

RICHARD III Podcast (Part One-Act I)

*Music underscores narration and continues under the first monologue.*

***Narration:*** *Richard the Third. Act One. In one of the many installments of the Wars of the Roses, England's most infamous civil war, the York family has claimed the throne from the House of Lancaster. Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, the title character of our play, is the youngest of three sons of York. His older brother, Edward currently holds the throne, but is very ill. Richard, who some say is deformed of body and mind, desires the throne for himself and uses every situation to that end. We should also note that, oddly enough, Queen Margaret of the fallen House of Lancaster has been given freedom to roam the halls of the palace, which she does like some deranged prophetess.*

*As the play begins, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, encounters his brother, George, Duke of Clarence, who is being sent to prison by their older brother, King Edward. Richard pretends to be sympathetic to Clarence, but later arranges for his murder to ease his own pathway to the throne. In the next scene, Richard encounters Lady Anne Neville, who he desires to be his wife for political purposes. Even though he killed her husband and arranged for the death of her Father-in-Law, King Henry VI of Lancaster, he convinces Anne to marry him somehow with his silver tongue. Next, in a hall of the palace, King Edward's wife, Queen Elizabeth, expresses her concerns about Richard's aspirations for power, but the wily Duke claims that this is all nonsense and rumors. Unknown to all, as this conversation unfolds, Queen Margaret is hidden in the shadows. When the time is right, she reveals herself to curse them all. As the Act ends, murderers hired by Richard to kill his brother, Clarence, go about their dark business in the Tower of London.*

**SCENE I**

***Narration:*** *Act One, Scene One. London. A street. Richard of Gloucester approaches and speaks directly to us, the audience. He then encounters his brother, the Duke of Clarence, who is being taken to prison.*

RICHARD  
 Now is the winter of our discontent  
 Made glorious summer by this son of York,  
 And all the clouds that lour'd 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 barbed steeds  
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

*Street sounds, etc. Footsteps  
 as Richard approaches.*

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,  
 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.

*Echo "I am that am rudely stamped"*

*Echo "Deformed, unfinished"*

*Echo "deformity"*

*Enter CLARENCE, guarded by BRAKENBURY*

*Sound of a guard marching which stops as Richard addresses Clarence.*

**RICHARD**

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.

*Exit Clarence and Brakenbury*

*Sound of guard marching off.*

**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*

*Sound of footsteps.*

**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*

*Sound of footsteps.*

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*

**SCENE II**

*Narration:* Act One. Scene Two. Another London Street. Richard stops the funeral procession of King Henry VI which is accompanied by Lady Anne of Neville, in mourning.

*Music underscoring narration.*

**LADY ANNE**

Set down, set down your honourable load,  
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament  
Th'untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.

*Various street sounds. Then the solemn sounds of a funeral march. Monks chanting.*

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!  
 Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,  
 I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.  
 Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!  
 Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!  
 Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!  
 More direful hap betide that hated wretch,  
 That makes us wretched by the death of thee,  
 Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,  
 Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!  
 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.  
 Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,  
 Taken from Paul's to be interred there;  
 And still, as you are weary of the weight,  
 Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corpse.

*Enter RICHARD*

**RICHARD**

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

**LADY ANNE**

What black magician conjures up this fiend?

**RICHARD**

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

**1<sup>st</sup> GUARD**

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

**RICHARD**

Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command:  
 Advance thy halbert higher than my breast,  
 Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,  
 And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

*Sound of swords briefly clashing.*

**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.

*Sound of heavy load (the coffin)  
 being lowered to the ground.*

**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.

Why dost thou spit at me?

*Sound of spitting*

**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.

*Sound of sword drawn from sheath*

*Sound of sword clattering to the ground*



**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 thy 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.

*Exit LADY ANNE*

*Sound of Lady Anne leaving*

**2<sup>ND</sup> GUARD**

Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

*Monks begin to sing again*

**RICHARD**

No, to Whitefriars; there attend my coming.

*Exit all but RICHARD*

*Sound of funeral procession with guard  
 and monks moving off*

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*

### SCENE III

*Narration: Act One. Scene Three. A hall in the palace. Enter Queen Elizabeth followed by her family members, Rivers, Dorset and Grey.*

*Music underscoring narration*

#### 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.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM and STANLEY*

*Clattering footsteps on hard palace floors.*

#### 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.

*Enter RICHARD and HASTINGS*

*Clattering footsteps on  
hard palace floors.*

**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.  
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.

*Margaret is whispering in  
hiding.*

**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.  
Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave the world,  
Thou cacodemon! there thy kingdom is.

**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?

*Sound of Margaret coming out of  
 hiding*

**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 thee, Elizabeth of York, poor Queen,  
 Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's death  
 And see another, as I see thee now,  
 Decked in thy rights, as thou art stalled in mine.  
 Long die thy happy days before thy death,  
 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.

*Sound of all but Richard leaving*

**RICHARD**

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.  
The secret mischiefs that I set abroad  
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.  
Clarence, whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness,  
I do bewep to many simple gulls  
And say it is the queen and her allies  
That stir the king against the duke my brother.  
Now, they believe it; and withal whet me  
To be revenged on Rivers, Hastings, Grey:  
But then I sigh; and, with a piece of scripture,  
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:  
And thus I clothe my naked villany  
With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;  
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

*Ominous Music under monologue that  
Continues into scene with murderers*

*Enter two Murderers*

But, soft! here come my executioners.  
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.

**SCENE IV**

*Narration: Act One. Scene Four. George, Duke of Clarence has been imprisoned in the Tower of London. As the scene begins, he speaks with his guard, Brakenbury.*

*Music Underscore Narration*

**BRAKENBURY**

Why looks your grace so heavily today?

**CLARENCE**

O, I have passed a miserable night,  
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,  
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,  
I would not spend another such a night,  
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,  
So full of dismal terror was the time!

**BRAKENBURY**

What was your dream? I long to hear you tell it.

**CLARENCE**

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,  
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;  
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;  
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk  
Upon the hatches: thence we looked toward England,  
And cited up a thousand fearful times,

During the wars of York and Lancaster  
 That had befall'n us. As we paced along  
 Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,  
 Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, in falling,  
 Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard,  
 Into the tumbling billows of the main.  
 Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!  
 What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!  
 What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!  
 Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;  
 Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;  
 Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,  
 Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,  
 All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:  
 Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes  
 Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,  
 As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,  
 Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,  
 And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.

**BRAKENBURY**

Had you such leisure in the time of death  
 To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?

**CLARENCE**

Methought I had; and often did I strive  
 To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood  
 Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth  
 To seek the empty, vast and wandering air;  
 But smother'd it within my panting bulk,  
 Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

**BRAKENBURY**

Awaked you not with this sore agony?

**CLARENCE**

O, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life;  
 O, then began the tempest to my soul,  
 Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,  
 With that grim ferryman which poets write of,  
 Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.  
 The first that there did greet my stranger soul,  
 Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;  
 Who cried aloud, 'What scourge for perjury  
 Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'  
 And so he vanish'd: then came wandering by  
 A shadow like an angel, with bright hair  
 Dabbled in blood; and he squeak'd out aloud,  
 'Clarence is come; false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,  
 That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury;

Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!  
With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends  
Environ'd 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 the dream.

**BRAKENBURY**

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

**CLARENCE**

O Brakenbury, I have done those things,  
Which now bear evidence against my soul,  
For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me!  
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,  
But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,  
Yet execute thy wrath in me alone,  
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!  
I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;  
My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

**BRAKENBURY**

I will, my lord: God give your grace good rest!

*CLARENCE sleeps*

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,  
Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.  
Princes have but their tides for their glories,  
An outward honour for an inward toil;  
And, for unfelt imagination,  
They often feel a world of restless cares:  
So that, betwixt their tides and low names,  
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

*Enter the two Murderers***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.

**SECOND MURDERER**

You are deceived; your brother Gloucester hates you.

**CLARENCE**

O no, he loves me, and he holds me dear.  
Go you to him from me.

**FIRST MURDERER**

You deceive yourself.  
'Tis he that sends us to destroy you here.

**SECOND MURDERER**

Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.

*Sound of dagger drawn from sheath.*

**CLARENCE**

Have you that holy feeling in your souls  
To counsel me to make my peace with God,  
And are you yet to your own souls so blind  
That you will war with God by murdering me?  
O sirs, consider: they that set you on  
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.

**SECOND MURDERER**

What shall we do?

**CLARENCE**

Relent, and save your souls.  
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,  
Being pent from liberty, as I am now,  
If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,  
Would not entreat for life?

**FIRST MURDERER**

Relent? No. 'Tis cowardly and womanish.

**CLARENCE**

Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.  
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks.  
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,  
Come thou on my side, and entreat for me.

**SECOND MURDERER**

Look behind you, my lord.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Take that, and that!

*Stabs him*

If all this will not do, I'll drag you in the  
room close by and drown you in the malmsey  
butt within.

*Exit, with the body*

*Sounds of knife stabbing body.  
Clarence groaning as he is stabbed.*

*Sound of body being dragged.  
Murderer panting, moving body*

**SECOND MURDERER**

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

*Re-enter FIRST MURDERER*

*Sound of first murderer reentering*

**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*

*Sound of second murderer leaving*

**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*