

Henry VI Part 3 abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 2

Ruthlessness

Situation: The young Richard Plantagenet, now the duke of Gloucester, born physically challenged, known in earlier plays as Crookback Richard, offsets his physical limitations with an outsized, ruthless, narrowly focused ambition, determined not to let his brother Edward's son nor a son of Henry VI's get in his way. His focus is on England's crown for himself.

RICHARD DUKE OF GLOUCESTER: Ay, Edward will use women honorably. Would he were wasted, morrow, bones, and all, that from his loins no hopeful branch may spring to cross me from the golden time I look for. Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty, flattering me with impossibilities.

Richard Duke of Gloucester to himself, No. 1

Edward, Clarence, Henry and his son too,
And all their bodies' unlooked-for issue,
Stand between my soul's desire and me. Why
Then do I dream of sovereignty and so
Chide all that limits me? What worldly tie
To life's pleasures would end this early woe?
I'll wear gay clothes and bewitch a lady
With my words and looks, but that unlikely,
Love having forsworn me in my mother's
Womb, where on my back sits deformity;
Where mine frail withered-shrub-like arm angers
My misshapen legs, mocking my body.
Yet, can I not get the crown, being one
To add colors to the chameleon?

RICHARD DUKE OF GLOUCESTER: I can set the murderous Machiavel to school. Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?