

Some Suggested Audition Speeches for Richard III

(Other Shakespeare monologues ok)

RICHARD

Come, bustle, bustle. Caparison my horse. –
Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power. –
I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain.
March on. Join bravely. Let us to it pell mell,
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.
(To his army.) What shall I say more than I have inferred?
Remember whom you are to cope withal,
A sort of vagabonds, rascals and runaways,
A scum of Bretons and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'erloyed country vomits forth
To desperate adventures and assured destruction.
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,
A milksop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as overshoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'erseas again,
Lash hence these overweening rags of France.
Fight, gentlemen of England. – Fight, bold yeomen. –
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves

ANNE

Set down, set down your honorable load,
If honor may be shrouded in a hearse,
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
Th'untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost
To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son,
Stabbed by the selfsame hand that made these wounds.
O, cursed be the hand that made these holes;
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it;
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence.
More direful hap betide that hated wretch
Than I can wish to wolves, to spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives.
If ever he have wife, let her be made
More miserable by the death of him
Than I am made by my young lord and thee. –
Come now towards Chertsey with your holy load.

KING EDWARD

Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death?
My brother killed no man; his fault was thought,
And yet his punishment was bitter death.
Who sued to me for him? Who, in my wrath,
Kneeled at my feet, and bade me be advised?
Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
The mighty Warwick and did fight for me?
Who told me, in the field at Tewkesbury,
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,
And said "Dear brother, live, and be a king"?
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
Sinfully plucked, and not a man of you
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
O God, I fear Thy justice will take hold
On me and you, and mine and yours for this! –
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet. –
Ah, poor Clarence.

SCRIVENER

Here is the indictment of the good Lord Hastings.
Eleven hours I have spent to write it over,
For yesternight by Catesby was it sent me;
And yet within these five hours Hastings lived,
Untainted, unexamined, free, at liberty.
Here's a good world the while. Who is so gross
That cannot see this palpable device?
Yet who so bold but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world and all will come to naught
When such ill dealing must be seen in thought.

TYRREL

The tyrannous and bloody act is done,
The most arch deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
Dighton and Forrest, who I did suborn
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,
Albeit they were fleshed villains, bloody dogs,
Melted with tenderness and mild compassion,
Wept like two children in their deaths' sad story.
"O thus," quoth Dighton, "lay the gentle babes."
"Thus, thus," quoth Forrest, "girdling one another
Within their alabaster innocent arms.
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
A book of prayers on their pillow lay.
We smothered the most sweet work of nature
That from the prime creation e'er she framed."
They could not speak; and so I left them both
To bear this tidings to the bloody king.

MARGARET

Bear with me, I am hungry for revenge.
Thy Edward he is dead, that killed my Edward,
Thy Clarence he is dead that stabbed my Edward.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
But at hand ensues his piteous end.
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray,
To have him suddenly conveyed from hence.
Cancel his bonds of life, dear God I pray,
That I may live and say "The dog is dead."
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I called thee then poor shadow, "painted queen."
Where is thy husband now? Where be thy brothers?
Where are thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy?
Who sues and kneels and says "God save the Queen?"
Thus hath the course of justice whirled about
And left thee but a very prey to time,
Having no more but thought of what thou wast
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.
Now thy proud neck bears half my burdened yoke,
From which even here I slip my weary head
And leave the burden of it all on thee.
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance.
These English woes shall make me smile in France.

DUCHESS

I prithee, hear me speak.

For I shall never speak to thee again.

Either thou wilt die by God's just ordinance

Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,

Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish

And nevermore behold thy face again.

Therefore take with thee my most grievous curse,

My prayers on the adverse party fight,

And there the little souls of Edward's children

Whisper the spirits of thine enemies

And promise them success and victory.

Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.

Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.