

# William Shakespeare

## The Life and Death of Richard the Third

### Dramatis Personæ

**KING EDWARD THE FOURTH.**

Sons to the King:

**EDWARD** , Prince of Wales; afterwards King Edward the Fifth

**RICHARD** , Duke of York

Brothers to the King:

**GEORGE** , Duke of Clarence

**RICHARD** , Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard the Third

**A young Son of Clarence.**

**HENRY** , Earl of Richmond; afterwards King Henry the Seventh.

**CARDINAL BOURCHIER**, Archbishop of Canterbury.

**THOMAS ROTHERHAM** , Archbishop of York.

**JOHN MORTON** , Bishop of Ely.

**DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.**

**DUKE OF NORFOLK.**

**EARL OF SURREY** , his Son.

**EARL RIVERS** , Brother to King Edward's

Queen.

**MARQUESS OF DORSET** , and **LORD GREY** ,  
her Sons.

**EARL OF OXFORD.**

**LORD HASTINGS.**

**LORD STANLEY** , called also **EARL OF  
DERBY** .

**LORD LOVEL.**

**SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN.**

**SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.**

**SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.**

**SIR JAMES TYRRELL.**

**SIR JAMES BLOUNT.**

**SIR WALTER HERBERT.**

**SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY** , Lieutenant of  
the Tower.

**SIR WILLIAM BRANDON.**

**CHRISTOPHER URSWICK** , a Priest.

Another Priest.

**Lord Mayor of London.**

**Sheriff of Wiltshire.**

**TRESSEL** and **BERKELEY** , Gentlemen  
attending on Lady Anne.

**ELIZABETH** , Queen of King Edward the  
Fourth.

**MARGARET** , Widow of King Henry the Sixth.

**DUCHESS OF YORK** , Mother to King Edward  
the Fourth, Clarence, and Gloucester.

**LADY ANNE** , Widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, Son to King Henry the Sixth; afterwards married to the Duke of Gloucester.

**LADY MARGARET PLANTAGENET** , a young Daughter of Clarence.

Lords, and other Attendants; two Gentlemen, a Pursuivant, Scrivener, Citizens, Murderers, Messengers, Ghosts of those murdered by Richard the Third, Soldiers, amp;c.

SCENE.-*England.*

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*London. A street.*

*Enter GLOUCESTER, solus*

#### GLOUCESTER

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun 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 smooth'd his wrinkled front;  
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds  
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
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, unfinish'd, 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 determin'd 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:

And if King Edward be as true and just  
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,  
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,  
About a prophecy, which says that 'G'  
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here  
Clarence comes.

*Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY*

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.

**GLOUCESTER**

Upon what cause?

**CLARENCE**

Because my name is George.

**GLOUCESTER**

Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;  
He should, for that, commit your godfathers:  
O, belike his majesty hath some intent  
That you shall be new-christen'd in the Tower.  
But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?

### **CLARENCE**

Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest  
As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,  
He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;  
And from the cross-row plucks the letter G.  
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.  
These, as I learn, and such like toys as these  
Have moved his highness to commit me now.

### **GLOUCESTER**

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.  
Was it not she and that good man of worship,  
Anthony Woodville, her brother there,

That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,  
From whence this present day he is deliver'd?  
We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

### **CLARENCE**

By heaven, I think there's no man is secure  
But the queen's kindred and night-walking heralds  
That trudge betwixt the king and Mistress Shore.  
Heard ye not what an humble suppliant  
Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery?

### **GLOUCESTER**

Humbly complaining to her deity  
Got my lord chamberlain his liberty.  
I'll tell you what; I think it is our way,  
If we will keep in favour with the king,  
To be her men and wear her livery:  
The jealous o'erworn widow and herself,  
Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen.  
Are mighty gossips in this monarchy.

### **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.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Even so; an't please your worship, Brakenbury,  
You may partake of any thing we say:  
We speak no treason, man: we say the king  
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen  
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous;  
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,  
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;  
And that the queen's kindred are made gentle-folks:  
How say you sir? Can you deny all this?

## **BRAKENBURY**

With this, my lord, myself have nought to do.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Naught to do with mistress Shore! I tell thee, fellow,  
He that doth naught with her, excepting one,  
Were best he do it secretly, alone.

## **BRAKENBURY**

What one, my lord?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Her husband, knave: wouldst thou betray me?

## **BRAKENBURY**

I beseech your grace to pardon me, and withal  
Forbear your conference with the noble duke.

## **CLARENCE**

We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

## **GLOUCESTER**

We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.  
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king;  
And whatsoever you will employ me in,  
Were it to call King Edward's widow sister,  
I will perform it to enfranchise you.  
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood  
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

## **CLARENCE**

I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;  
Meantime, have patience.

## **CLARENCE**

I must perforce. Farewell.

*Exeunt CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and Guard*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Go, tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return.  
Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,  
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,  
If heaven will take the present at our hands.  
But who comes here? the new-deliver'd Hastings?

*Enter HASTINGS*

## **HASTINGS**

Good time of day unto my gracious lord!

## **GLOUCESTER**

As much unto my good lord chamberlain!  
Well are you welcome to the open air.  
How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?

## **HASTINGS**

With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must:  
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks  
That were the cause of my imprisonment.

## **GLOUCESTER**

No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;  
For they that were your enemies are his,  
And have prevail'd as much on him as you.

## **HASTINGS**

More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,  
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.

## **GLOUCESTER**

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.

## CLARENCE

Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed.  
O, he hath kept an evil diet long,  
And overmuch consumed his royal person:  
'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.  
What, is he in his bed?

## HASTINGS

He is.

## GLOUCESTER

Go you before, and I will follow you.

*Exit HASTINGS*

He cannot live, I hope; and must not die  
Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.  
I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence,  
With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;

And, if I fall not in my deep intent,  
Clarence hath not another day to live:  
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 kill'd her husband and her father?  
The readiest way to make the wench amends  
Is to become her husband and her father:  
The which will I; not all so much for love  
As for another secret close intent,  
By marrying her which I must reach unto.  
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

*The same. Another street.*

*Enter the corpse of KING HENRY the Sixth,  
Gentlemen with halberds to guard it; LADY ANNE  
being the mourner*

### LADY ANNE

Set down, set down your honourable load,  
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse,  
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament

The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.  
Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!  
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!  
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 slaughter'd son,  
Stabb'd 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 child, abortive be it,  
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,  
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect  
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;  
And that be heir to his unhappiness!  
If ever he have wife, let her he made  
A miserable by the death of him  
As I am made by my poor 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 corse.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**LADY ANNE**

What black magician conjures up this fiend,  
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

**GLOUCESTER**

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

**Gentleman**

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

**GLOUCESTER**

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.

### **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 be gone.

### **GLOUCESTER**

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

### **LADY ANNE**

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;  
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,  
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.  
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,  
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.  
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds  
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh!  
Blush, Blush, thou lump of foul deformity;  
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood  
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;  
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,

Provokes this deluge most unnatural.  
O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!  
O earth, which this blood drink'st revenge his death!  
Either heaven with lightning strike the  
murderer dead,  
Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,  
As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood  
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

### **GLOUCESTER**

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.

### **GLOUCESTER**

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

### **LADY ANNE**

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

### **GLOUCESTER**

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.  
Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,  
Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,  
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

**LADY ANNE**

Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,  
For these known evils, but to give me leave,  
By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

**GLOUCESTER**

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have  
Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

**LADY ANNE**

Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make  
No excuse current, but to hang thyself.

**GLOUCESTER**

By such despair, I should accuse myself.

**LADY ANNE**

And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;  
For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,  
Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

**GLOUCESTER**

Say that I slew them not?

**LADY ANNE**

Why, then they are not dead:  
But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

I did not kill your husband.

**LADY ANNE**

Why, then he is alive.

**GLOUCESTER**

Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

**LADY ANNE**

In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw

Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;  
The which thou once didst bend against her breast,  
But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

### **GLOUCESTER**

I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,  
which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

### **LADY ANNE**

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind.  
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:  
Didst thou not kill this king?

### **GLOUCESTER**

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!

### **GLOUCESTER**

The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

**LADY ANNE**

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let him thank me, that holp to send him thither;  
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

**LADY ANNE**

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

**GLOUCESTER**

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

**LADY ANNE**

Some dungeon.

**GLOUCESTER**

Your bed-chamber.

**LADY ANNE**

Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

**GLOUCESTER**

So will it, madam till I lie with you.

**LADY ANNE**

I hope so.

**GLOUCESTER**

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,  
To leave this keen encounter of our wits,  
And fall somewhat 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 accursed effect.

**GLOUCESTER**

Your beauty was the cause of that effect;

Your beauty: which did haunt me in my sleep  
To undertake the death of all the world,  
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

**LADY ANNE**

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,  
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

**GLOUCESTER**

These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's  
wreck;  
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:  
As all the world is cheered by the sun,  
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

**LADY ANNE**

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

**GLOUCESTER**

Curse not thyself, fair creature thou art both.

**LADY ANNE**

I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

## **GLOUCESTER**

It is a quarrel most unnatural,  
To be revenged on him that loveth you.

## **LADY ANNE**

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,  
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.

## **GLOUCESTER**

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.

## **GLOUCESTER**

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

## **LADY ANNE**

Name him.

**GLOUCESTER**

Plantagenet.

**LADY ANNE**

Why, that was he.

**GLOUCESTER**

The selfsame name, but one of better nature.

**LADY ANNE**

Where is he?

**GLOUCESTER**

Here.

*She spitteth at him*

Why dost thou spit at me?

**LADY ANNE**

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

## **GLOUCESTER**

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.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

## **LADY ANNE**

Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!

## **GLOUCESTER**

I would they were, that I might die at once;  
For now they kill me with a living death.  
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,  
Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:  
These eyes that never shed remorseful tear,  
No, when my father York and Edward wept,  
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made  
When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him;  
Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,

Told the sad story of my father's death,  
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,  
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks  
Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time  
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;  
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,  
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with  
weeping.

I never sued to friend nor enemy;  
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word;  
But now thy beauty is proposed my fee,  
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to  
speak.

*She looks scornfully at him*

Teach not thy lips such scorn, for they were 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 bosom.  
And let the soul forth that adoreth thee,  
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.

**LADY ANNE**

Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,  
I will not be the executioner.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

**LADY ANNE**

I have already.

**GLOUCESTER**

Tush, 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 thou shalt be accessory.

**LADY ANNE**

I would I knew thy heart.

**GLOUCESTER**

'Tis figured in my tongue.

**LADY ANNE**

I fear me both are false.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then never man was true.

**LADY ANNE**

Well, well, put up your sword.

**GLOUCESTER**

Say, then, my peace is made.

**LADY ANNE**