

The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 4
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

SCENE IV. Before the palace.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET

QUEEN MARGARET

So, now prosperity begins to mellow
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
Here in these confines slyly have I lurk'd,
To watch the waning of mine adversaries.
A dire induction am I witness to,
And will to France, hoping the consequence
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret: who comes here?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS OF YORK

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, my young princes! ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
Hover about me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation!

QUEEN MARGARET

Hover about her; say, that right for right
Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

DUCHESS OF YORK

So many miseries have crazed my voice,
That my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb,
Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

QUEEN MARGARET

Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet.
Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,
And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?

QUEEN MARGARET

When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost,
Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,
Brief abstract and record of tedious days,
Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth,

Sitting down

Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O, that thou wouldst as well afford a grave
As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!
Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.
O, who hath any cause to mourn but I?

Sitting down by her

QUEEN MARGARET

If ancient sorrow be most reverend,
Give mine the benefit of seniory,
And let my woes frown on the upper hand.
If sorrow can admit society,

Sitting down with them

Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine:
I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him;

DUCHESS OF YORK

I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;
I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.
From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,
That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,

That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,
Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee, that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

DUCHESS OF YORK

O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

QUEEN MARGARET

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me with beholding it.
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward:
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot, because both they
Match not the high perfection of my loss:
Thy Clarence he is dead that kill'd my Edward;
And the beholders of this tragic play,
The adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray.
To have him suddenly convey'd away.
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I prey,
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-back'd toad!

QUEEN MARGARET

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering index of a direful pageant;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;
A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,
A sign of dignity, a garish flag,
To be the aim of every dangerous shot,
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
Where are thy children? wherein dost thou, joy?

Who sues to thee and cries 'God save the queen'?
Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?
Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;
For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
For one commanding all, obey'd of none.
Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about,
And left thee but a very prey to time;
Having no more but thought of what thou wert,
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?
Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke;
From which even here I slip my weary neck,
And leave the burthen of it all on thee.
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance:
These English woes will make me smile in France.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

QUEEN MARGARET

Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer 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

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why should calamity be full of words?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Windy attorneys to their client woes,
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope: though what they do impart
Help not all, 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 smother'd.
I hear his drum: be copious in exclams.

Enter KING RICHARD III, marching, with drums and trumpets

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

Hidest thou that forehead with a golden crown,
Where should be graven, if that right were right,
The slaughter of the prince that owed that crown,
And the dire death of my two sons and brothers?
Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Where is kind Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey?

KING RICHARD III

A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums!
Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
Rail on the Lord's enointed: strike, I say!

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

Art thou my son?

KING RICHARD III

Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Then patiently hear my impatience.

KING RICHARD III

Madam, I have a touch of your condition,
Which cannot brook the accent of reproof.

DUCHESS OF YORK

O, let me speak!

KING RICHARD III

Do then: but I'll not hear.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I will be mild and gentle in my speech.

KING RICHARD III

And brief, good mother; for I am in haste.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd for thee,
God knows, in anguish, pain and agony.

KING RICHARD III

And came I not at last to comfort you?

DUCHESS OF YORK

No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,
Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subdued, bloody,
treacherous,
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred:

What comfortable hour canst thou name,
That ever graced me in thy company?

KING RICHARD III

Faith, none, but Humphrey Hour, that call'd
your grace
To breakfast once forth of my company.
If I be so disgracious in your sight,
Let me march on, and not offend your grace.
Strike the drum.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I prithee, hear me speak.

KING RICHARD III

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

Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,
Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,
Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish
And never look upon thy face again.
Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;
Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more
Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!
My prayers on the adverse party fight;
And there the little souls of Edward's children
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
And promise them success and victory.
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 murder: 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 call'd Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And must she die for this? O, let her live,
And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;
Throw over her the veil of infamy:
So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

KING RICHARD III

Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

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

KING RICHARD III

Her life is only safest in her birth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And only in that safety died her brothers.

KING RICHARD III

Lo, at their births good stars were opposite.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

No, to their lives bad friends were contrary.

KING RICHARD III

All unavoided is the doom of destiny.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

True, when avoided grace makes destiny:
My babes were destined to a fairer death,
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

KING RICHARD III

You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.
Whose hand soever lanced their tender hearts,
Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:
No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
And I, in such a desperate bay of death,
Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,
Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

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 wrong'd!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,
To be discover'd, that can do me good?

KING RICHARD III

The advancement of your children, gentle lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads?

KING RICHARD III

No, to the dignity and height of honour
The high imperial type of this earth's glory.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Flatter my sorrows with report of it;
Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,

Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

KING RICHARD III

Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,
Will I withal endow a child of thine;
So in the Lethe of thy angry soul
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Be brief, lest that be process of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

KING RICHARD III

Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.

KING RICHARD III

What do you think?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

That thou dost love my daughter from thy soul:
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers;
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.

KING RICHARD III

Be not so hasty to confound my meaning:
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,
And mean to make her queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Say 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

I, even I: what think you of it, madam?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How canst thou woo her?

KING RICHARD III

That would I learn of you,
As one that are best acquainted with her humour.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And wilt thou learn of me?

KING RICHARD III

Madam, with all my heart.

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:
Therefore present to her--as sometime Margaret
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood,--
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.
If this inducement force her not to love,
Send her a story of thy noble acts;
Tell her thou madest away her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers; yea, and, for her sake,
Madest quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

KING RICHARD III

Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way
To win our daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

There is no other way
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,
And not be Richard that hath done all this.

KING RICHARD III

Say that I did all this for love of her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hate thee,

Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

KING RICHARD III

Look, what is done cannot be now amended:
Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after hours give leisure to repent.
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, Ill give it to your daughter.
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase, I will beget
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter
A grandam's name is little less in love
Than is the doting title of a mother;
They are as children but one step below,
Even of your mettle, of your very blood;
Of an one pain, save for a night of groans
Endured of her, for whom you bid like sorrow.
Your children were vexation to your youth,
But mine shall be a comfort to your age.
The loss you have is but a son being king,
And by that loss your daughter is made queen.
I cannot make you what amends I would,
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.
Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul
Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,
This fair alliance quickly shall call home
To high promotions and great dignity:
The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife.
Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;
Again shall you be mother to a king,
And all the ruins of distressful times
Repair'd with double riches of content.
What! we have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,
Advantaging their loan with interest
Of ten times double gain of happiness.
Go, then my mother, to thy daughter go
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale
Put in her tender heart the 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-brain'd Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;
To whom I will retail my conquest won,
And she shall be sole victress, Caesar's Caesar.

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,
That God, the law, my honour and her love,
Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

KING RICHARD III

Infer fair England's peace by this alliance.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Which she shall purchase with still lasting war.

KING RICHARD III

Say that the king, which may command, entreats.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

That at her hands which the king's King forbids.

KING RICHARD III

Say, she shall be a high and mighty queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To wail the tide, as her mother doth.

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 lie last?

KING RICHARD III

So long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

So long as hell and Richard likes of it.

KING RICHARD III

Say, I, her sovereign, am her subject love.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.

KING RICHARD III

Be eloquent in my behalf to her.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.

KING RICHARD III

Then in plain terms tell her my loving tale.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Plain and not honest is too harsh a style.

KING RICHARD III

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O no, my reasons are too deep and dead;
Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave.

KING RICHARD III

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.

KING RICHARD III

Now, by my George, my garter, and my crown,--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Profaned, dishonour'd, and the third usurp'd.

KING RICHARD III

I swear--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By nothing; for this is no oath:
The George, profaned, hath lost his holy honour;
The garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
The crown, usurp'd, disgraced his kingly glory.
if something thou wilt swear to be believed,
Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.

KING RICHARD III

Now, by the world--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

KING RICHARD III

My father's death--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thy life hath that dishonour'd.

KING RICHARD III

Then, by myself--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thyself thyself misusest.

KING RICHARD III

Why then, by God--

QUEEN ELIZABETH

God's wrong is most of all.
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
The unity the king thy brother made
Had not been broken, nor my brother slain:
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
The imperial metal, circling now thy brow,
Had graced the tender temples of my child,
And both the princes had been breathing here,
Which now, two tender playfellows to dust,
Thy broken faith hath made a prey for worms.
What canst thou swear by now?

KING RICHARD III

The time to come.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast;
For I myself have many tears to wash
Hereafter time, for time past wrong'd by thee.
The children live, whose parents thou hast
slaughter'd,
Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;
The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,
Old wither'd plants, to wail it with their age.
Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast.

KING RICHARD III

As I intend to prosper and repent,
So thrive I in my dangerous attempt
Of hostile arms! myself myself confound!
Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!
Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!
Be opposite all planets of good luck
To my proceedings, if, with pure heart's love,
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter!
In her consists my happiness and thine;
Without her, follows to this land and me,
To thee, herself, 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, good mother,--I must can 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:
Urge the necessity and state of times,
And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

KING RICHARD III

Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I forget myself to be myself?

KING RICHARD III

Ay, if yourself's remembrance wrong yourself.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But thou didst kill my children.

KING RICHARD III

But in your daughter's womb I bury them:
Where in that nest of spicery they shall breed
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

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 the shore
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,
Unarm'd, 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

Fly to the duke:

To RATCLIFF

Post thou to Salisbury
When thou comest thither--

To CATESBY

Dull, unmindful villain,
Why stand'st thou still, and go'st not to the duke?

CATESBY

First, mighty sovereign, let me know your mind,
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 presently at Salisbury.

CATESBY

I go.

Exit

RATCLIFF

What is't your highness' pleasure I shall 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, sir, my mind is changed.

Enter STANLEY

How now, what news with you?

STANLEY

None good, my lord, to please you with the hearing;
Nor none so bad, but it may well be told.

KING RICHARD III

Hoyday, a riddle! neither good nor bad!
Why dost thou run so many mile about,
When thou mayst tell thy tale a nearer way?
Once more, what news?

STANLEY

Richmond is on the seas.

KING RICHARD III

There let him sink, and be the seas on him!
White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

STANLEY

I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

KING RICHARD III

Well, sir, as you guess, as you guess?

STANLEY

Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, there to claim the crown.

KING RICHARD III

Is the chair empty? is the sword unsway'd?
Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then, tell me, what doth he upon the sea?

STANLEY

Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

KING RICHARD III

Unless for that he comes to be your liege,
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.

Thou wilt revolt, and fly to him, I fear.

STANLEY

No, mighty liege; therefore mistrust me not.

KING RICHARD III

Where is thy power, then, to beat him back?
Where are thy tenants and thy followers?
Are they not now upon the western shore.
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships!

STANLEY

No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.

KING RICHARD III

Cold friends to Richard: what do they in the north,
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

STANLEY

They have not been commanded, mighty sovereign:
Please it your majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends, and meet your grace
Where and what time your majesty shall please.

KING RICHARD III

Ay, ay. thou wouldst be gone to join with Richmond:
I will not trust you, sir.

STANLEY

Most mighty sovereign,
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful:
I never was nor never will be false.

KING RICHARD III

Well,
Go muster men; but, hear you, leave behind
Your son, George Stanley: look your faith 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,
As I by friends am well advertised,
Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate
Bishop of Exeter, his brother there,
With many more confederates, are in arms.

Enter another Messenger

Second Messenger

My liege, in Kent the Guildfords are in arms;
And every hour more competitors
Flock to their aid, and still their power increaseth.

Enter another Messenger

Third Messenger

My lord, the army of the Duke of Buckingham--

KING RICHARD III

Out on you, owls! nothing but songs of death?

He striketh him

Take that, until thou bring me 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 scatter'd;
And he himself wander'd away alone,
No man knows whither.

KING RICHARD III

I cry thee mercy:
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.
Hath any well-advised friend proclaim'd
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?

Third Messenger

Such proclamation hath been made, my liege.

Enter another Messenger

Fourth Messenger

Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquis Dorset,
'Tis said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.
Yet this good comfort bring I to your grace,
The Breton navy is dispersed by tempest:
Richmond, in Yorkshire, sent out a boat
Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks
If they were his assistants, yea or no;
Who answer'd him, they came from Buckingham.
Upon his party: he, mistrusting them,
Hoisted sail and made away for Brittany.

KING RICHARD III

March on, march on, since we are up in arms;
If not to fight with foreign enemies,
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

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
Some one take order Buckingham be brought
To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

Flourish. Exeunt

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 4
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)