

Richard III Extracts 3

Act III scene 4 line 58–end

Re-enter RICHARD *and* BUCKINGHAM.

RICHARD I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damnèd witchcraft – and that have prevailed 60
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.
I say, my lord, they have deserved death. 65

RICHARD Then be your eyes the witness of their evil.
Look 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, 70
That by their witchcraft thus have markèd me!

HASTINGS If they have done this deed, my noble lord –

RICHARD If? – Thou protector of this damnèd strumpet!
Talk'st thou to me of ifs? Thou art a traitor!
Off with his head! Now by Saint Paul I swear 75
I will not dine until I see the same.
Lovell and Ratcliffe, look that it be done.
The rest that love me, rise and follow me.

Exit RICHARD. *All follow, except* HASTINGS, RATCLIFFE, *and* LOVELL.

HASTINGS Woe, woe, for England! Not a whit for me –
For I, too fond, might have prevented this! 80
Stanley did dream the boar did raze our helms,
And I did scorn it and disdain to fly.
Three times today my foot-cloth horse did stumble,
And started when he looked upon the Tower,
As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house. 85
O, now I need the priest that spake to me!
I now repent I told the pursuivant,
As too triumphing, how mine enemies
Today at Pomfret bloodily were butchered,
And I myself secure in grace and favour! 90
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

RATCLIFFE Come, come, dispatch! The Duke would be at dinner.
Make a short shrift! He longs to see your head!

HASTINGS O momentary grace of mortal men, 95
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your good looks
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast –
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep. 100

LOVELL Come, come, dispatch. 'Tis bootless to exclaim.

HASTINGS O bloody Richard! Miserable England!
I prophesy the fearfull'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath looked upon!
Come, lead me to the block. Bear him my head. 105
They smile at me who shortly shall be dead!
Exeunt.

