

Madam, his majesty doth call for you,
And for your grace, and you my gracious lords.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Catesby, I come.±±Lords, will you go with me? 320

RIVERS We wait upon your grace.

Exeunt all but Richard

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
The secret mischiefs that I set abroad
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
Clarence, whom I indeed have cast in darkness, 325
I do bewep to many simple gulls±±
Namely to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham±±
And tell them, 'Tis the Queen and her allies
That stir the King against the Duke my brother'.
Now they believe it, and withal whet me 330
To be revenged on Rivers, Dorset, Gray;
But then I sigh, and with a piece of scripture
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ, 335

And seem a saint when most I play the devil.

Enter two Murderers

But soft, here come my executioners.±±

How now, my hardy, stout, resolveÁd mates!

Are you now going to dispatch this thing?

A MURDERER

We are, my lord, and come to have the warrant,

340

That we may be admitted where he is.

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Well thought upon; I have it here about me.

He gives them the warrant

When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.

But sirs, be sudden in the execution,

Withal obdurate; do not hear him plead,

345

For Clarence is well spoken, and perhaps

May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.

A MURDERER

Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate.

Talkers are no good doers. Be assured,

We go to use our hands, and not our tongues.

350

RICHARD GLOUCESTER

Your eyes drop millstones when fools' eyes fall tears.

I like you, lads. About your business straight.

Go, go, dispatch.

[MURDERERS] We will, my noble lord.

Exeunt Richard at one door, the Murderers at another