

Enter GLOUCESTER



GLOUCESTER

Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.

LADY ANNE

What black magician conjures up this fiend,
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

35

GLOUCESTER

Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.

Gentleman

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

GLOUCESTER

Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command:
Advance thy halbert higher than my breast,
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

40

LADY 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.

45

Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore be gone.

GLOUCESTER

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

LADY ANNE

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.

50

O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh!

55

Blush, Blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.

60

O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!

O earth, which this blood drink'st revenge his death!

Either heaven with lightning strike the
murderer dead,

Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,

As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood

Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

GLOUCESTER

Lady, you know no rules of charity,

Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:

No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

GLOUCESTER

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

GLOUCESTER

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.

Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,

Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,

By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

LADY ANNE

Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,

For these known evils, but to give me leave,

By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

GLOUCESTER

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have

Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

LADY ANNE

Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make

No excuse current, but to hang thyself.

GLOUCESTER

By such despair, I should accuse myself.

LADY ANNE

And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;

For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,

Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

65

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85

GLOUCESTER

Say that I slew them not?

LADY ANNE

Why, then they are not dead:

90

But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

GLOUCESTER

I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE

Why, then he is alive.

GLOUCESTER

Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

LADY ANNE

In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw

Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;

95

The which thou once didst bend against her breast,

But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

GLOUCESTER

I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,

which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

LADY ANNE

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind.

100

Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:

Didst thou not kill this king?

GLOUCESTER

I grant ye.

LADY ANNE

Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too

Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!

O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

105

GLOUCESTER

The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

LADY ANNE

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

GLOUCESTER

Let him thank me, that help to send him thither;

For he was fitter for that place than earth.

LADY ANNE

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

110

GLOUCESTER

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

LADY ANNE

Some dungeon.

GLOUCESTER

Your bed-chamber.

LADY ANNE

Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

GLOUCESTER

So will it, madam till I lie with you.

LADY ANNE

I hope so.

115

GLOUCESTER

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,

To leave this keen encounter of our wits,

And fall somewhat into a slower method,

Is not the causer of the timeless deaths

Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,

120

As blameful as the executioner?

LADY ANNE

Thou art the cause, and most accursed effect.

GLOUCESTER

Your beauty was the cause of that effect;

Your beauty: which did haunt me in my sleep

To undertake the death of all the world,

125

So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

LADY ANNE

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,

These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

GLOUCESTER

These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's wreck;

You should not blemish it, if I stood by:

130

As all the world is cheered by the sun,

So I by that; it is my day, my life.

LADY ANNE

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

GLOUCESTER

Curse not thyself, fair creature thou art both.

LADY ANNE

I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

135

GLOUCESTER

It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be revenged on him that loveth you.

LADY ANNE

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.

GLOUCESTER

He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

140

LADY ANNE

His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

GLOUCESTER

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

LADY ANNE

Name him.

GLOUCESTER

Plantagenet.

LADY ANNE

Why, that was he.

GLOUCESTER

The selfsame name, but one of better nature.

145

LADY ANNE

Where is he?

GLOUCESTER

Here.

She spitteth at him

Why dost thou spit at me?

LADY ANNE

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

GLOUCESTER

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

LADY ANNE

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.

Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.

150

GLOUCESTER

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

LADY ANNE

Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!

GLOUCESTER

I would they were, that I might die at once;

For now they kill me with a living death.

Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears, 155

Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:

These eyes that never shed remorseful tear,

No, when my father York and Edward wept,

To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made

When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him; 160

Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,

Told the sad story of my father's death,

And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,

That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks

Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time 165

My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;

And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,

Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.

I never sued to friend nor enemy;

My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word; 170

But now thy beauty is proposed my fee,

My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.

She looks scornfully at him

Teach not thy lips such scorn, for they were made

For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.

If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive, 175

Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;

Which if thou please to hide in this true bosom.

And let the soul forth that adareth thee,

I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,

And humbly beg the death upon my knee. 180

He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward,
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

Here she lets fall the sword

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

185

LADY ANNE

Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,
I will not be the executioner.

GLOUCESTER

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

LADY ANNE

I have already.

GLOUCESTER

Tush, that was in thy rage:
Speak it again, and, even with the word,
That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love,
Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love;
To both their deaths thou shalt be accessory.

190

LADY ANNE

I would I knew thy heart.

GLOUCESTER

'Tis figured in my tongue.

195

LADY ANNE

I fear me both are false.

GLOUCESTER

Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE

Well, well, put up your sword.

GLOUCESTER

Say, then, my peace is made.

LADY ANNE

That shall you know hereafter.

200

GLOUCESTER

But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE

All men, I hope, live so.

GLOUCESTER

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE

To take is not to give.

GLOUCESTER

Look, how this ring encompasseth finger. 205

Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;

Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.

And if thy poor devoted suppliant may

But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,

Thou dost confirm his happiness for ever. 210

LADY ANNE

What is it?

GLOUCESTER

That it would please thee leave these sad designs

To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,

And presently repair to Crosby Place;

Where, after I have solemnly interr'd 215

At Chertsey monastery this noble king,

And wet his grave with my repentant tears,

I will with all expedient duty see you:

For divers unknown reasons. I beseech you,

Grant me this boon. 220

LADY ANNE

With all my heart; and much it joys me too,

To see you are become so penitent.

Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.

GLOUCESTER

Bid me farewell.

LADY ANNE

'Tis more than you deserve;

But since you teach me how to flatter you, 225

Imagine I have said farewell already.

Exeunt LADY ANNE, TRESSEL, and BERKELEY