

BACK ROOM SHAKESPEARE PROJECT
RICHARD III

ACT I

SCENE I. London. A street.

[Music into underscoring]

Enter RICHARD, Duke of Gloucester, alone

RICHARD

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this son of York,
And all the clouds that loured upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged War hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up;
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity.
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul; here Clarence comes.

[Music]

Enter CLARENCE, guarded by BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day. What means this armed guard
That waits upon your grace?

CLARENCE

His majesty,
Tendering my person's safety, hath appointed
This conduct to convey me to the Tower.

RICHARD
Upon what cause?

CLARENCE
Because my name is George.

RICHARD
Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;
But what's the matter, Clarence, may I know?

CLARENCE
He hearkens after prophecies and dreams,
And says a wizard told him that by 'G'
His issue disinherited should be.
And for my name of George begins with G,
It follows in his thought that I am he.

RICHARD
Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:
'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower;
My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she
That tempers him to this extremity.
We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

CLARENCE
By heaven, I think there's no man is secure.
Heard ye not what an humble suppliant
Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery?

RICHARD
Humbly complaining to her deity
Got my Lord Hastings his liberty.

BRAKENBURY
I beseech your graces both to pardon me.
His majesty hath straitly given in charge
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with his brother.

CLARENCE
We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

RICHARD
We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.
Brother, farewell. I will unto the king;
Your imprisonment shall not be long;
I will deliver you, or else lie for you.
Meantime, have patience.

CLARENCE

I must perforce. Farewell.

Exeunt CLARENCE and BRAKENBURY

RICHARD

Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven.
But who comes here? The new-deliver'd Hastings?

Enter HASTINGS

HASTINGS

Good time of day unto my gracious lord.

RICHARD

As much unto my good Lord Chamberlain.
Well are you welcome to the open air.
What news abroad?

HASTINGS

No news so bad abroad as this at home:
The King is sickly, weak and melancholy,
And his physicians fear him mightily.

RICHARD

Now by Saint John, that news is bad indeed.
What, is he in his bed?

HASTINGS

He is.

RICHARD

Go you before, and I will follow you.

Exit HASTINGS

He cannot live, I hope, and must not die
Till George be packed with post-horse up to heaven;
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!
For then, I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
What though I killed her husband and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father.
But yet I run before my horse to market:
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns.
When they are gone, then must I count my gains.
Exit

[Music]

SCENE II. The same. Another street.

Enter the corpse of KING HENRY the Sixth, Gentlemen with halberds to guard it; LADY ANNE being the mourner

LADY ANNE

Set down, set down your honourable load,
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
Th'untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood,
Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost,
To hear the lamentations of Poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son,
Stabbed by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
O, cursed be the hand that made these holes;
Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it;
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence.
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the death of him
Than I am made by my young lord and thee.

Enter RICHARD

RICHARD

Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.

LADY ANNE

What black magician conjures up this fiend?

RICHARD

Villains, set down the corse, or by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.

LADY ANNE

What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?
Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.
Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body;
His soul thou canst not have. Therefore begone.

RICHARD

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

LADY ANNE

If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O, gentlemen, see, see dead Henry's wounds
Open their congealed mouths, and bleed afresh.
O God! which this blood mad'st, revenge his death.
O earth! which this blood drink'st, revenge his death.

RICHARD

Lady, you know no rules of charity,
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man.
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

RICHARD

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

RICHARD

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.
Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
Of these supposed crimes, to give me leave
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

LADY ANNE

Vouchsafe, diffused infection of a man,
For these known evils, but to give me leave
By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

RICHARD

I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE

Why, then he is alive.

RICHARD

Nay, he is dead, and slain by Edward's hand.

LADY ANNE

Didst thou not kill this king?

RICHARD

I grant ye.

LADY ANNE

Dost grant me, hedgehog? Then God grant me too
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed.
O, he was gentle, mild and virtuous.

RICHARD

The fitter for the King of Heaven that hath him,
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

LADY ANNE

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

RICHARD

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

LADY ANNE

Some dungeon.

RICHARD
Your bed-chamber.

LADY ANNE
Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest.

RICHARD
So will it, madam till I lie with you.

LADY ANNE
I hope so.

RICHARD
I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,
To leave this keen encounter of our wits
And fall something into a slower method:
Is not the causer of the timeless deaths
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
As blameful as the executioner?

LADY ANNE
Thou art the cause, and most accurst effect.

RICHARD
Your beauty was the cause of that effect.

LADY ANNE
If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

RICHARD
These eyes could never endure that beauty's wrack.
He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

LADY ANNE
His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

RICHARD
He lives that loves thee better than he could.

LADY ANNE
Name him.

RICHARD
Plantagenet.

LADY ANNE
Why, that was he.

RICHARD
The selfsame name, but one of better nature.

LADY ANNE

Where is he?

RICHARD

Here.

She spits at him

Why dost thou spit at me?

LADY ANNE

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake.

RICHARD

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

LADY ANNE

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.

Out of my sight! Thou dost infect my eyes.

RICHARD

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

Teach not thy lip such scorn, for it was made

For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.

If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,

Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword,

Which if thou please to hide in this true breast

I lay it naked to the deadly stroke

And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,

But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.

Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward,

But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

Here she lets fall the sword

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

LADY ANNE

Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,

I will not be the executioner.

RICHARD

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

LADY ANNE

I have already.

RICHARD

That was in thy rage.

Speak it again and, even with the word,

That hand, which for thy love did kill thy love,

Shall for thy love kill a far truer love;

To both their deaths shalt thou be accessory.

LADY ANNE

I would I knew thy heart.

RICHARD

'Tis figured in my tongue.

LADY ANNE

I fear me both are false.

RICHARD

Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE

Well, well, put up your sword.

RICHARD

Say then my peace is made.

LADY ANNE

That shall you know hereafter.

RICHARD

But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE

All men I hope live so.

RICHARD

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE

To take is not to give.

RICHARD

Look how my ring encompasseth finger;
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart.
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.
And if thy poor devoted servant may
But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,
Thou dost confirm his happiness forever.

LADY ANNE

What is it?

RICHARD

That it would please thee leave these sad designs
To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to Crosby House,
Where, after I have solemnly interred
At Chertsey Monastery this noble king
And wet his grave with my repentant tears,
I will with all expedient duty see you.
Grant me this boon.

LADY ANNE

With all my heart, and much it joys me too
To see you are become so penitent.

RICHARD
Bid me farewell.

LADY ANNE
'Tis more than you deserve;
But since you teach me how to flatter you,
Imagine I have said farewell already.

[Music]

Exeunt LADY ANNE

GENTLEMEN
Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

RICHARD
No, to Whitefriars; there attend my coming.

Exeunt all but RICHARD

Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
What? I that killed her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of her hatred by;
And yet to win her? All the world to nothing!
Ha!
I do mistake my person all this while!
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.
Exit

[Music]

SCENE III. The palace.

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVERS, DORSET and GREY

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

GREY
Therefore for God's sake entertain good comfort,
And cheer his grace with quick and merry words.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
If he were dead, what would betide of me?

DORSET

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh, 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 that he shall be Protector?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

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

[Fanfare]

Enter BUCKINGHAM and STANLEY

GREY

Here come the lords of Buckingham and Stanley.

BUCKINGHAM

Good time of day unto your royal grace.

STANLEY

God make your majesty joyful, as you have been.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Saw you the king to-day, my Lord Stanley?

STANLEY

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

God grant him health. Did you confer with him?

BUCKINGHAM

Ay madam; he desires to make atonement
Between the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,
And between them and my Lord Hastings.

[Fanfare]

Enter RICHARD and HASTINGS

RICHARD

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?
Because I cannot flatter, and look fair,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.

GREY

To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

RICHARD

To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.
When have I injured thee? When done thee wrong?
Or thee? —Or thee? —Or any of your faction?
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'.
God grant we never may have need of you.

RICHARD

Meantime, God grants that we have need of you.
Our brother is imprisoned by your means.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I never did incense his majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.

RICHARD

You may deny that you were not the cause
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

RIVERS

She may, my lord, for--

RICHARD

She may, Lord Rivers; why, who knows not so?
What may she not? She may, ay, marry, may she.

RIVERS

What, marry, may she?

RICHARD

What, marry, may she? Marry with a king,

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
With those gross taunts that oft I have endured.

[Music]

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, behind

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

QUEEN MARGARET

[Aside] And lessened be that small, God, I beseech Him.
Thy honour, state and seat is due to me.

RICHARD

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.
'Tis time to speak; my pains are quite forgot.

QUEEN MARGARET

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

RICHARD

Ere you were queen, ay, or your husband king,
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs,
In all which time you and your husband Grey
Were factious for the house of Lancaster.
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,
What you have been ere now, and what you are;
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

QUEEN MARGARET

[Aside] A murderous villain, and so still thou art.

RIVERS

My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days
We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king.
So should we you, if you should be our king.

RICHARD

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

QUEEN MARGARET

[Aside] I can no longer hold me patient.

Advancing

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?

RICHARD

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

QUEEN MARGARET

A husband and a son thou ow'st to me;
-And thou a kingdom; -all of you, allegiance.
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.
Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!

To Elizabeth

Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's death
And see another, as I see thee now,
Deck'd in thy rights, as thou art stalled in mine.
Long die thy happy days before thy death,
And, after many lengthened hours of grief,
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,
But by some unlooked accident cut off.

RICHARD

Have done thy charm, thou hateful withered hag.

QUEEN MARGARET

And leave out thee? Stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul;
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends;
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine.
Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,
Thou rag of honour, thou detested--

RICHARD

Margaret.

QUEEN MARGARET

Richard!

RICHARD

Ha?

QUEEN MARGARET

I call thee not.

RICHARD

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.
O, let me make the period to my curse.

RICHARD

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

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,
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
Fool, fool, thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.
The time will come when thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-backed toad.

BUCKINGHAM

Have done, have done.

QUEEN MARGARET

O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog.
Look, when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle to the death.
Have not to do with him, beware of him.

RICHARD

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,
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.
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

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.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I never did her any, to my knowledge.

RICHARD

But you have all the vantage of her wrong.

Enter Page

Page

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

We come. Lords, will you go with me?

RIVERS

We wait upon your grace.

Exeunt all but RICHARD

Enter two Murderers

RICHARD

[Music]

How now, my hardy, stout resolved mates;
Are you now going to dispatch this thing?

First Murderer

We are, my lord, and come to have the warrant
That we may be admitted where he is.

RICHARD

Well thought upon. I have it here about me.
Gives the warrant
But sirs, be sudden in the execution,
For Clarence is well-spoke, and perhaps
May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.

First Murderer

Fear not, my lord, we will not stand to prate.
We go to use our hands and not our tongues.

RICHARD

Your eyes drop millstones when fools' eyes fall tears.
I like you, lads. About your business straight.
Go, go, dispatch.

First Murderer

We will, my noble lord.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE IV. London. The Tower.

Enter CLARENCE and BRAKENBURY

BRAKENBURY

Why looks your grace so heavily today?

CLARENCE

O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights.

BRAKENBURY

What was your dream, my lord? I pray you tell me.

[Underscoring]

CLARENCE

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embarked to cross to Burgundy;
And in my company my brother Gloucester,
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches. As we paced along
Methought that Gloucester stumbled, and in falling
Struck me (that thought to stay him) overboard.
O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown.
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks,
A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon,

Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.

BRAKENBURY

Awaked you not with this sore agony?

CLARENCE

No, no, my dream was lengthened after life.
O, then began the tempest to my soul.
I passed, methought, the melancholy flood,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends
Environed me about, and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries, that with the very noise
I, trembling, waked, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell,
Such terrible impression made my dream.

BRAKENBURY

No marvel, my lord, though it affrighted you;
I am afraid, methinks, to hear you tell it.

CLARENCE

O Brakenbury, I have done these things,
That now give evidence against my soul,
For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me.
Keeper, I prithee sit by me awhile;
My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

BRAKENBURY

I will, my lord. God give your grace good rest.

CLARENCE sleeps

Enter the two Murderers

[Music]

First Murderer

Ho, who's here?

BRAKENBURY

What wouldst thou, fellow? And how cam'st thou hither?

Second Murderer

I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

BRAKENBURY

What, so brief?

First Murderer

'Tis better, sir, than to be tedious. Let him see our commission, and talk no more.

BRAKENBURY reads it

BRAKENBURY

I am in this commanded to deliver
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands.
I will not reason what is meant hereby
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.
There lies the Duke asleep, and there the keys.
I'll to the King and signify to him
That thus I have resigned to you my charge.

First Murderer

You may, sir; 'tis a point of wisdom. Fare you well.

Exit BRAKENBURY

Second Murderer

What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

First Murderer

No. He'll say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.

Second Murderer

Why, he shall never wake until the great Judgment Day.

First Murderer

Why, then he'll say we stabbed him sleeping.

Second Murderer

The urging of that word 'Judgment' hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

First Murderer

What? Art thou afraid?

Second Murderer

Not to kill him, having a warrant, but to be damned for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me.

First Murderer

I thought thou hadst been resolute.

Second Murderer

So I am, to let him live.

First Murderer

I'll back to the Duke of Gloucester and tell him so.

Second Murderer

Nay, I prithee stay a little. I hope this passionate humor of mine will change. It was wont to hold me but while one tells twenty.

First Murderer

How dost thou feel thyself now?

Second Murderer

Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

First Murderer

Remember our reward when the deed's done.

Second Murderer

'Zounds, he dies! I had forgot the reward.

First Murderer

Where's thy conscience now?

Second Murderer

O, in the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

First Murderer

When he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

Second Murderer

'Tis no matter; let it go. There's few or none will entertain it.

First Murderer

What if it come to thee again?

Second Murderer

I'll not meddle with it; it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear but it checks him; a man he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife but it detects him. It mutinies in a man's bosom. It fills a man full of obstacles. It made me once restore a purse of gold that by chance I found. It beggars any man that keeps it. It is turned out of towns and cities for a dangerous thing, and every man that means to live well endeavours to trust to himself, and live without it.

First Murderer

'Zounds, 'tis even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the Duke.

Second Murderer

Take the devil in thy mind, and believe him not.

First Murderer

I am strong-framed; he cannot prevail with me.

Second Murderer

Spoke like a tall man that respects thy reputation. Come, shall we fall to work?

First Murderer

Take him over the costard with the hilts of thy sword, and then throw him into the malmsey butt in the next room.

Second Murderer

O excellent device! And make a sop of him.

First Murderer

Soft, he wakes.

Second Murderer
Strike!

First Murderer
No, we'll reason with him.

CLARENCE
Where art thou, keeper? Give me a cup of wine.

Second Murderer
You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

CLARENCE
In God's name, what art thou?

First Murderer
A man, as you are.

CLARENCE
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

Second Murderer
To, to, to--

CLARENCE
To murder me?

Both
Ay, ay.

CLARENCE
You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

First Murderer
Offended us you have not.

CLARENCE
Are you drawn forth among a world of men
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?

First Murderer
What we will do, we do upon command.

Second Murderer
And he that hath commanded is our king.

CLARENCE
If you are hired for meed, go back again,
And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,
Who shall reward you better for my life
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatched.
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous murder.

Re-enter First Murderer

First Murderer

How now? What mean'st thou that thou help'st me not?
By heavens, the Duke shall know how slack you have been.

Second Murderer

I would he knew that I had saved his brother.
Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say,
For I repent me that the Duke is slain.
Exit

First Murderer

So do not I. Go, coward as thou art.
Well, I'll go hide the body in some hole
Till that the Duke take order for his burial.
And when I have my meed, I will away,
For this will out, and then I must not stay.
Exit

[Music]

ACT II

[Flourish]

SCENE I. London. The palace.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so. Now have I done a good day's work.
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.

RIVERS

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

HASTINGS

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like.

KING EDWARD IV

Madam, yourself is not exempt in 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.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

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

KING EDWARD IV

Dorset, embrace him. Hastings, love Lord Dorset.

DORSET

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

HASTINGS

And so swear I.

They embrace

KING EDWARD IV

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

BUCKINGHAM

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.

KING EDWARD IV

A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here
To make the blessed period of this peace.

BUCKINGHAM

And, in good time, here comes the noble Duke.

[Music]

Enter RICHARD, RATCLIFFE and CATESBY

RICHARD

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

KING EDWARD IV

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

RICHARD

A blessed labour, my most sovereign lord.
Amongst this princely heap, if any here
By false intelligence or wrong surmise
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.
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born to-night.
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.
My sovereign lord, I do beseech your highness
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

RICHARD

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

KING EDWARD IV

Who knows not he is dead? Who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

All seeing heaven, what a world is this?

KING EDWARD IV

Is Clarence dead? The order was reversed.

GLOUCESTER

But he, poor man, by your first order died.

Enter STANLEY

STANLEY

A boon, my sovereign, for my service done.

KING EDWARD IV

I prithee, peace. My soul is full of sorrow.

STANLEY

I will not rise, unless your highness hear me.

KING EDWARD IV

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.

KING EDWARD IV

My brother killed 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?
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;
And I unjustly too, must grant it you.
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.

[Music]

Exeunt some with KING EDWARD IV and QUEEN ELIZABETH; RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY and RATCLIFFE remain.

RICHARD

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
To comfort Edward with our company?

BUCKINGHAM

We wait upon your grace.

[Music]

Exeunt

SCENE II. The palace.

Enter the DUCHESS OF YORK

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her ears; RIVERS, GREY and DORSET after her

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah! Who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune, and torment myself?

DUCHESS OF YORK

What means this scene of rude impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Edward, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I have bewept a worthy husband's death
And lived by looking on his images:
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are cracked in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

GRAY

[To Queen Elizabeth] Comfort, dear mother.

RIVERS

Sister, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him;
Let him be crowned. In him your comfort lives.

[Music]

Enter RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM

RICHARD

Madam, have comfort. All of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star,
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;
I did not see your grace. Humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

DUCHESS OF YORK

God bless thee and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience and true duty.

RICHARD

Amen; *[Aside]* and make me die a good old man.
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing;
I marvel that her grace did leave it out.

BUCKINGHAM

Me seemeth good that with some little train
Forthwith from Ludlow the young Prince be fetched
Hither to London, to be crowned our king.

RIVERS

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM

Marry, my lord, lest by a multitude
The new-healed wound of malice should break out.

RICHARD

I hope the king made peace with all of us,
And the compact is firm and true in me.

RIVERS

And so in me, and so, I think, in all.
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put

To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply by much company might be urged;
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham
That it is meet so few should fetch the Prince.

RICHARD

Then be it so, and go we to determine
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.

Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and RICHARD

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,
For God's sake let not us two stay at home;
For by the way I'll sort occasion,
As index to the story we late talked of,
To part the Queen's proud kindred from the Prince.

RICHARD

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin,
I, as a child, will go by thy direction.
Toward Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE IV. London. The palace.

Enter young YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and the DUCHESS OF YORK

DUCHESS OF YORK

I long with all my heart to see the Prince.
I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But I hear no. They say my son of York
Hath almost overta'en him in his growth.

YORK

Ay, mother, but I would not have it so.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, my young cousin, it is good to grow.

YORK

Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper,
My uncle Rivers talked how I did grow
More than my brother. 'Ay,' quoth my uncle Gloucester,
'Small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace.'
And since, methinks I would not grow so fast
Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold
In him that did object the same to thee.
He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,
So long a-growing, and so leisurely,
That if his rule were true, he should be gracious.

YORK

Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast
That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old;
'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A parlous boy; go to, you are too shrewd.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Good madam, be not angry with the child.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Pitchers have ears.

[Fanfare]

Enter a Messenger

DUCHESS OF YORK

Here comes a messenger. What news?

Messenger

Such news, Madam, as grieves me to report.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How fares the Prince?

Messenger

Well, madam, and in health.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What is thy news then?

Messenger

Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret, prisoners.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Who hath committed them?

Messenger

The mighty Dukes,
Gloucester and Buckingham.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

For what offence?

Messenger

Why or for what these nobles were committed
Is all unknown to me, my gracious lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ay me! I see the ruin of my house.
Welcome, destruction, blood and massacre.
I see, as in a map, the end of all.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
How many of you have mine eyes beheld?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Come, come, my boy, we will to sanctuary.

Messenger

Go, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary.

Exeunt

ACT III

[Fanfare]

SCENE I. London. A street.

The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD, RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM

Welcome, sweet Prince, to London, to your chamber.

RICHARD

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign.

PRINCE EDWARD

I want more uncles here to welcome me.

RICHARD

Sweet Prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit.
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;
God keep you from them, and from such false friends.

PRINCE EDWARD

God keep me from false friends, but they were none.
I thought my mother and my brother York,
Would long ere this have met us on the way.
Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not
To tell us whether they will come or no.

Enter HASTINGS

BUCKINGHAM

And in good time, here comes the sweating lord.

PRINCE EDWARD

Welcome, my lord. What, will our mother come?

HASTINGS

On what occasion God He knows, not I,
The Queen your mother and your brother York
Have taken sanctuary. The tender prince
Would fain have come with me to meet your grace,
But by his mother was perforce withheld.

BUCKINGHAM

Fie, what an indirect and peevish course
Is this of hers! Lord Hastings, will your grace
Persuade the Queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently?
If she deny,
From her jealous arms pluck him perforce.

HASTINGS

I go, my lord.

PRINCE EDWARD

Good lord, make all the speedy haste you may.

Exit HASTINGS

Say, uncle Gloucester, if our brother come,
Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

RICHARD

Where it seems best unto your royal self.
If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower;
Then where you please and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.

PRINCE EDWARD

I do not like the Tower, of any place.

RICHARD

[Aside] So wise so young, they say, do never live long.

PRINCE EDWARD

What say you, uncle?

Enter young YORK and HASTINGS

BUCKINGHAM

Now in good time here comes the Duke of York.

PRINCE EDWARD

Richard of York, how fares our loving brother?

YORK

Well, my dread lord—so must I call you now.

PRINCE EDWARD

Ay, brother, to our grief, as it is yours.
Too late he died that might have kept that title,
Which by his death hath lost much majesty.

RICHARD

How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

YORK

I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

RICHARD

What, would you have my weapon, little lord?

YORK

I would, that I might thank you as you call me.

RICHARD

How?

YORK

Little.

PRINCE EDWARD

My Lord of York will still be cross in talk.
Uncle, your grace knows how to bear with him.

YORK

You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me.
Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me.
Because that I am little, like an ape,
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

RICHARD

My lord, will't please you pass along?
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham
Will to your mother to entreat of her
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.

YORK

What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

PRINCE EDWARD

My lord protector needs will have it so.

YORK

I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.

RICHARD

Why, what should you fear?

YORK

Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost.
My grandam told me he was murdered there.

PRINCE EDWARD

I fear no uncles dead.

RICHARD

Nor none that live, I hope.

PRINCE EDWARD

An if they live, I hope I need not fear.
But come, my lord. With a heavy heart,
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.

[Fanfare]

A Sennet. Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM

Think you, my lord, this little prating York
Was not incensed by his subtle mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?

RICHARD

No doubt, no doubt. O, 'tis a perilous boy.
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.

BUCKINGHAM

Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.

CATESBY enters

What think'st thou? Is it not an easy matter
To make William, Lord Hastings, of our mind,
For the instalment of this noble Duke
In the seat royal of this famous isle?

CATESBY

He for his father's sake so loves the Prince
That he will not be won to aught against him.

BUCKINGHAM

What think'st thou then of Stanley? Will not he?

CATESBY

He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

BUCKINGHAM

Well, then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,
And as it were far off, sound thou Lord Hastings,
How doth he stand affected to our purpose
And summon him to-morrow to the Tower
To sit about the coronation.

RICHARD

Commend me to Lord Hastings. Tell him, Catesby,
His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries
Tomorrow are let blood at Pomfret Castle.

CATESBY

My good lords both, with all the heed I can.

Exit CATESBY

BUCKINGHAM

Now, my lord, what shall we do, if we perceive
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

RICHARD

Chop off his head; something we will determine.
And look when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford and the moveables
Whereof the king my brother stood possessed.

BUCKINGHAM

I'll claim that promise at your grace's hand.

RICHARD

And look to have it yielded with all kindness.
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
We may digest our complots in some form.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE II. Before Lord Hastings' house.

Enter CATESBY
Enter HASTINGS

CATESBY

Many good morrows to my noble lord!

HASTINGS

Good morrow, Catesby. You are early stirring.
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

CATESBY

It is a reeling world indeed, my lord,
And I believe twill never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm.

HASTINGS

How? Wear the garland? Dost thou mean the crown?

CATESBY

Ay, my good lord.

HASTINGS

I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders
Ere I will see the crown so foul misplaced.
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

CATESBY

Ay, on my life, and hopes to find you forward
Upon his party for the gain thereof;
And thereupon he sends you this good news,
That this same very day your enemies,
The kindred of the Queen, must die at Pomfret.

HASTINGS

Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,
Because they have been still my adversaries.
But that I'll give my voice on Richard's side
To bar my master's heirs in true descent,
God knows I will not do it, to the death.

CATESBY

God keep your lordship in that gracious mind.

HASTINGS

What, shall we toward the Tower? The day is spent.

CATESBY

Come, my lord, let's away.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE III. Pomfret Castle.

RIVERS

Sir Richard Ratcliffe, let me tell thee this:
Today shalt thou behold a subject die
For truth, for duty and for loyalty.

GREY

God bless the Prince from all the pack of you.
A knot you are of damned bloodsuckers.

RATCLIFFE

Dispatch. The limit of your lives is out.

[Sound]

RATCLIFFE puts RIVERS and GREY to death

SCENE IV. The Tower of London.

Enter BUCKINGHAM, STANLEY, HASTINGS, the BISHOP OF ELY, CATESBY

HASTINGS

Now noble peers, the cause why we are met
Is, to determine of the coronation.
In God's name, speak: when is the royal day?

BUCKINGHAM

Is all things ready for that royal time?

STANLEY

It is, and wants but nomination.

BISHOP OF ELY

Tomorrow, then, I judge a happy day.

BUCKINGHAM

Who knows the Lord Protector's mind herein?
Who is most inward with the noble Duke?

BISHOP OF ELY

Your grace, we think, should soonest know his mind.

BUCKINGHAM

We know each other's faces; for our hearts,
He knows no more of mine than I of yours,
Or I of his, my lord, than you of mine.
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

HASTINGS

I thank his grace, I know he loves me well;
But for his purpose in the coronation,
I have not sounded him, nor he delivered
His gracious pleasure any way therein.
But you, my honourable lords, may name the time,
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice,
Which I presume he'll take in gentle part.

[Music]

Enter RICHARD

BISHOP OF ELY

Now in good time, here comes the duke himself.

RICHARD

My noble lords and cousins all, good morrow.
I have been long a sleeper, but I trust
My absence doth neglect no great design
Which by my presence might have been concluded.

BUCKINGHAM

Had not you come upon your cue, my lord
William, Lord Hastings had pronounced your part.

RICHARD

Than my Lord Hastings, no man might be bolder;
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.

My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
I do beseech you, send for some of them.

BISHOP OF ELY

Marry and will, my lord, with all my heart.
Exit

RICHARD

Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.
Drawing him aside
Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot
As he will lose his head ere give consent
His master's child, as worshipfully he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

BUCKINGHAM

Withdraw yourself awhile. I'll follow you.

Exit RICHARD, BUCKINGHAM following

Re-enter BISHOP OF ELY

BISHOP OF ELY

Where is my lord the Duke of Gloucester?
I have sent for these strawberries.

HASTINGS

His grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he,
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

STANLEY

What of his heart perceive you in his face
By any livelihood he showed to-day?

HASTINGS

Marry, that with no man here he is offended,
For were he, he had shown it in his looks.

Re-enter RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM

RICHARD

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevailed
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

HASTINGS

The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,
Makes me most forward in this princely presence
To doom th'offenders, whosoe'er they be.

RICHARD

Then be your eyes the witness of their evil.
See how I am bewitched! Behold, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling withered up;
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
That by her witchcraft thus has marked me.

HASTINGS

If she has done this deed, my noble lord--

RICHARD

If? Thou protector of this damned strumpet,
Talk'st thou to me of 'ifs'? Thou art a traitor.
Off with his head! Now by Saint Paul I swear
I will not dine until I see the same.
Catesby, look that it be done:
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

Exeunt all but HASTINGS and CATESBY

HASTINGS

Woe, woe for England, not a whit for me,
For I, too fond, might have prevented this.
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head.

CATESBY

Come, come, dispatch. The duke would be at dinner.
Make a short shrift. He longs to see your head.

HASTINGS

Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head.
They smile at me who shortly shall be dead.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE V. The Tower-walls.

Enter RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM

RICHARD

Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

BUCKINGHAM

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian.

Enter the Lord Mayor

BUCKINGHAM

Lord Mayor--

RICHARD

Look to the drawbridge there!

[Drums]

BUCKINGHAM
Hark, a drum!

RICHARD
O'erlook the walls.

BUCKINGHAM
Lord mayor, the reason we have sent--

RICHARD
Look back! Defend thee! Here are enemies.

BUCKINGHAM
God and our innocency defend and guard us.

RICHARD
Be patient, they are friends, Ratcliff and Catesby.

Enter CATESBY and RATCLIFF, with HASTINGS' head

CATESBY
Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.

RICHARD
So dear I loved the man that I must weep.
I took him for the plainest harmless creature
That breathed upon this earth a Christian.

BUCKINGHAM
Would you imagine, or almost believe,
Were't not that by great preservation
We live to tell it, the subtle traitor
This day had plotted in the council-house
To murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester?

Lord Mayor
Had he done so? Then he deserved his death,
And you my good lords, both have well proceeded
To warn false traitors from the like attempts.
And do not doubt, right noble princes both,
But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens
With all your just proceedings in this cause.

RICHARD
And to that end we wished your lord-ship here,
To avoid the carping censures of the world.

BUCKINGHAM

And so, my good lord mayor, we bid farewell.

Exit Lord Mayor

RICHARD

Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.
The mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post.
There, at your meetest vantage of the time,
Infer the bastardy of Edward's children.
Moreover, urge his hateful luxury
And bestial appetite in change of lust.

BUCKINGHAM

Fear not, my lord, I'll play the orator
As if the golden fee for which I plead
Were for myself.

Exit BUCKINGHAM, then re-enter

RICHARD

How now, how now, what say the citizens?

BUCKINGHAM

The citizens are mum, say not a word.

RICHARD

Touched you the bastardy of Edward's children?

BUCKINGHAM

I did;
Indeed, left nothing fitting for your purpose
Untouched or slightly handled in discourse.
And when mine oratory grew to an end
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

RICHARD

And did they so?

BUCKINGHAM

No, so God help me, they spake not a word.

RICHARD

What tongueless blocks were they! Would not they speak?

BUCKINGHAM

No, by my troth, my lord.

RICHARD

Will not the Mayor then, and his brethren, come?

BUCKINGHAM

The Mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear.
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand;
And be not easily won to our requests;
Play the maid's part: still answer nay, and take it.

RICHARD

I go, and if you plead as well for them
As I can say nay to thee for myself,
No doubt well bring it to a happy issue.

BUCKINGHAM

Go, go up to the leads, the lord mayor knocks.

Exit RICHARD with RATCLIFFE and CATESBY
Enter the Lord Mayor and Citizens

Welcome my lord; I dance attendance here.
I think the Duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter CATESBY

Now, Catesby, what says your lord to my request?

CATESBY

He doth entreat your grace, my noble lord,
To visit him tomorrow, or next day.
He is within, with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation.

BUCKINGHAM

Return, good Catesby, to the gracious Duke;
Tell him myself, the Mayor and citizens
Are come to have some conference with his grace.

CATESBY

I'll signify so much unto him straight.
Exit

BUCKINGHAM

Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward.
He is not lolling on a lewd love-bed,
But on his knees at meditation.
Happy were England, would this virtuous prince
Take on his grace the sovereignty thereof.
But sure I fear we shall not win him to it.

Lord Mayor

Marry, God defend his grace should say us nay.

BUCKINGHAM

I fear he will. Here Catesby comes again.

Re-enter CATESBY

Now, Catesby, what says his grace?

CATESBY

He wonders to what end you have assembled
Such troops of citizens to come to him.

BUCKINGHAM

By heaven, we come to him in perfect love;
And so once more return and tell his grace.

Exit CATESBY

When holy and devout religious men
Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them thence,
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

[Music]

Enter RICHARD aloft, between CATESBY and RATCLIFFE dressed as priests

Lord Mayor

See, where he stands between two clergymen!

BUCKINGHAM

Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,
Lend favourable ears to our requests,
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

RICHARD

My lord, there needs no such apology.
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Deferred the visitation of my friends.
But leaving this, what is your grace's pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM

Know then, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestic,
To the corruption of a blemished stock;
Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land,
Your right of birth, your empery, your own.

RICHARD

Your love deserves my thanks, but my desert
Unmeritable shuns your high request.
But, God be thanked, there is no need of me.
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit.

BUCKINGHAM

You say that Edward is your brother's son;
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife.
Then, good my lord, take to your royal self
This proffered benefit of dignity.

Lord Mayor

Do, good my lord. Your citizens entreat you.

RICHARD

Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?

BUCKINGHAM

If you refuse it, as in love and zeal
Loath to depose the child, your brother's son—
As well we know your tenderness of heart—
Yet know, whe'er you accept our suit or no,
Your brother's son shall never reign our king,
But we will plant some other in the throne,
To the disgrace and downfall of your house.
Come, citizens. Zounds, I'll entreat no more.

RICHARD

O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

Exit BUCKINGHAM with the Citizens

Lord Mayor

Call them again, sweet prince; accept their suit.
If you deny them, all the land will rue it.

RICHARD

Will you enforce me to a world of cares?
Call them again. I am not made of stone.

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM and the rest

Cousin of Buckingham, and sage, grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
I must have patience to endure the load;
For God doth know, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire of this.

Lord Mayor

God bless your grace; we see it, and will say it.

RICHARD

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

BUCKINGHAM

Then I salute you with this royal title:
Long live King Richard, England's worthy king!

Lord Mayor & Citizens

Long live King Richard, England's worthy king!

Exeunt

[Music]

ACT IV

SCENE I. Before the Tower.

Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF YORK, and DORSET; on the other, ANNE, Duchess of Gloucester

DUCHESS OF YORK

Daughter, well met.

LADY ANNE

God give your graces both
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.

Enter BRAKENBURY

QUEEN ELIZABETH

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?

BRAKENBURY

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The King? Who's that?

BRAKENBURY

I mean the Lord Protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Lord protect him from that kingly title.
I am their mother. Who shall bar me from them?

BRAKENBURY

I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.
Exit

Enter LORD STANLEY

STANLEY

To LADY ANNE

Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned 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.

LADY ANNE

Despiteful tidings. O, unpleasing news.

DORSET

Be of good cheer, mother. How fares your grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O Dorset, speak not to me. Get thee gone.
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 curse,
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.

STANLEY

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
[To ANNE] Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

LADY ANNE

And I in all unwillingness will go.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Go, go, poor soul; I envy not thy glory.

LADY ANNE

O when, I say, I looked on Richard's face,
This was my wish: 'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed
For making me, so young, so old a widow;
And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife, if any be so mad,
More miserable by the life of thee
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 my own soul's curse,
Which hitherto hath held mine eyes from rest;
For never yet one hour in his bed
Have I enjoyed the golden dew of sleep.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick,
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

LADY ANNE

No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.

DUCHESS OF YORK

To DORSET

Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee.

To LADY ANNE

Go thou to Richard, and good angels tend thee.

To QUEEN ELIZABETH

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee.

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.

Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes

Whom envy hath immured within your walls;

Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow

For tender princes, use my babies well.

So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE II. London. The palace.

Sennet. Enter KING RICHARD III, in pomp, crowned; BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, RATCLIFFE

KING RICHARD III

Stand all apart. Cousin of Buckingham.

BUCKINGHAM

My gracious sovereign.

KING RICHARD III

Give me thy hand.

Here he ascendeth his throne

Thus high, by thy advice

And thy assistance, is King Richard seated.

But shall we wear these glories for a day?

Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

BUCKINGHAM

Still live they and forever may they last!

KING RICHARD III

Ah Buckingham, now do I play the touch

To try if thou be current gold indeed:

Young Edward lives; think now what I would speak.

BUCKINGHAM

Say on, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD III

Why, Buckingham, I say I would be king.

BUCKINGHAM

Why so you are, my thrice-renowned liege.

KING RICHARD III

Ha! Am I king? 'Tis so—but Edward lives.

BUCKINGHAM

True, noble prince.

KING RICHARD III

O bitter consequence
That Edward still should live 'true noble prince'!
Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull.
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead.
What sayest thou? Speak suddenly. Be brief.

BUCKINGHAM

Your grace may do your pleasure.

KING RICHARD III

Tut, tut, thou art all ice; thy kindness freezes.
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCKINGHAM

Give me some breath, some little pause, my lord
Before I positively speak in this.
I will resolve you herein presently.
Exit

CATESBY

[Aside to Ratcliffe]

The King is angry. See, he gnaws his lip.

KING RICHARD III

Ratcliffe!

RATCLIFFE

My lord?

KING RICHARD III

Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold
Would tempt unto a close exploit of death?

RATCLIFFE

I know a discontented gentleman
Whose humble means match not his haughty spirit.
Gold were as good as twenty orators,
And will, no doubt, tempt him to anything.

KING RICHARD III

What is his name?

RATCLIFFE

His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

KING RICHARD III

I partly know the man. Go, call him hither.

Exit RATCLIFFE

The deep-revolving witty Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsel.

Enter STANLEY

How now, Lord Stanley, what's the news?

STANLEY

The Marquess Dorset, as I hear, is fled
To Richmond, in the parts where he abides.

Stands apart

KING RICHARD III

Come hither, Catesby. Rumour it abroad
That Anne my queen is sick and like to die.

Exit CATESBY

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her—
Uncertain way of gain. But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin.
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Enter TYRREL

Is thy name Tyrrel?

TYRREL

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

KING RICHARD III

Art thou, indeed?

TYRREL

Prove me, my gracious lord.

KING RICHARD III

Dar'st thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

TYRREL

Please you. But I had rather kill two enemies.

KING RICHARD III

Why, then thou hast it. Two deep enemies.
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

TYRREL

Let me have open means to come to them,
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

KING RICHARD III

Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come hither, Tyrrel.
Go by this token. Rise, and lend thine ear:

Whispers

There is no more but so. Say it is done,
And I will love thee and prefer thee for it.

TYRREL

I will dispatch it straight.
Exit

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM

My Lord, I have considered in my mind
The late request that you did sound me in.

KING RICHARD III

Well, let that rest. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

BUCKINGHAM

I hear the news, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

Stanley, he is your wife's son. Well, look unto it.

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise,
Th'earldom of Hereford and the moveables
Which you have promised I shall possess.

KING RICHARD III

Stanley, look to your wife; if she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

BUCKINGHAM

What says your highness to my just request?
My Lord!

KING RICHARD III

Ay, what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM

I am thus bold to put your grace in mind
Of what you promised me.

KING RICHARD III

Well, but what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM

Upon the stroke of ten.

KING RICHARD III

Well, let it strike.

BUCKINGHAM

Why let it strike?

KING RICHARD III

Because that, like a jack, thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.
I am not in the giving vein today.

BUCKINGHAM

May it please you to resolve me in my suit?

KING RICHARD III

Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM

And is it thus? Repays he my deep service
With such contempt? Made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings and be gone
To Brecknock, while my fearful head is on.
Exit

SCENE III. The same.

Enter TYRREL

[Music]

TYRREL

The tyrannous and bloody act is done,
The most arch deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
O, thus lay the gentle babes,
Thus, thus, girdling one another
Within their alabaster innocent arms.
A book of prayers on their pillow lay,
Which once almost changed my mind;
But, O, the Devil—we smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature,
That from the prime creation e'er she framed.

[Music]

Enter KING RICHARD III

All health, my sovereign liege.

KING RICHARD III

Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

TYRREL

If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then,
For it is done, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

But didst thou see them dead?

TYRREL

I did, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

TYRREL

The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them,
But where, to say the truth, I do not know.

KING RICHARD III

Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after-supper,
And thou shalt tell the process of their death.
Farewell till then.

TYRREL

I humbly take my leave.

Exit TYRREL

KING RICHARD III

The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
And, by that knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,
To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer.

Enter CATESBY

CATESBY

My lord.

KING RICHARD III

Good or bad news, that thou com'st in so bluntly?

CATESBY

Bad news, my lord. Ely is fled to Richmond,
And Buckingham, backed with the hardy Welshmen,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

KING RICHARD III

Go muster men. My counsel is my shield.
We must be brief when traitors brave the field.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Before the palace.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET

[Music]

QUEEN MARGARET

Here in these confines slyly have I lurked,
To watch the waning of mine enemies.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret. Who comes here?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS OF YORK

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, my poor princes! Ah, my tender babes,
Hover about me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth,
Sitting down
Unlawfully made drunk with innocent blood.

QUEEN MARGARET

[Comes forward]

If ancient sorrow be most reverend,
Give mine the benefit of seniory.
I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
I had a Henry, till a Richard killed him.
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard killed him.
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him.
Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard killed him.
From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death.
Cancel his bond of life, dear God I pray,
That I may live to say, 'The dog is dead.'

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-backed toad.

QUEEN MARGARET

I called thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I called thee then, poor shadow, painted queen.
Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers?
Where be thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy?
Who sues, and kneels, and says, 'God save the Queen'?
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance.
These English woes will make me smile in France.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O thou well skilled in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies.

QUEEN MARGARET

Forbear to sleep the night, and fast the day;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were sweeter than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is.
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My words are dull. O, quicken them with thine.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine.
Exit

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Let them have scope, though what they will impart
Help nothing else, yet do they ease the heart.

DUCHESS OF YORK

If so, then be not tongue-tied. Go with me,
And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
My damned son, which thy two sweet sons smothered.

[Flourish]

Enter KING RICHARD III and train

KING RICHARD III

Who intercepts my expedition?

DUCHESS OF YORK

O, she that might have intercepted thee,
By strangling thee in her accursed womb,
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Tell me, thou villain-slave, where are my children?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Where is the gentle Rivers, Hastings, Grey?

KING RICHARD III

Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
Rail on the Lord's anointed. Strike, I say!

[Flourish]

Flourish. Alarums

Either be patient, and entreat me fair,
Or with the clamorous report of war
Thus will I drown your exclamations.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Thou cam'st on earth to make the earth my hell.

KING RICHARD III

If I be so disgracious in your sight,
Let me march on, and not offend your grace.
You speak too bitterly.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Hear me a word;
For I shall never speak to thee again.

KING RICHARD III

So.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Therefore take with thee my most grievous curse.
Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.
Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.
Exit

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse
Abides in me. I say amen to all.

KING RICHARD III

Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I have no more sons of the royal blood
For thee to slaughter. For my daughters, Richard,
They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens,
And therefore level not to hit their lives.

KING RICHARD III

You have a daughter called Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And must she die for this? O, let her live.
So she may live unscarred of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

KING RICHARD III

Wrong not her birth. She is a royal princess.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To save her life, I'll say she is not so.

KING RICHARD III

Her life is safest only in her birth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And only in that safety died her brothers.

KING RICHARD III

Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise
And dangerous success of bloody wars,
As I intend more good to you and yours
Than ever you or yours were by me wronged.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,
Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

KING RICHARD III

Even all I have—ay, and myself and all.
Then know that from my soul I love thy daughter
And do intend to make her queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Well then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?

KING RICHARD III

Even he that makes her queen. Who should be else?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What, thou?

KING RICHARD III

Even so. How think you of it?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How canst thou woo her?

KING RICHARD III

That would I learn of you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding-hearts; thereon engrave
'Edward' and 'York'. Then haply she will weep.
If this inducement move her not to love,
Send her a letter of thy noble deeds:
Tell her thou mad'st away her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers, ay, and for her sake
Mad'st quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

KING RICHARD III

You mock me, madam. This is not the way
To win your daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

There is no other way.

KING RICHARD III

Look, what is done cannot be now amended.
Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes.
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, I'll give it to your daughter.
If I have killed the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase, I will beget
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter.
Go then, my mother; to thy daughter go.
Put in her tender heart th'aspiring flame
Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the princess
With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys;
And when this arm of mine hath chastised
The petty rebel, dull-brained Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What were I best to say? Her father's brother
Would be her lord? Or shall I say her uncle?
Or he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee?

KING RICHARD III

Say, I will love her everlastingly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

KING RICHARD III

Sweetly in force, unto her fair life's end.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But how long fairly shall her sweet life last?

KING RICHARD III

As long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

As long as hell and Richard likes of it.

KING RICHARD III

I swear--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By nothing, for this is no oath.
If something thou wouldst swear to be believed,
Swear then by something that thou hast not wronged.

KING RICHARD III

Then, by myself--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thyself thyself misusest.

KING RICHARD III
Now, by the world--

QUEEN ELIZABETH
'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

KING RICHARD III
Why then, by God.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
God's wrong is most of all.
What canst thou swear by now?

KING RICHARD III
The time to come.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast.
The children live whose fathers thou hast slaughtered;
The parents live whose children thou hast butchered.
Swear not by time to come, for that thou hast
Misused ere used, by times ill-used o'erpast.

KING RICHARD III
Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours,
Be opposite all planets of good luck
To my proceeding, if with dear heart's love,
I tender not thy beauteous, princely daughter.
In her consists my happiness and thine;
Without her, follows to myself and thee,
Herself, the land and many a Christian soul,
Death, desolation, ruin and decay.
It cannot be avoided but by this;
It will not be avoided but by this.
Therefore, dear mother,--I must call you so--
Be the attorney of my love to her:
Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
Not my deserts, but what I will deserve.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

KING RICHARD III
Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Yet thou didst kill my children.

KING RICHARD III
But in your daughter's womb I bury them.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

KING RICHARD III

And be a happy mother by the deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I go. Write to me very shortly,
And you shall understand from me her mind.

KING RICHARD III

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

Exit QUEEN ELIZABETH

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman.

Enter RATCLIFF; CATESBY following

How now, what news?

RATCLIFF

My gracious sovereign, on the western coast
Rideth a puissant navy. To our shores
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,
Unarmed and unresolved to beat them back.
'Tis thought that Richmond is their admiral,
And there they hull, expecting but the aid
Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.

KING RICHARD III

Some light-foot friend post to the Duke of Norfolk:
Ratcliff, thyself—or Catesby. Where is he?

CATESBY

Here, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

Catesby, fly to the Duke.

To RATCLIFF

Post thou to Salisbury
When thou comest thither--

To CATESBY

Dull, unmindful villain,
Why stay'st thou here, and go'st not to the Duke?

CATESBY

First, mighty liege, tell me your highness' pleasure,
What from your grace I shall deliver to him.

KING RICHARD III

O, true, good Catesby. Bid him levy straight
The greatest strength and power he can make
And meet me suddenly at Salisbury.

CATESBY

I go.
Exit

RATCLIFF

What, may it please you, shall I do at Salisbury?

KING RICHARD III

Why, what wouldst thou do there before I go?

RATCLIFF

Your highness told me I should post before.

KING RICHARD III

My mind is changed.

Enter STANLEY

Stanley, what news with you?

STANLEY

Richmond is on the seas.

KING RICHARD III

There let him sink, and be the seas on him.
White-livered runagate. What doth he there?

STANLEY

Stirred up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, here to claim the crown.

KING RICHARD III

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?
Is the king dead? The empire unpossessed?
Thou wilt revolt and fly to him, I fear.

STANLEY

You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful;
I never was, nor never will be, false.

KING RICHARD III

Go then, and muster men, but leave behind
Your son George Stanley. Look your heart be firm,
Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

STANLEY

So deal with him as I prove true to you.
Exit

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,
Sir Edward Courtney and the haughty prelate

[Music]

Bishop of Exeter, his elder brother,
With many more confederates are in arms.

Enter another Messenger

Second Messenger

In Kent, my liege, the Guildfords are in arms
And every hour more competitors
Flock to the rebels, and still their power grows strong.

Enter another Messenger

Third Messenger

My lord, the army of great Buckingham--

KING RICHARD III

Out on you, owls! Nothing but songs of death.
He striketh him
There, take thou that, till thou bring better news.

Third Messenger

The news I have to tell your majesty
Is that by sudden floods and fall of waters
Buckingham's army is dispersed and scattered,
And he himself wandered away alone,
No man knows whither.

KING RICHARD III

I cry thee mercy.
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.

Re-enter CATESBY

CATESBY

My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken.
That is the best news. That the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford
Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

KING RICHARD III

Away towards Salisbury! While we reason here,
A royal battle might be won and lost.
Someone take order Buckingham be brought
To Salisbury. The rest march on with me.

Flourish. Exeunt

[Music]

ACT V

SCENE I. Salisbury. An open place.

Enter BRAKENBURY, with BUCKINGHAM, led to execution

[Music]

BUCKINGHAM

Will not King Richard let me speak with him?

BRAKENBURY

No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

BUCKINGHAM

This is All Souls' Day, fellow, is it not?

BRAKENBURY

It is.

BUCKINGHAM

Why then, All Souls' Day is my body's doomsday.
This is the day that, in King Edward's time,
I wished might fall on me when I was found
False to his children or his wife's allies.
This is the day wherein I wished to fall
By the false faith of him whom I trusted most.
Thus Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck:
'When he,' quoth she, 'shall split thy heart with sorrow,
Remember Margaret was a prophetess.'
Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame.
Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The camp near Tamworth.

Enter RICHMOND and his followers

[Fanfare]

RICHMOND

Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we march'd on without impediment;
And here receive we from our father Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
He says the Queen hath heartily consented
I should espouse Elizabeth her daughter.
In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

Follower 1

Every man's conscience is a thousand men
To fight against this guilty homicide.

Follower 2

I doubt not but his friends will turn to us.

Follower 3

He hath no friends but who are friends for fear,
Which in his dearest need will shrink from him.

RICHMOND

All for our vantage. Then in God's name, march.
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Bosworth Field.

Enter KING RICHARD III in arms, with RATCLIFFE and CATESBY

[Music]

KING RICHARD III

Up with my tent. Here will I lie tonight,
But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.
Who hath descried the number of the traitors?

RATCLIFFE

Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

KING RICHARD III

Why, our battalia trebles that account.
Besides, the King's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse faction want.
Let's lack no discipline, make no delay,
For lords, tomorrow is a busy day.

Exeunt

Enter, on the other side of the field, RICHMOND and DORSET

RICHMOND

Where is Lord Stanley quartered, do you know?

DORSET

His regiment lies half a mile at least
South from the mighty power of the king.

RICHMOND

If without peril it be possible,
Dorset, make some good means to speak with him,
And give him from me this most needful note.

DORSET

Upon my life, my lord, I'll undertake it,
And so God give you quiet rest tonight.
Exit

Richmond withdraws into the tent

Enter, to his tent, KING RICHARD III, RATCLIFF, CATESBY

KING RICHARD III

What is't o'clock?

CATESBY

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

KING RICHARD III

I will not sup to-night. Give me some ink and paper.
What, is my armour laid into my tent?

CATESBY

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

KING RICHARD III

Catesby.

CATESBY

My lord.

KING RICHARD III

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.

Exit CATESBY

Ratcliff.

RATCLIFF

My lord.

KING RICHARD III

Is ink and paper ready?

RATCLIFF

It is, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

Bid my guard watch. Leave me.
Ratcliff, about the mid of night come to my tent
And help to arm me. Leave me, I say.

Exeunt RATCLIFF

Enter RICHMOND

RICHMOND

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye,
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
The usurping helmets of our adversaries.
To Thee I do commend my watchful soul,
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still!

Sleeps

[Music]

Enter the Ghost of CLARENCE

Ghost of CLARENCE

[To KING RICHARD III]

Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
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,
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee.
Good angels guard thy battle. Live and flourish.

Enter the Ghosts of RIVERS and GRAY

Ghost of RIVERS

[To KING RICHARD III]

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

Ghost of GREY

[To KING RICHARD III]

Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair.

Ghosts of RIVERS and GREY

[To RICHMOND]

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

Enter the Ghost of HASTINGS

Ghost of HASTINGS

[To KING RICHARD III]

Think on Lord Hastings. Despair and die
To RICHMOND
Arm, fight, and conquer for fair England's sake.

Enter the Ghosts of the two young Princes

Ghosts of young Princes

[To KING RICHARD III]

Dream on thy cousins smother'd in the Tower.
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die.
To RICHMOND
Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

Enter the Ghost of LADY ANNE

Ghost of LADY ANNE

[To KING RICHARD III]

Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne, thy wife,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations.

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.
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

Enter the Ghost of BUCKINGHAM

Ghost of BUCKINGHAM

[To KING RICHARD III]

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.

To RICHMOND

God and good angels fight on Richmond's side,
And Richard fall in height of all his pride.

The Ghosts vanish

KING RICHARD III starts out of his dream

KING RICHARD III

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

O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
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. What, myself upon myself?

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.

Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues.

I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
And if I die, no soul will pity me.

Enter RATCLIFF

RATCLIFF

My lord!

KING RICHARD III

'Zounds, who is there?

RATCLIFF

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

KING RICHARD III

O Ratcliff, I have dreamed a fearful dream!
What think'st thou, will our friends prove all true?

RATCLIFF

No doubt, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear.

RATCLIFF

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

KING RICHARD III

By the Apostle Paul, shadows tonight
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.

Exeunt

Enter DORSET to RICHMOND, sitting in his tent

DORSET

How have you slept, my lord?

RICHMOND

The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams
That ever entered in a drowsy head.
How far into the morning is it?

DORSET

Upon the stroke of four.

RICHMOND

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

His oration to his soldiers

More than I have said, loving countrymen,
The leisure and enforcement of the time
Forbids to dwell upon: yet remember this,
God and our good cause fight upon our side;
The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,
Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces;
Richard except, those whom we fight against
Had rather have us win than him they follow:
For what is he they follow? truly, gentlemen,
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,

[Music]

You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;
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,
Your children's children quit 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 my bold attempt
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
The least of you shall share his part thereof.
Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully;
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!

[Flourish]

Exeunt

[Music]

Re-enter KING RICHARD, CATESBY

KING RICHARD III

Who saw the sun today?

CATESBY

Not I, my lord.

KING RICHARD III

The sun will not be seen to-day.
The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.
Not shine today? Why, what is that to me
More than to Richmond? For the selfsame heaven
That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.
Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power.

Exit CATESBY

His oration to his Army

Remember whom you are to cope withal,
A scum of Bretons and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'eremployed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters?
Drum afar off

[Drums]

Hark, I hear their drum.
Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge.
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls.
Conscience is but a word that cowards use.
March on, join bravely, let us to it pell-mell,
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

Exeunt

[Music]

SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

Alarum: excursions
Enter KING RICHARD III

KING RICHARD III

A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!

[Music]

Enter RICHMOND; they fight. KING RICHARD III is slain. Retreat and flourish.
Re-enter RICHMOND, STANLEY bearing the crown, with divers other Lords

RICHMOND

God and your arms be praised, victorious friends,
The day is ours; the bloody dog is dead.

STANLEY

Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee.
Lo, here this long-usurped royalty
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch
Have I plucked off to grace thy brows withal.
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.

RICHMOND

Great God of heaven, say Amen to all.
We will unite the white rose and the red.
O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
The true succeeders of each royal house,
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together.
Now civil wounds are stopped; peace lives again.
That she may long live here, God say amen.

[Music]

Exeunt