

ACT III

Music underscoring narration.

Narration: *Richard the Third. Act Three. At this point in the play, Richard moves forward aggressively with his plans to take the throne. Richard greets the young prince Edward as he arrives in London and reunites him with his brother, young York, playing the loving uncle despite the suspicions of the young boys. Richard arranges to house the princes in the Tower of London where he plans to dispose of them later. After they are led away, Buckingham and Richard ask their accomplice Catesby to determine where the loyalty of Lord Chamberlain William Hastings lies. Catesby goes on a mission to Hastings' estate where he finds that Hastings would rather die than see Richard become King. Next, the scene changes to the Prison at Pomfret where we learn that Richard has arranged for Queen Elizabeth's family members, Lord Rivers and Grey to be put to death.*

The play continues in a conference room in the Tower of London where nobles are gathered to plan the coronation of the young Prince Edward. Richard uses the occasion to claim that Lord Hastings has treasonously allowed him to be bewitched, causing him to be deformed. When none of the nobles oppose him, Richard demands the Lord Chamberlain's head. Now, with Hastings out of the picture, Richard must explain his absence to the rest of the government including the Lord Mayor of London. Accordingly, Richard, Lord Buckingham and their henchmen, Catesby and Ratcliffe act out a great scene on the Tower walls pretending that Lord Hastings is attacking them with an army in order to convince the Mayor of Lord Hastings' treason. Finally, as the act ends, Richard must convince the people of London to crown him King. He encourages Buckingham to give a speech claiming that the young princes are illegitimate. When the people are unconvinced, he puts on a show of piety and refuses the crown until they demand that he agree to be King.

SCENE I.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene One. London. A street. Enter the young Prince Edward on horseback. Richard, the Duke of Gloucester and Lord Buckingham greet him.*

Sound of fanfare. Horses neighing. Horses trotting on cobblestones and then coming to a stop.

RICHARD

Welcome, sweet Prince, to London!

BUCKINGHAM

Welcome, dear prince, and my sovereign Lord.

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.

RICHARD

My lord, the mayor of London comes to greet you.
Enter the Lord Mayor and his train

Sound of grand fanfare. Sound of guard marching. More horses.

LORD MAYOR

God bless your grace with health and happy days!

PRINCE EDWARD

I thank you, good my lord; and thank you all.
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

*Sound of horse arriving, neighing.
Person dismounting.*

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 Mayor, will your grace
Persuade the queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently?
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him,
And from her jealous arms pluck him perforce.

LORD MAYOR

My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory
Can from his mother win the Duke of York,
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid
We should infringe the holy privilege
Of blessed sanctuary! not for all this land
Would I be guilty of so deep a sin.

BUCKINGHAM

You are too senseless--obstinate, my lord,
 Too ceremonious and traditional
 Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,
 You break not sanctuary in seizing him.
 Oft have I heard of sanctuary men;
 But sanctuary children ne'er till now.

LORD MAYOR

My lord, you shall o'er-rule my mind for once.
 Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?

HASTINGS

I go, my lord.

PRINCE EDWARD

Good lords, make all the speedy haste you may.

Exit LORD MAYOR and HASTINGS

*Sound of men mounting horses
 and leaving.*

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

GLOUCESTER

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.
 Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?

BUCKINGHAM

He did, my gracious lord, begin that place;
 Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.

PRINCE EDWARD

Is it upon record, or else reported
 Successively from age to age, he built it?

BUCKINGHAM

Upon record, my gracious lord.

PRINCE EDWARD

But say, my lord, it were not register'd,
 Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
 As 'twere retail'd to all posterity,
 Even to the general all-ending day.

GLOUCESTER

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

PRINCE EDWARD

What say you, uncle?

GLOUCESTER

I say, without characters, fame lives long.
[Aside] Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,
I moralize two meanings in one word.

PRINCE EDWARD

That Julius Caesar was a famous man;
With what his valour did enrich his wit,
His wit set down to make his valour live
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.
I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham,--

BUCKINGHAM

What, my gracious lord?

PRINCE EDWARD

An if I live until I be a man,
I'll win our ancient right in France again,
Or die a soldier, as I lived a king.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] Short summers lightly have a forward spring.

Enter young YORK, HASTINGS, and the CARDINAL

Sound of horses arriving.

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.

Exit all but GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM

Sound of horses and men leaving.

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.

Sound of footsteps.

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

Sound of footsteps leaving.

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.

Exit

SCENE II.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene Two.*
Early morning in front of Lord Hastings' estate.
Catesby finds Hastings and speaks to him.

Music underscoring narration

Early morning sounds. Birds etc.

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.

Exit

SCENE III.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene Three.
 Pomfret Castle and Prison. Richard's
 henchman, Ratcliffe, enters with soldiers,
 leading Lord Rivers and Grey to their
 deaths.*

Music underscoring narration

*Sound of soldiers laughing, men yelling
 etc. Other sounds that might indicate a
 prison. Then sound of execution drum.*

RATCLIFF

Come, bring forth the prisoners.

RIVERS

Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this:
 To-day shalt thou behold a subject die
 For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.

GREY

God keep the prince from all the pack of you!
 A knot you are of damned blood-suckers!
 You live that shall cry woe for this after.

RATCLIFF

Dispatch; the limit of your lives is out.

RIVERS

O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
 Fatal and ominous to noble peers!
 Within the guilty closure of thy walls
 Richard the second here was hack'd to death;
 And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,
 We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.

GREY

Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,
 For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.

RIVERS

Then cursed she Hastings, then cursed she Buckingham,
 Then cursed she Richard. O, remember, God
 To hear her prayers for them, as now for us
 And for my sister and her princely sons,
 Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,
 Which, as thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

RATCLIFF

Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.

RIVERS

Come, Grey, come, friends, let us all embrace:
 And take our leave, until we meet in heaven.

SCENE IV.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene Four.*
A Hall in the Tower of London. Nobles are
gathered to discuss the coronation of the
young Prince Edward.

Music underscoring narration

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

Sound of men laughing, joking over
the music

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.

Enter RICHARD

Sound of door opening

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
Reenter BISHOP OF ELY

Sound of R & B leaving then
B of E reentering

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

Sound of R & B reentering

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,
 Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
 That by their witchcraft thus have 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.

Sound of hand slammed on table

*Sound of men quickly leaving hall.
 Door slams.*

Exit 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.

Exit

SCENE V.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene Five. The Tower-walls. Richard, Buckingham and their men pretend to be under siege by Lord Hastings.*

Music underscoring narration.

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**Sound of horse arriving and person dismounting.***BUCKINGHAM**

Lord Mayor--

RICHARD

Look to the drawbridge there!

BUCKINGHAM

Hark, a drum!

RICHARD

O'erlook the walls.

*Sound of arrows, clashing swords, Catesby and Ratcliffe yelling, and drums***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**A hub-bub as the men run in.***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 lordship here,
To avoid the carping censures of the world.

BUCKINGHAM

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

Exit Lord Mayor

Person mounts, horse leaves.

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: and so, my lord, adieu.

GLOUCESTER

If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle;
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops.

BUCKINGHAM

I go: and towards three or four o'clock
Look for the news that the Guildhall affords.
Exit Buckingham

Second horse leaves.

RICHARD

Now will I in, to take some privy order,
To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight;
And to give notice, that no manner of person
At any time have recourse unto the princes.

SCENE VI.

Narration: *Act Three. Scene Six. Outside Baynard's Castle, a hall where the nobility of London gather to make important decisions, similar in some ways to the modern-day Parliament. Richard and Buckingham confer.*

Music underscoring narration.

Sounds of a crowd talking, yelling etc. Like English Parliament.

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 we'll 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*

Sound of an approaching crowd

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

Enter CATESBY

Sound of Catesby entering

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

Catesby enters

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

Catesby leaves

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

Enter RICHARD aloft, between CATESBY and RATCLIFFE dressed as priests

Lord Mayor

See, where he stands between two clergymen!

*Perhaps sound of monks chanting?
 Or sacred music of some kind?*

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 majestical,
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.

Sound of crowd murmuring

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.

Sounds of crowd again

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

Sounds of crowd moving off

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

Sounds of crowd returning

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!

Cheers of a large crowd