

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

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## SCENE I. Before the Tower.

*Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF YORK, and DORSET; on the other, ANNE, Duchess of Gloucester, leading Lady Margaret Plantagenet, CLARENCE's young Daughter*

### DUCHESS OF YORK

Who meets us here? my niece Plantagenet  
Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?  
Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,  
On pure heart's love to greet the tender princes.  
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.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

Kind sister, thanks: we'll enter all together.

*Enter BRAKENBURY*

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 straitly charged the contrary.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

The king! why, who's that?

## **BRAKENBURY**

I cry you mercy: I mean the lord protector.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!  
Hath he set bounds betwixt their love and me?  
I am their mother; who should keep me from them?

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

I am their fathers mother; I will see them.

## **LADY ANNE**

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:  
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame  
And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

## **BRAKENBURY**

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

*Exit*

*Enter LORD STANLEY*

## **LORD STANLEY**

Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,  
And I'll salute your grace of York as mother,  
And reverend looker on, of two fair queens.

*To LADY ANNE*

Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,  
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O, cut my lace in sunder, that my pent heart  
May have some scope to beat, or else I swoon  
With this dead-killing news!

## **LADY ANNE**

Despiteful tidings! O displeasing news!

## **DORSET**

Be of good cheer: mother, how fares your grace?

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee hence!  
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;  
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.  
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 slaughter-house,  
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.

## LORD STANLEY

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.  
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;  
You shall have letters from me to my son  
To meet you on the way, and welcome you.  
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

## DUCHESS OF YORK

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!  
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!  
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,  
Whose unavoyded eye is murderous.

## LORD STANLEY

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

## LADY ANNE

And I in all unwillingness will go.  
I would to God that the inclusive verge  
Of golden metal that must round my brow  
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!  
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,  
And die, ere men can say, God save the queen!

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory  
To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.

## LADY ANNE

No! why? When he that is my husband now  
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse,  
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands  
Which issued from my other angel husband  
And that dead saint which then I weeping follow'd;

O, when, I say, I look'd 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--  
As miserable by the life of thee  
As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!  
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,  
Even in so short a space, my woman's heart  
Grossly grew captive to his honey words  
And proved the subject of my own soul's curse,  
Which ever since hath kept my eyes from rest;  
For never yet one hour in his bed  
Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,  
But have been waked by his timorous dreams.  
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.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Farewell, thou woful welcomer of glory!

### **LADY ANNE**

Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

### **DUCHESS OF YORK**

[To DORSET]  
Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

*To LADY ANNE*

Go thou to Richard, and good angels guard thee!

*To QUEEN ELIZABETH*

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!  
I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!  
Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,  
And each hour's joy wrecked with a week of teen.

### **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!  
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!  
Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow  
For tender princes, use my babies well!  
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

*Exeunt*

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