

Richard III abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 2

Grief

Situation: As the body of Henry VI is carried across the stage, Lady Anne grieves, she being the widow of Prince Edward, the deceased Henry VI's only son. Richard duke of Gloucester, the man who had murdered Henry VI and her husband, enters the church.

Anne to the deceased Henry VI

O Lancaster, be it lawful that I
Ask thy ghost to hear poor Anne, wife to thy
Edward, stabbed by the selfsame hand that made
These wounds. Cursed be the heart that had the heart
To do it. And cursed be the hand that laid
Thy shrouded corpse here; our dreams fell apart
By the death of thee. If the blood that let
This blood acquire a wife, let her beget
A child that will fright the hopeful mother,
Born prematurely, portending a life
Of unhappiness, one who will be her
Heir to his evil being. For his wife,
May his death make a more miserable she
Than I am made by my young lord and thee.

Halberds take up the corpse. Halberds are guards with weapons. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, enters.

RICHARD: Stay, you that bear the corpse, and set it down.

The Halberds set down the corpse.

ANNE: What, do you tremble? Are you all afraid? Alas, I blame you not, for you are mortal. And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.

RICHARD: Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

ANNE: Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not.

She points to the corpse.

ANNE: O, gentlemen, see, see dead Henry's wounds open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh! O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death! Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead, or earth gape open wide and eat him quick.

RICHARD: Lady, you know no rules of charity, which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.