

Richard III abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 3

Inspiration

Situation: Richard III wakens, frightened, saying to Ratcliffe “Will our friends prove all true? O Ratcliffe, I fear, I fear.” The battle with Richmond at Salisbury is imminent. Richmond wakens from his sleep and says he’s had “The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams.”

RICHMOND: The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams that ever entered in a drowsy head have I since your departure had, my lords. Methought their souls whose bodies Richard murdered came to my tent and cried on victory. How far into the morning is it, lords?

A LORD: Upon the stroke of four.

RICHMOND: Why, then ‘tis time to arm and give direction.

Richmond to his soldiers, No. 1

**Remember this: God, and our good cause, fight
For us. The prayers of holy saints to right
Wronged souls are for us. Except for Richard,
Those against us would rather have us win
Than him they follow, the base foul stone lured
Falsely, now set in England’s chair through sin,
Now God’s enemy. If you fight God’s foe,
God will, justly, protect you as you go
To battle. If you do fight against this
Foe, your country’s wealth will pay you for your
Pain, and your wives, being safe, with a kiss
Will welcome you each as a conqueror.
If you free your children from Richard’s sword,
Their children will honor you as a lord.**

RICHMOND: For me, the ransom of my bold attempt shall be this cold corpse on the earth’s cold face, but if I thrive, the gain of my attempt the least of you shall share his part thereof.