

The Life and Death of Richard the Third

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SCENE II. Before Lord Hastings' house.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

What, ho! my lord!

HASTINGS

[Within] Who knocks at the door?

Messenger

A messenger from the Lord Stanley.

Enter HASTINGS

HASTINGS

What is't o'clock?

Messenger

Upon the stroke of four.

HASTINGS

Cannot thy master sleep these tedious nights?

Messenger

So it should seem by that I have to say.
First, he commends him to your noble lordship.

HASTINGS

And then?

Messenger

And then he sends you word
He dreamt to-night the boar had razed his helm:
Besides, he says there are two councils held;
And that may be determined at the one
which may make you and him to rue at the other.
Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,

If presently you will take horse with him,
And with all speed post with him toward the north,
To shun the danger that his soul divines.

HASTINGS

Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;
Bid him not fear the separated councils
His honour and myself are at the one,
And at the other is my servant Catesby
Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us
Whereof I shall not have intelligence.
Tell him his fears are shallow, wanting instance:
And for his dreams, I wonder he is so fond
To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers
To fly the boar before the boar pursues,
Were to incense the boar to follow us
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase.
Go, bid thy master rise and come to me
And we will both together to the Tower,
Where, he shall see, the boar will use us kindly.

Messenger

My gracious lord, I'll tell him what you say.

Exit

Enter CATESBY

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 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 mine enemies:
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

But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,
That they who brought me in my master's hate
I live to look upon their tragedy.
I tell thee, Catesby--

CATESBY

What, my lord?

HASTINGS

Ere a fortnight make me elder,
I'll send some packing that yet think not on it.

CATESBY

'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
When men are unprepared and look not for it.

HASTINGS

O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out
With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey: and so 'twill do
With some men else, who think themselves as safe
As thou and I; who, as thou know'st, are dear

To princely Richard and to Buckingham.

CATESBY

The princes both make high account of you;

Aside

For they account his head upon the bridge.

HASTINGS

I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

Enter STANLEY

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?
Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

STANLEY

My lord, good morrow; good morrow, Catesby:
You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,
I do not like these several councils, I.

HASTINGS

My lord,
I hold my life as dear as you do yours;
And never in my life, I do protest,
Was it more precious to me than 'tis now:
Think you, but that I know our state secure,
I would be so triumphant as I am?

STANLEY

The lords at Pomfret, when they rode from London,
Were jocund, and supposed their state was sure,
And they indeed had no cause to mistrust;
But yet, you see how soon the day o'ercast.
This sudden stag of rancour I misdoubt:
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward!
What, shall we toward the Tower? the day is spent.

HASTINGS

Come, come, have with you. Wot you what, my lord?
To-day the lords you talk of are beheaded.

LORD STANLEY

They, for their truth, might better wear their heads
Than some that have accused them wear their hats.

But come, my lord, let us away.

Enter a Pursuivant

HASTINGS

Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.

Exeunt STANLEY and CATESBY

How now, sirrah! how goes the world with thee?

Pursuivant

The better that your lordship please to ask.

HASTINGS

I tell thee, man, 'tis better with me now
Than when I met thee last where now we meet:
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower,
By the suggestion of the queen's allies;
But now, I tell thee--keep it to thyself--
This day those enemies are put to death,
And I in better state than e'er I was.

Pursuivant

God hold it, to your honour's good content!

HASTINGS

Gramercy, fellow: there, drink that for me.

Throws him his purse

Pursuivant

God save your lordship!

Exit

Enter a Priest

Priest

Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your honour.

HASTINGS

I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart.
I am in your debt for your last exercise;
Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.

He whispers in his ear

Enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCKINGHAM

What, talking with a priest, lord chamberlain?
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;
Your honour hath no shriving work in hand.

HASTINGS

Good faith, and when I met this holy man,
Those men you talk of came into my mind.
What, go you toward the Tower?

BUCKINGHAM

I do, my lord; but long I shall not stay
I shall return before your lordship thence.

HASTINGS

'Tis like enough, for I stay dinner there.

BUCKINGHAM

[Aside] And supper too, although thou know'st it not.
Come, will you go?

HASTINGS

I'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

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