

Richard III abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 2

Grief

Situation: The Duchess, the Plantagenet brothers' mother, grieving over the loss of two of her sons, lets Clarence's confused son know that one of his living uncles may have been the cause of his father's death. Richard had told the boy that "the king your uncle was to blame for it." Elizabeth, distraught over her husband, Edward IV's, death, soon enters. The Duchess has now lost three sons.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Ah, who shall hinder me to wail and weep.

DUCHESS: What means this scene of rude impatience?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Edward, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead. Why grow the branches when the root is gone? Why wither not the leaves that want their sap?

Duchess to Elizabeth and others

A worthy husband's death I have bewept,
And by looking on his three sons have kept
My life, but now two heirs of his princely
Being are cracked by malignant death, and
I have but one false image that grieves me
When I see my shame that threatens the land.
Elizabeth, what support had they but
George Clarence? My two crutches are gone. What
Stays had I but they? You're widowed, but goes
On your son. These deaths have taken their toll,
And I am the mother of these dear woes.
Your griefs are parceled; mine is general.
Alas, you three, on me pour all your tears.
I'll be sorrow's nurse and pamper your years.

DORSET: Comfort, dear mother. God is much displeased that you take with unthankfulness his doing.