

First Murderer

Take that, and that: if all this will not do,

Stabs him

I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.

Exit, with the body

Second Murderer

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatch'd!
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

Re-enter First Murderer

First Murderer

How now! what mean'st thou, that thou help'st me not?
By heavens, the duke shall know how slack thou art!

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

First Murderer

So do not I: go, coward as thou art.
Now must I hide his body in some hole,
Until the duke take order for his burial:
And when I have my meed, I must away;
For this will out, and here I must not stay.

ACT II

SCENE I. London. The palace.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY, and others

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so: now have I done a good day's work:
You peers, continue this united league:
I every day expect an embassy
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;
And now in peace my soul shall part to heaven,
Since I have set my friends at peace on earth.
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;
Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

RIVERS

By heaven, my heart is purged from grudging hate:
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

HASTINGS

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!

KING EDWARD IV

Take heed you dally not before your king;
Lest he that is the supreme King of kings
Confound your hidden falsehood, and award
Either of you to be the other's end.

HASTINGS

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

RIVERS

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

KING EDWARD IV

Madam, yourself are not exempt in this,
Nor your son Dorset, Buckingham, nor you;
You have been factious one against the other,
Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;
And what you do, do it unfeignedly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Here, Hastings; I will never more remember
Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

KING EDWARD IV

Dorset, embrace him; Hastings, love lord marquess.

DORSET

This interchange of love, I here protest,
Upon my part shall be unviolable.

HASTINGS

And so swear I, my lord

They embrace

KING EDWARD IV

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league
With thy embracements to my wife's allies,
And make me happy in your unity.

BUCKINGHAM

Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate
On you or yours,

To the Queen

but with all duteous love
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!
When I have most need to employ a friend,
And most assured that he is a friend
Deep, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile,
Be he unto me! this do I beg of God,
When I am cold in zeal to yours.

KING EDWARD IV

A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,
To make the perfect period of this peace.

BUCKINGHAM

And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen:
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

KING EDWARD IV

Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we done deeds of charity;
Made peace enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.

GLOUCESTER

A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege:
Amongst this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence, or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe;
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,
If ever any grudge were lodged between us;
Of you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Grey, of you;
That without desert have frown'd on me;
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen; indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds
More than the infant that is born to-night
I thank my God for my humility.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A holy day shall this be kept hereafter:
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your majesty
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

GLOUCESTER

Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this
To be so bouted in this royal presence?
Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

They all start

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

RIVERS

Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

All seeing heaven, what a world is this!

BUCKINGHAM

Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

DORSET

Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

KING EDWARD IV

Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

GLOUCESTER

But he, poor soul, by your first order died,
And that a winged Mercury did bear:
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too lag to see him buried.
God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,
Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,
Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,
And yet go current from suspicion!

Enter DERBY

DORSET

A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

KING EDWARD IV

I pray thee, peace: my soul is full of sorrow.

DORSET

I will not rise, unless your highness grant.

KING EDWARD IV

Then speak at once what is it thou demand'st.

DORSET

The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;
Who slew to-day a righteous gentleman
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

KING EDWARD IV

Have a tongue to doom my brother's death,
And shall the same give pardon to a slave?
My brother slew no man; his fault was thought,
And yet his punishment was cruel death.
Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage,
Kneel'd at my feet, and bade me be advised
Who spake of brotherhood? who spake of love?
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me?
Who told me, in the field by Tewksbury
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,
And said, 'Dear brother, live, and be a king'?
Who told me, when we both lay in the field
Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me
Even in his own garments, and gave himself,
All thin and naked, to the numb cold night?
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
But when your carters or your waiting-vassals
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced
The precious image of our dear Redeemer,
You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;
And I unjustly too, must grant it you
But for my brother not a man would speak,
Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself
For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
Have been beholding to him in his life;
Yet none of you would once plead for his life.

O God, I fear thy justice will take hold
On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet.
Oh, poor Clarence!

Exeunt some with KING EDWARD IV and QUEEN MARGARET

GLOUCESTER

This is the fruit of rashness! Mark'd you not
How that the guilty kindred of the queen
Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
O, they did urge it still unto the king!
God will revenge it. But come, let us in,
To comfort Edward with our company.

BUCKINGHAM

We wait upon your grace.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The palace.

Enter the DUCHESS OF YORK, with the two children of CLARENCE

Boy

Tell me, good grandam, is our father dead?

DUCHESS OF YORK

No, boy.

Boy

Why do you wring your hands, and beat your breast,
And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son!'

Girl

Why do you look on us, and shake your head,
And call us wretches, orphans, castaways
If that our noble father be alive?

DUCHESS OF YORK

My pretty cousins, you mistake me much;
I do lament the sickness of the king.
As loath to lose him, not your father's death;
It were lost sorrow to wail one that's lost.

Boy

Then, grandam, you conclude that he is dead.
The king my uncle is to blame for this:
God will revenge it; whom I will importune
With daily prayers all to that effect.

Girl

And so will I.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Peace, children, peace! the king doth love you well:
Incapable and shallow innocents,
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.

Boy

Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloucester
Told me, the king, provoked by the queen,
Devised impeachments to imprison him :
And when my uncle told me so, he wept,

And hugg'd me in his arm, and kindly kiss'd my cheek;
Bade me rely on him as on my father,
And he would love me dearly as his child.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Oh, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,
And with a virtuous vizard hide foul guile!
He is my son; yea, and therein my shame;
Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit.

Boy

Think you my uncle did dissemble, grandam?

DUCHESS OF YORK

Ay, boy.

Boy

I cannot think it. Hark! what noise is this?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her ears; RIVERS, and DORSET after her

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune, and torment myself?
I'll join with black despair against my soul,
And to myself become an enemy.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What means this scene of rude impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To make an act of tragic violence:
Edward, my lord, your son, our king, is dead.
Why grow the branches now the root is wither'd?
Why wither not the leaves the sap being gone?
If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's;
Or, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband!
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And lived by looking on his images:
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass,
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:
But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms,
And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble limbs,
Edward and Clarence. O, what cause have I,
Thine being but a moiety of my grief,
To overgo thy plaints and drown thy cries!

Boy

Good aunt, you wept not for our father's death;
How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

Girl

Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;
Your widow-dolour likewise be unwept!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Give me no help in lamentation;
I am not barren to bring forth complaints
All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes,
That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world!
Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

Children

Oh for our father, for our dear lord Clarence!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.

Children

What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What stays had I but they? and they are gone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Was never widow had so dear a loss!

Children

Were never orphans had so dear a loss!

DUCHESS OF YORK

Was never mother had so dear a loss!
Alas, I am the mother of these moans!
Their woes are parcell'd, mine are general.
She for an Edward weeps, and so do I;
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she:
These babes for Clarence weep and so do I;
I for an Edward weep, so do not they:
Alas, you three, on me, threefold distress'd,
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
And I will pamper it with lamentations.

DORSET

Comfort, dear mother: God is much displeas'd
That you take with unthankfulness, his doing:
In common worldly things, 'tis call'd ungrateful,
With dull unwillingness to repay a debt
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;
Much more to be thus opposite with heaven,
For it requires the royal debt it lent you.

RIVERS

Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

Enter GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, and RATCLIFF

GLOUCESTER

Madam, have comfort: all of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;

I did not see your grace: humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

DUCHESS OF YORK

God bless thee; and put meekness in thy mind,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] Amen; and make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:
I marvel why her grace did leave it out.

BUCKINGHAM

You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers,
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,
Now cheer each other in each other's love
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,
But lately splinter'd, knit, and join'd together,
Must gently be preserved, cherish'd, and kept:
Me seemeth good, that, with some little train,
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fetch'd
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

RIVERS

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM

Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out,
Which would be so much the more dangerous
By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd:
Where every horse bears his commanding rein,
And may direct his course as please himself,
As well the fear of harm, as harm apparent,
In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

GLOUCESTER

I hope the king made peace with all of us
And the compact is firm and true in me.

RIVERS

And so in me; and so, I think, in all:
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put
To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply by much company might be urged:
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,
That it is meet so few should fetch the prince.

HASTINGS

And so say I.

GLOUCESTER

Then be it so; and go we to determine
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.
Madam, and you, my mother, will you go
To give your censures in this weighty business?

QUEEN ELIZABETH DUCHESS OF YORK

With all our harts.

Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and GLOUCESTER

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,
For God's sake, let not us two be behind;
For, by the way, I'll sort occasion,
As index to the story we late talk'd of,
To part the queen's proud kindred from the king.

GLOUCESTER

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet! My dear cousin,
I, like a child, will go by thy direction.
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.

Exeunt

SCENE III. London. A street.

Enter two Citizens meeting

First Citizen

Neighbour, well met: whither away so fast?

Second Citizen

I promise you, I scarcely know myself:
Hear you the news abroad?

First Citizen

Ay, that the king is dead.

Second Citizen

Bad news, by'r lady; seldom comes the better:
I fear, I fear 'twill prove a troublous world.

Enter another Citizen

Third Citizen

Neighbours, God speed!

First Citizen

Give you good morrow, sir.

Third Citizen

Doth this news hold of good King Edward's death?

Second Citizen

Ay, sir, it is too true; God help the while!

Third Citizen

Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

First Citizen

No, no; by God's good grace his son shall reign.

Third Citizen

Woe to the land that's govern'd by a child!

Second Citizen

In him there is a hope of government,
That in his nonage council under him,
And in his full and ripen'd years himself,
No doubt, shall then and till then govern well.

First Citizen

So stood the state when Henry the Sixth
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

Third Citizen

Stood the state so? No, no, good friends, God wot;
For then this land was famously enrich'd

With politic grave counsel; then the king
Had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.

First Citizen

Why, so hath this, both by the father and mother.

Third Citizen

Better it were they all came by the father,
Or by the father there were none at all;
For emulation now, who shall be nearest,
Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.
O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!
And the queen's sons and brothers haught and proud:
And were they to be ruled, and not to rule,
This sickly land might solace as before.

First Citizen

Come, come, we fear the worst; all shall be well.

Third Citizen

When clouds appear, wise men put on their cloaks;
When great leaves fall, the winter is at hand;
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.
All may be well; but, if God sort it so,
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect.

Second Citizen

Truly, the souls of men are full of dread:
Ye cannot reason almost with a man
That looks not heavily and full of fear.

Third Citizen

Before the times of change, still is it so:
By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
Ensuing dangers; as by proof, we see
The waters swell before a boisterous storm.
But leave it all to God. whither away?

Second Citizen

Marry, we were sent for to the justices.

Third Citizen

And so was I: I'll bear you company.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The palace.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, young YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and the
DUCHESS OF YORK*

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Last night, I hear, they lay at Northampton;
At Stony-Stratford will they be to-night:
To-morrow, or next day, they will be here.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I long with all my heart to see the prince:
I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But I hear, no; they say my son of York
Hath almost overta'en him in his growth.

YORK

Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, my young cousin, it is good to grow.

YORK

Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper,

My uncle Rivers talk'd how I did grow

More than my brother: 'Ay,' quoth my uncle

Gloucester,

'Small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace:'

And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,

Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold

In him that did object the same to thee;

He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,

So long a-growing and so leisurely,

That, if this rule were true, he should be gracious.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Why, madam, so, no doubt, he is.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I hope he is; but yet let mothers doubt.

YORK

Now, by my troth, if I had been remember'd,

I could have given my uncle's grace a flout,

To touch his growth nearer than he touch'd mine.

DUCHESS OF YORK

How, my pretty York? I pray thee, let me hear it.

YORK

Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast

That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old

'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth.

Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I pray thee, pretty York, who told thee this?

YORK

Grandam, his nurse.

DUCHESS OF YORK

His nurse! why, she was dead ere thou wert born.

YORK

If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A parlous boy: go to, you are too shrewd.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Good madam, be not angry with the child.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Pitchers have ears.

Enter a Messenger

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Here comes a messenger. What news?

Messenger

Such news, my lord, as grieves me to unfold.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How fares the prince?

Messenger

Well, madam, and in health.

DUCHESS OF YORK

What is thy news then?

Messenger

Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret,
With them Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Who hath committed them?

Messenger

The mighty dukes
Gloucester and Buckingham.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

For what offence?

Messenger

The sum of all I can, I have disclosed;
Why or for what these nobles were committed
Is all unknown to me, my gracious lady.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!
The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;
Insulting tyranny begins to jet
Upon the innocent and aweless throne:
Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre!
I see, as in a map, the end of all.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
How many of you have mine eyes beheld!
My husband lost his life to get the crown;
And often up and down my sons were toss'd,
For me to joy and weep their gain and loss:
And being seated, and domestic broils
Clean over-blown, themselves, the conquerors.
Make war upon themselves; blood against blood,
Self against self: O, preposterous
And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen;
Or let me die, to look on death no more!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.
Madam, farewell.

DUCHESS OF YORK

I'll go along with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

You have no cause.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

My gracious lady, go;
And thither bear your treasure and your goods.
For my part, I'll resign unto your grace
The seal I keep: and so betide to me
As well I tender you and all of yours!
Come, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary.

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. London. A street.

The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, CARDINAL, CATESBY, and others

BUCKINGHAM

Welcome, sweet prince, to London, to your chamber.

GLOUCESTER

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

PRINCE EDWARD

No, uncle; but our crosses on the way
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

GLOUCESTER

Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit
Nor more can you distinguish of a man
Than of his outward show; which, God he knows,
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;
Your grace attended to their sugar'd words,
But look'd not on the poison of their hearts :
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

PRINCE EDWARD

God keep me from false friends! but they were none.

GLOUCESTER

My lord, the mayor of London comes to greet you.

Enter the Lord Mayor and his train

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

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 cardinal, will your grace