

Scene 2

SCENE II. London. A Room of State in the Palace.

[Flourish of trumpets. RICHARD, as King, upon his throne;
BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, RATCLIFF, LOVEL, a Page, and others.]

KING RICHARD.

Stand all apart--Cousin of Buckingham,--

BUCKINGHAM.

My gracious sovereign?

KING RICHARD.

Give me thy hand. Thus high, by thy advice
And thy assistance, is King Richard seated:--
But shall we wear these glories for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

BUCKINGHAM.

Still live they, and for ever let them last!

KING RICHARD.

Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,
To try if thou be current gold indeed:--
Young Edward lives;--think now what I would speak.

BUCKINGHAM.

Say on, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD.

Why, Buckingham, I say I would be king.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why, so you are, my thrice-renowned lord.

KING RICHARD.

Ha! am I king? 'tis so: but Edward lives.

BUCKINGHAM.

True, noble prince.

KING RICHARD.

O bitter consequence,
That Edward still should live,--true, noble Prince!--
Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull:--
Shall I be plain?--I wish the bastards dead;

And I would have it suddenly perform'd.
What say'st thou now? speak suddenly, be brief.

BUCKINGHAM.
Your grace may do your pleasure.

KING RICHARD.
Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezes:
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCKINGHAM.
Give me some little breath, some pause, dear lord,
Before I positively speak in this:
I will resolve your grace immediately.

[Exit.]

CATESBY.
[Aside.] The king is angry: see, he gnaws his lip.

KING RICHARD.
I will converse with iron-witted fools
[Descends from his throne.]
And unrespective boys; none are for me
That look into me with considerate eyes:
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
Boy!—

PAGE.
My lord?

KING RICHARD.
Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold
Will tempt unto a close exploit of death?

PAGE.
I know a discontented gentleman
Whose humble means match not his haughty spirit:
Gold were as good as twenty orators,
And will, no doubt, tempt him to anything.

KING RICHARD.
What is his name?

PAGE.
His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

KING RICHARD.

I partly know the man: go, call him hither, boy.

[Exit PAGE.]

The deep-revolving witty Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsels:

Hath he so long held out with me untir'd,
And stops he now for breath?--well, be it so.

[Enter STANLEY.]

How now, Lord Stanley! what's the news?

STANLEY.

Know, my loving lord,
The Marquis Dorset, as I hear, is fled
To Richmond, in the parts where he abides.

KING RICHARD.

Come hither, Catesby: rumour it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is very grievous sick;
I will take order for her keeping close:
Inquire me out some mean poor gentleman,
Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter;--
The boy is foolish, and I fear not him.--
Look how thou dream'st!--I say again, give out
That Anne, my queen, is sick and like to die:
About it; for it stands me much upon,
To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.

[Exit CATESBY.]

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass:--
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

[Re-enter PAGE, with TYRREL.]

Is thy name Tyrrel?

TYRREL.

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

KING RICHARD.

Art thou, indeed?

TYRREL.

Prove me, my gracious lord.

KING RICHARD.

Dar'st thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

TYRREL.

Please you. But I had rather kill two enemies.

KING RICHARD.

Why, then thou hast it: two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest, and my sweet sleep's disturbers,
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:--
Tyrell, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

TYRREL.

Let me have open means to come to them,
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

KING RICHARD.

Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come hither, Tyrrel:
Go, by this token:--rise, and lend thine ear:
[Whispers.] There is no more but so:--say it is done,
And I will love thee, and prefer thee for it.

TYRREL.

I will despatch it straight.

[Exit.]

[Re-enter BUCKINGHAM.]

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late request that you did sound me in.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let that rest. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

BUCKINGHAM.

I hear the news, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, he is your wife's son:--well, look to it.

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, I claim the gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd:
The earldom of Hereford, and the movables
Which you have promised I shall possess.

KING RICHARD.

Stanley, look to your wife: if she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

BUCKINGHAM.

What says your highness to my just request?

KING RICHARD.

I do remember me:--Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king!--perhaps,--

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord,--

KING RICHARD.

How chance the prophet could not at that time
Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord, your promise for the earldom,--

KING RICHARD.

Richmond!--When last I was at Exeter,
The mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle
And call'd it Rougemount; at which name I started,
Because a bard of Ireland told me once
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

BUCKINGHAM.

My lord—

KING RICHARD.

Ay, what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM.

I am thus bold to put your grace in mind
Of what you promis'd me.

KING RICHARD.

Well, but what's o'clock?

BUCKINGHAM.

Upon the stroke of ten.

KING RICHARD.

Well, let it strike.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why let it strike?

KING RICHARD.

Because that, like a Jack, thou keep'st the stroke
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.

I am not in the giving vein to-day.

BUCKINGHAM.

Why then, resolve me whether you will or no.

KING RICHARD.

Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.

[Exeunt KING RICHARD and Train.]

BUCKINGHAM.

And is it thus? repays he my deep service
With such contempt? made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock while my fearful head is on!