

Richard III abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 4

Remorse

Situation: Queen Margaret, the Duchess of York, and Queen Elizabeth jointly share their griefs and miseries, each having a spouse murdered by Richard. Also, each one of the women has had at least one son murdered. Margaret shares some personal thoughts with Elizabeth.

DUCHESS: O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes! God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

QUEEN MARGARET: Bear with me. I am hungry for revenge.

Queen Margaret to Queen Elizabeth

I called thee a shadow of my fortune,
The perception of but what I was, one
Heaved high to be hurled down below, a sign
Of dignity, a breath, a queen in jest,
Only to fill the scene. Where is the line
Of kneeling gift seekers? Where are the rest,
The peers that flattered thee, the thronging troops
That followed thee, the ever clinging groups?
Justice now swirls 'bout the one with the gall
To mock me, enduring scorn by me, one
Now feared by none, once being feared by all,
Once commanding all, now obeyed by none,
Having but the tortured thoughts of the part
Of the realm thou wast, being what thou art.

QUEEN MARGARET: Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance. These English woes shall make me smile in France.

She begins to exit.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: O, thou well-skilled in curses, stay awhile, and teach me how to curse mine enemies.

QUEEN MARGARET: Compare dead happiness with living woe; think that thy babes were sweeter than they were, and he that slew them fouler than he is.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: My words are dull. O, quicken them with thine!

QUEEN MARGARET: Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine.