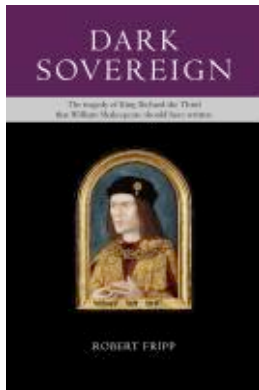


# DARK SOVEREIGN

The tragedy of King Richard the Third  
that William Shakespeare should have written



ROBERT FRIPP



*William Shakespeare's "Tragedy of Richard the Third" branded King Richard with a nightmare reputation. British author Robert Fripp attacks Shakespeare's interpretation by writing "Dark Sovereign" in Shakespeare's English--a first in four centuries. Fripp's "Dark Sovereign" dramatizes the genuine tragedy of King Richard III while becoming the longest play ever written in renaissance English. Fripp produced investigative television before he set out to overturn Shakespeare's verdict on Richard III.*

## **Dark Sovereign**

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OR, THE TRUE TRAGEDY OF  
KING RICHARD THE THIRD

*The play on the life and death of King Richard the Third  
that William Shakespeare should have written.*

ROBERT FRIPP

## **Dark Sovereign**

or, The True Tragedy of King Richard the Third

*The life of King Richard the Third that William Shakespeare should have written*

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Written between 1984 and 1988, *Dark Sovereign* takes the form of a play about the life and reign of King Richard III. *Dark Sovereign* is crafted in English as it stood during the life of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries: The 'Golden Age' of English literature lasted from about 1579 to 1626. *Dark Sovereign* challenges Shakespeare's depiction of Richard III as a moral and physical grotesque.

*Cover:* The Society of Antiquaries of London holds the Copyright to the Paston 'arched frame' portrait of King Richard III. Pamela Tudor-Craig, Ph.D., Lady Wedgwood, describes this portrait as having 'no trace of vilification'. She means that the majority of the nearly twenty known portraits of Richard III show that a hump or shortened arm were added after his death. The Paston family's portrait escaped. This likeness remains as the artist intended.

into an age from whence this act begun.  
 Then are we whither we may discover  
 how that this might be brought to pass.

**Rumour** *blows out the candle.*

**Lights:** *All is dark.*

Until again, farewell.

77

**Rumour** *goes, in darkness.*

## ACT I, SCENE I

---

*A walled garden. Mid-winter, 1471–72*

**Lady Anne** *Neville is discovered, dressed in mourning,  
 heavily cloaked against winter.*

**Sfx:** *Sounds of horsemen arriving.*

**Lady Anne, speaking Northern:** Ha, Richard Gloucester comes at last!

How must I receive him? Until as now I thought to hold back,  
 for hate, cold as the frost that gripes this winter'd garden;  
 to greet proud Gloucester wi' th' ice-dagger  
 is the loathing of a woman dispossess'd.

39

Pah! Instead of that, inly anger doth kiss me into colour;  
 my cheek paints crimson and the like.

My purpose to dissemble slips, beneath a vengeful scorn,  
 the tear-fraught anguish of my loss.

The space of a twelvemonth — two moons less! —  
 twixt troth and mourning gowns. O might I loose  
 th'embowell'd powers of Hecaté against that son of York  
 which slew my prince at Tewkesbury! Lost! Give me lost!

10

40

---

<sup>39</sup> 1.1.5. *That* is omitted from the start of the line.

<sup>40</sup> 1.1.13. *Give me lost:* Give me up for lost.

My heritance; my Prince of Wales; and my ambition! 41  
 Nay, Heart, be still; head, be in calm;  
 whatever pass, tongue say not nay, unless thou cast me  
 on a still more stony ground of my preparing.  
 Our Lady, hear me! Take off my woman frailty;  
 instead whereof do on my heart an hedge of thorn  
 cloak'd all wi' flowers: 20  
 I'll treat this hell-fiend wi' fixen guile. 42  
 Or Lancaster, or York, it matters not.  
 It stands my life upon to marry to the royal house.

Enter **Richard, Duke of Gloucester**, behind her.

Winter wind, have mercy!  
 Quick, avaunt, to carry the blush of ire away.  
 My heart, be still'd. He comes.  
 Methinks great Gloucester has come.

**Gloucester**, *aside*: What stratagem is this? Her fellows henc'd,  
 she stands to winter blast as 'twere fair June.  
 She seems as though she would affect a summer flower. 30

**Anne**, *aside*: He not deigns to speak, but stands apart  
 and stops his tongue. He would regard me rather  
 with a curious eye. 43

**Gloucester**, *aside*: What careful snares she lays.  
 Accoutred in her sighing weeds she chides at me. 44

**Anne**, *aside*: When shall he speak? how give me to discover him?  
 La you, my lord, the lowest hell have not more hating in't  
 than I for thee! My heart-grudge stops my mouth still.

**Gloucester**, *aside*: Perhaps those weeds denote but only piety.  
 Half a year has gone about since Lancaster was brought to die. 40

<sup>41</sup> 1.1.14. *Prince of Wales*: King Henry VI's heir, Edward of Lancaster, Prince of Wales, was betrothed to Lady Anne Neville when they were seventeen, at Angers Cathedral (Wed., July 25, 1470.) See note 4.5.92.

<sup>42</sup> 1.1.21. *fixen*: vixen. Shakespeare was among the first to use the modern spelling. *Fixen* is phonetically stronger here.

<sup>43</sup> 1.1.33. *curious*: careful, calculating.

<sup>44</sup> 1.1.39. *sighing weeds*: mourning garb, dark clothing. Hence the expression 'widow's weeds'.



**Anne**, *aside*: Speak to me, Gloucester, speak! Hot temper  
born of action's easier borne than is th'expecting on't.

**Gloucester**, *aside*: I'll treat with her  
like one whose passage threads a mire.

**Anne**, *aside*: Speak, Gloucester, speak!

I cannot bear silence out more.

45

**Gloucester**: Hem hem.

**Anne**, *aside, panic*: He will I should discover him!

**Gloucester**: Hem hem. My Lady Anne ...

**Anne**, *turns, unruffled. Speaks Southern*: O, how doth your grace? 50

**Gloucester**: Well, madam. But I encroach upon your contemplation.

I thought t'have found you in company of your ladies.

**Anne**: Poor silly slips, I chid them within-door,  
to chatter, at the fire. My heart was woe;  
'tis such an enemy a body needs will fight alone.

*She turns away.*

**Gloucester**, *aside*: Gods a' me! 'Tis comfortable sorrow  
serves her better to friend than to foe!

If she'd indict me of Lancaster's blood hereby,

I'll scold but straightways I shall answer it.

46

*Speaks*: So valiant an hearted prince than Edward seldom lived. 60 47

Had Fortune smiled upon our opposites,

then had that day have been reverse.

48

**Anne**, *aside*: Would God had would ... !

**Gloucester**: How say you?

**Anne** *shakes her head. Aside*: Fate, dost thou despite me?

or despise the time? I would know whether.

**Gloucester**: You shiver for the frost.

<sup>45</sup> 1.1.46. *bear silence out*: pretend to be silent; be responsible for keeping silent.

<sup>46</sup> 1.1.59. *I'll scold ... answer it*: This represents one of the more limited constructions involving *but*, and a difficult one for modern perception. If *but* is taken to mean *even if*, and placed before the clause which it here follows, the actual sense will emerge. Modern English thus: Even if I have to scold (her) (by doing so), I shall reply right away. Note this construction in *The Merchant of Venice*: 'The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction' (3.1.78).

<sup>47</sup> 1.1.60. *than*: was used in comparative contexts during the Period, instead of *as*.

<sup>48</sup> 1.1.62. *had ... have*: Up to the early seventeenth century, *had* and *have* are sometimes found together in compound tenses where one or other is redundant.

I entreat we come within-doors.

**Anne:** I had rather stay, I thank you.

**Gloucester:** May I not see your face? 70

**Anne:** I crave a further moment of indulgence for my grief.

**Gloucester:** Your woman's reason bodies forth Lancaster's death.

My very presence speaks it; which, as it did quicken you, 49

lives yet inwardly, unless it be deliver'd from your brain. 50

'Tis paradox: y'are with quick memories;

and yet, wherein they feed time-was, 51

they do supplant you of what life *shall* be.

He died, my lady ...

**Anne:** *Angry.* My lord, you did him slay!

*Calm.* How well your person I may fairly quit, 80 52

but well the house of York shall stand to time 53

attainted of his life.

**Gloucester:** What, will you have me to put it up without retort?

Lancaster lacks not less innocence from blood! 54

At Wakefield was my father slain; and more than so,

my elder brother Edmund, earl of Rutland,

— scarce had a' seen yet seventeen years.

At York, their heads adornéd were with paper crowns

and bodied with a stake.

Small birds peck'd out the apples of their eyes 90

as they were carcasses of rotted ravens, 55

49 1.1.73. *as it did quicken you*: Loosely, 'as if [your obsession with Lancaster's death] had developed a life of its own in you'.

50 1.1.74. *unless*: until. If *until* had been used, the verb following it would have had to be indicative. Using *unless* permits a less pointed subjunctive tense.

51 1.1.76. *wherein*: to the extent that.

52 1.1.79–80. After screaming line 79 at Gloucester, Lady Anne recalls that she hopes to marry this man! She delivers line 80 calmly, even apologetically, as a complete contrast.

53 1.1.81. *How well ... but well*: Although ... on the other hand.

54 1.1.84. *not less*: Though this usage of less is not identical to those in 2.1.15 and 4.1.6, comparison with those examples will help show how the word evolved through negative senses to the point where it actually seemed to indicate the opposite.

55 1.1.91. *Small birds ... rotted ravens*: The figure implies vendetta. In the medieval period, the raven, a bird of ill omen, was held to prey upon the eggs and young of smaller birds, which took revenge by pecking carcasses of dead ravens.

till at length the stink came up, obedient to the airs,  
for worlds of men to smell out their dishonour.

**Anne:** In likewise fell my sire at Barnet,  
and my prince at Tewkesbury.

**Gloucester:** These were not prick'd upon poles,  
to be in death dishonour'd. Though Edward sits in throne again,  
meseemeth, lo, this many years, a kind of madness reigns 100  
throughout the breadth of all this England.

**Anne:** I pray for both parts; as Lancaster, so York.

**Gloucester, approaching Lady Anne:**

Would I might commend you to your prayers.  
Howbeit, I may withhold th'imperate mind 56  
no more nor I can stay the wind. 57

There needs no spur to a forward horse.  
Interest, will we or nill we, doth press us apace.  
Purblind, yet spurr'd like caparisoned horses of service,  
int'rest doth mar whatsoever it pass.

**Gloucester stops close behind Anne, who flees.**

Your prince was dighted of the very womb 110  
to do his duties and his complements. Nor could he else.

We are what our birth dooms.  
In likewise, Fortune doth compel to struggle  
whomsoe'er she lotteth high degree;  
else, being dash'd, he falleth beneath vaunting hooves.  
There are that tumble early, other late,  
but needs perforce each must bear him alone,  
his visor close, hemm'd all about,  
not seeing nothing but for certain danger lies afore,  
yet impotent to bear a rein upon his fate, 120  
to draw aside, ne yet to stop.

<sup>56</sup> 1.1.104. *th'imperate mind*: a driven, compelled mind. Does Gloucester refer to his own nature as compelled or to the urgent demands of the times? The latter, surely. As I read him, drive was a forced rather than a natural feature of his cautious personality. Or is there more to it? After all, '...imperate acts [are those] wherein we see the empire of the soul' (Sir Matthew Hale, 1609–76).

<sup>57</sup> 1.1.105. *no more nor*: no more than (Northern).

It is commanded of us, madam,  
whatso stars of Destin frame.

Our period is all, where'er it lie. 58

**Anne, aside:** Mine angels, help! I cannot taint with misery. 59

*Speaks:* Speak to me, your grace, more soft and fair.

**Gloucester:** O Anne, if swords were harvest poppets  
made of straw. If darts were thistle-down.  
'Twas in your father's house I learn'd to war.  
Remember wi' yourself, how I bethought was to play David 130  
in Goliath's armour; and whilst did you, a little golden girl,  
sit out and pick pied daisies. For all we fought  
as foes at Barnet, lov'd I your father well.

Never had boy a better master. Ah, sweet lady,  
to be high-born in this England is a blesséd, curséd thing.

**Anne:** Your grace hath ridden far to call me to remembrance;  
to instruct me in the politics.

**Gloucester:** Leave off affected Southern speaking.  
If w'are not to perish for frost, then carry to the mark:  
Vent far-hidden feeling wi' a Neville's Northern tongue. 140

**Anne turns to confront him. Speaks Northern:**

What wouldst tha then?

**Gloucester:** Why, what should I else? I would thee wed.

**Anne:** What mock be that?

Shall deep-affected night roll down her stars,  
translating all to glorious day within a word?

Look well to my apparel, lord.

Thou! from forth malevolents, wert Edward's fellest foe.

**Gloucester:** This body mine alone can loose thee from thy bond. 60

Hess thou so soon forgot? Thy father, Warwick, is most dead.  
Ever sithence, thy protection has devolv'd — so he holds — 150  
upon your sister's husband, mine own brother, Clarence.

<sup>58</sup> 1.1.124. *Our period:* Our eventual fate; Where we end up. Our destiny is pre-ordained. Cf. 1.3.200.

<sup>59</sup> 1.1.125. *taint with:* lose courage or resolve because of.

<sup>60</sup> 1.1.148. *body:* Gloucester includes the word for legal reasons. See 1.2.70–71.

- Imprimis*, your lands; *item*, your portion-money; 61  
 — nay, *item*, your portion of the Warwick earldom,  
 it right title, interest, and cares of state — 62  
 all which, thy rightful heritage,  
 George Clarence holdeth for his *chattels personals*,  
 under colour of his match with Isabel. Be mine, my lady;  
 or shall you rest my brother's *chattel reall*?  
 Clarence shall give you to marriage how he will.
- Anne:** Out of which perdition you would raise me up 160  
 to mine inheritance!
- Gloucester:** I offer to horse thee again. 63  
 Or will'st thou to be bruis'd beneath shod hooves?

<sup>61</sup> 1.1.52. *Imprimis*: In the first place. First! Signals the start of an itemized list. Cf. *item* (Latin), pronounced *eetem*, 1.2.142.

<sup>62</sup> 1.1.154. *it*: its. The neuter possessive pronoun *its* was among late elements to take its present form in Mod. Eng. O.E. and early M.E. had been content with *his* (cf. German *sein*), or *her* as in 'each stone has his shape' or 'every bird has her nest'. According to *OED*: 'Already in M.E. *his* began to be replaced as the possessive neuter pronoun, substitutes being found in *thereof*, *of it*, *the*, and in the North West the genitive use of *hit* and *it* became common around 1600. *Its* is not used in the King James Bible (KJV) of 1611, which has *thereof* besides the *his*, *her* of old grammatical gender. The possessive *it* occurs just once in the 1611 edition, at Leviticus 25.5: "That which groweth of it own accord..." a verse altered to *its* in 1660. *It* was the preferred form when followed by *own* as in "Though in *it own* nature it be too moist" (1607). *The Tempest*, II.i.163 (Globe ed.) has "of it own kinde". That example has been altered in modern editions.'

The first edition of KJV was not slave to old grammatical gender. For example, Coverdale's Bible (1535) gives Jeremiah 8.10: 'The Storke knoweth *his* apoynted tyme'. Freed from grammatical constraints, translators of the KJV give 'Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth *her* appointed times' (Jeremiah 8.7). The stork thus achieves in KJV the feminine gender of fertility.

*Its* had been colloquial around the London-Oxford axis since about 1550. Latimer may have used *it* in 'at its heels', but this example might be the work of a nineteenth century editor. *His* was still the literary neuter pronoun till after 1600. Gerard's *Herball* (1597) contains several hundred chapter headings along the lines of 'Peare tree and his kindes' or 'Cowslip and his kindes'.

Shakespeare was evidently uncomfortable with the modern *its*. *OED* states that the form never occurs in his works during his lifetime, although *it* and *it's* are not uncommon as possessive pronouns. *King Lear*, 1.4.218 (line 239 in Craig) thus: 'The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long, That it had *it* head bit off by *it* young'. On the other hand, all modern editions give 'My dagger muzzled, lest it should bite its master' (*Winter's Tale* 1.2.158).

It is often impossible to tell what was intended without reference to early editions. For example, the Camb. ed. gives *Hamlet* 5.1.243: 'The corse ... did ... fordo *it* own life'. Other modern eds. give *its*. I have tried to use the several variants in the same proportion as I found them in Period texts.

<sup>63</sup> 1.1.162. *horse thee*: put you back in the saddle. To be more prosaic, 'put you back on your feet'. Were Gloucester intending to be coarse, one might take this figure as a *double entendre*, as in expressions such as 'to put the mare to the horse' or 'to take the horse'.

**Anne** *laughs*: You proffer her rare charity, whose troth of hand  
bestoweth on her husband four thousand pound yearly! 64

**Gloucester**: When you are mine!

**Anne**: Such husband as I choose have right!  
Thus much the so-commanding law.

**Gloucester**: The law's a sword, an iron thing, and cold.  
She cuts no deeper than the might of him who would uphold her. 170  
First, marry, an' thou wilt, by Clarence' bidding.  
Then, summon on thy part the clacks of crafty-headed lawyers. 65  
Thus much truth: To snatch the prize, thy corse,  
out of the jealous lion's jaws,  
an army of blind moles shall fare as well.

**Anne**: Perfidious York!

**Gloucester**: Softly, lady. Hear me. We are two younger shoots,  
whose each advantage us endows with common strengths.  
We shall have need t'apply the tother's power.  
Solely, we fall; but go we t' th' world together, 180 66  
we shall master all. Consent with me, and be my love.  
And if so be the soul have in it harmony,  
then may not we together find it twice?

**Anne**: Love is heaven-consolation to the base-begot.  
She falleth from our station. 67

**Gloucester**: Well then, let us raise her to 't. 68  
Not with hyssop, but with myrrh let each touch other's sprite.  
Thou canst love me a little and a little, and thou wilt. 69

**Anne**: You touch love's alchemy  
as if I were a serving woman, you a common ploughman. 190

<sup>64</sup> 1.1.165. Lady Anne Neville's share of the Beauchamp-Despenser estates has been estimated at £3,500 a year (Ross, p.26), making her by far the wealthiest heiress in England.

<sup>65</sup> 1.1.172. *clacks*: tongues.

<sup>66</sup> 1.1.180. *go we t' th' world together*: marry each other.

<sup>67</sup> 1.1.85. *She falleth from our station*: Love is beneath us.

<sup>68</sup> 1.1.186. *her*: Love personified usually took masculine gender, after French precedent. However, Shaks. uses *her* in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 4.3.380.

<sup>69</sup> 1.1.188. *a little and a little*: little by little, by slow degrees.

Again: 'Tis the poor would owe love's solace; 70  
 the great may not countenance love against life. 71

**Gloucester**, *aside*: Here's labour'd love!

If so were that I did doubt this shrew her pedigree,  
 now, for my life, all doubt is dash'd.

Truly speaks a daughter to high Warwick's blood.

*Speaks*: Little and long, or love me not. 72

If thou would'st serve thyself, serve me.

**Anne**, *aside*: What hate so lorn, but melts?

*Speaks*: But we are cousins, cousin. 200

**Gloucester**: The Pope shall grace us by dispensation,  
 being we'll first grease him in the fist.

**Anne**: Then marry, let it be. As touching love,  
 a fire well fuell'd gives forth his brightest flame.

**Gloucester**: How shall I love a one  
 that stands a flight-shot back?

*Approaching, he stops half-way, extends his hands.* 73

Lend me thy hand; give hands thereby. 74

*Lady Anne approaches, but stops short.*

Come hither, Anne, my bride, my love.

I offer thee a token from my heart. 209

*Revealing her own hands, Anne moves to take his.*

*They go.*

<sup>70</sup> 1.1.191. *owe*: own. See note 1.2.86.

<sup>71</sup> 1.1.192. *countenance*: smile upon, support, favour, take the part of.

<sup>72</sup> 1.1.197. *Little and long*: From an English proverb given several forms since c. 1500: 'Love me little, love me long'.

<sup>73</sup> *Stage direction*: Whether Gloucester extends one hand or both will depend on the interpretation of his presumed physical deformity. See notes at 4.3.92 and 5.1.35.

<sup>74</sup> 1.1.207. *give hands*: consent, v., give your consent.

will smooth it with the queen and Council both,  
and draw her in.

**Anne:** By these news I judge thou canst not gain of her. 195

Consider how they did poor Clarence die:  
Upon his brother's head his brother's blood.

**Gloucester:** I have set down my period! 196

Credit me absolutely this.

Was not I litter'd under Libra? 110

Then the case to certain justice shall be tried,  
and of it virtue fully put. 197

We shall obtain our grace. 113

*Exeunt.*

## ACT 2, SCENE 4

*The Council Chamber, Westminster. Mid–April, 1483.*

*The Council assembles, in mourning. Present: the **Queen**, Bishop **Morton**, the three **Councillors**, **Howard**, **Hastings**, **Rotherham**, **Grey**, **Dorset** and **Russell**, with others as may be.*

**Q. Elizabeth:** We meet, my lords, upon a solemn time;  
we are his prisoners. What tortures had I endured,  
were I but giv'n to understand the king had peace.

**Morton:** Rest you easily, madam,  
in certain hope the king hath found eternal grace.

**Q. Elizabeth:** Certain, Morton? Certain?

When day droops into night, who then can light a brand

<sup>195</sup> 2.3.105. *gain of*: gain the advantage over, get the better of.

<sup>196</sup> 2.3.108. *set down my period*: reached a decision, made up my mind. *Period* in this sense evolved to become the name of the dot denoting the end of a sentence in American English.

<sup>197</sup> 2.3.112. *It*: its.



so great 'twill show the hórizont? Nay, my lord. 198  
 The face, the breath, the voice, the touch of hands,  
 the quick, the very certain countenance of life 10  
 rebuke our fond-imagin'd vizard of eternity.  
 Had heaven wept good measure of my grief,  
 the earth had wash'd away.

**Councillor 1**, to 2: Why tears she thus before the Council?

**Councillor 2**, to 1: She thinks, beyond the king's death,  
 t'absolve in sorrow, sin compounded some time of 's reign.

**Q. Elizabeth**: That lies beyond, doth us appear  
 as 'twere th'uncertain comfort of a distant light,  
 spied far apart, across a wood of storm-toss'd trees.

**Morton**: We pray that your faith sustain 20  
 to flect your distresses, until this bitter cup  
 doth somewhat melt from you, into the balm of time.

**Q. Elizabeth**: Would 'twould salve death; yet sorrow,  
 like refiner's fire, yields best remembrance,  
 true, and undefiled.

E'en as now my heart's hand gives me up to take him near. 199  
 I thank you for your comfort, sir. I thank you all, my lords.

*The three Councillors converse among themselves.*

**C2**: Yon Morton does whited sepulchre rarely!

**C3**: A' was born to it: 'Tis just his skin. 30 200

**C1**: He was of Lancaster from Henry's time.

**C3**: Then he became, of Lancaster, a friend of York. 201

**C2**: Now is he chain'd creature from the house of Woodvilles.

**C1**: Better men fall foul, be so they soak up honour  
 with mother's milk. This bishop is a sponge;  
 him falls well supping plots.

**C2**: Pah. A cock aloft his midden crows as well as he!

<sup>198</sup> 2.4.8. *hórizont*: This spelling was already archaic during the Period. However, the final 't' ensures that the stress falls on the first and third syllables, not the second, as in modern English. That Shakespeare used the modern spelling with the old ictus can be seen in *3 Henry VI*, 4.7.81.

<sup>199</sup> 2.4.27. *my heart's hand*: This figure is explained at 3.7.85, *breasts of all hearts*.

<sup>200</sup> 2.4.30. *just*: precisely, exactly. Cf. 'just a pound of flesh' or 'just the fashion'.

<sup>201</sup> 2.4.32. *of Lancaster*: from Lancaster.

- C3:** None doeth as well, nor hath, as Master Morton Chanticleer. 202  
 The straight he maketh crooked; the crooked he maketh fork'd.  
 His life to an end, this prelate brings to end 40  
 the sum of his desires — and that most wonderfully!
- Q. Elizabeth:** To us, lords, is given to guide the prince.  
 As many as over-live the king are chargéd 203  
 to do on the frumpled brow of government. 204
- Morton:** *Vivat* King Edward the Fifth!
- All,** *noises of assent:*  
 All hail King Edward!  
 God save the king!  
 May he long become his throne. 205
- Q. Elizabeth:** Join we t'address the future.
- Howard to Hastings:** Wherein we'll scorch our arses 50  
 in the embers of their past.
- Hastings to Howard:** May God forfend!
- Q. Elizabeth:** A retinue is a preparing:  
 Rivers carries the prince hither from Ludlow.
- Hastings:** How many men come on, your grace?
- Q. Elizabeth:** They number, one and other, some few thousands.
- Hastings:** Some warlike thousands under the earl's dispose  
 make to an army. It shall be jeopardous to peace  
 the king to come so strong.
- Rotherham:** These wait, my lord, attendance upon their king. 60
- Hastings:** They rather dance attendance on the earl!
- Rotherham:** His progress needs must speak  
 the prince's majesty. *Clamour*
- Morton:** His train but serves the prince. *Clamour*
- Grey:** Soldiers witness quality befits the king. *Clamour*
- Dorset:** Men in harness dignify our brother's train. *Clamour*

<sup>202</sup> 2.4.38. Heywood's *Proverbs*: "'Do well, and have well', men say". This goes back in English at least as far as Caxton (*Dialogues*, 47), who takes it from a French source.

<sup>203</sup> 2.4.43. *As many as over-live*: All those who survive [King Edward IV].

<sup>204</sup> 2.4.44. *Do on*: don, put on [clothing, regalia; responsibility].

<sup>205</sup> 2.4.45. *OED* finds neither *Vivat* nor 'God save the king!' from the sixteenth century. However, both appear on the title page of King Henry VIII's Great Bible.

**Howard:** The very air's a cautel ...

**Hastings:** ... sly wi' plots.

**Grey:** Is't not meet the prince should lead  
his leal troop to London?

**Dorset:** What say you, Hastings? Bare your grievance.

**Hastings:** I would know if your Welsh be friend or enemy! 70

**Grey:** Treason!

**Hastings:** Honey'd loyalty drips rather from your lips  
than drives your hearts. Hah, and 'twere for a countenance, 206  
the inly man betrays his skin; your very fronts do flash out  
the ill advantage of your part.

**Dorset:** Set off ill will.

**Howard:** Is not our humour settled? Edward is our king.

What needs for strangers in harness at his back?

**Hastings:** Or Rivers for troops at his beck?

**Dorset:** Your wilfulness makes t'exaggerate the seeming wrong. 80

Our liege must with his retinue.

**Hastings:** By'r Lord, methinks these Welsh owe slight allegiance  
to their prince. Rivers hath made a base head  
to his baser dispose. 207

The house of Woodville would this force;  
which, as heretofore, shall put the royalme on their rack;  
shall pill his body, drain his veins beyond distress ...

**Howard:** ... to venge old woes.

**Morton:** No. No. *Clamour*

**Grey:** Vile injuries! *Clamour*

**Dorset:** Take shame! *Clamour* 90

**Howard:** Whose line speaks loyalty to York

shall lick no tyrant's shoe.

**Hastings:** I shall post-haste to Calais if you'd bid us arms.

I had there liefer 'bide your shock.

**Q. Elizabeth:** I beg of you, lords, peace!

<sup>206</sup> 2.4.73. *for a countenance*: for the sake of appearances.

<sup>207</sup> 2.4.83. *head*: a force, soldiers, an army.

We were best descend within ourselves.

208

Let's treat of this in honourable ways.

**Hastings:** Small honour is, when Wales devoureth London.

**Dorset:** Have you no touch of shame?

**Q. Elizabeth:** Calm ye! Our way is to make compromise to jars.

I'll send t' th' king. How say you to the large limit of ... ?

100

**Hastings:** Two thousand!

**Dorset:** Such trash were a woman's escort, unworthy for the king.

Fly to Calais, Hastings.

For fear of loyalty, go shit thy shame.

*Hastings must be restrained.*

**Hastings:** Fetch our mistress. Beg of her to fight thy quarrel!

*Dorset must be restrained.*

Come! Dost bid me arms? I'll stick you t' th' blood.

**Q. Elizabeth:** I' name o' th' king's living memory, be ruled!

Be bidden, peace! Two thousand men.

Let this be stifled and be done.

**Howard:** This lesser betokens a greater infection, your grace.

110

**Q. Elizabeth:** A greater thing, Howard?

**Howard:** The prince, since his infancy, is put in mind

to do his kinsmen's part; whereas the king his father

will'd this bias should be countervail'd.

**Q. Elizabeth:** No.

**Howard:** He late sought to grant prince Edward his ward

to his brother, Gloucester.

**Dorset:** These lies are nowhere written down.

**Hastings:** Thus runs the fame.

**Howard:** The prince, in nonage, takes the diadem:

120 209

No more may he with 's kin hold narrow friendship.

England is become his best becoméd family of the blood.

**Dorset:** The Household is more worth than other

to appoint his motives to a king.

208 2.4.95. *descend within ourselves*: reflect inwardly, consider quietly, calm down.

209 2.4.120. *in nonage*: during his minority.

**Hastings, to Howard:** Hark how he bears himself in hand. 210  
 Those villains shame not lightly.

**Morton:** Lord Jesus had twelve only apostles.  
 Yet loved he all mankind.

**Hastings:** Lord bishop, you would have the king of England  
 sell indulgences, like priests! 130

**Dorset:** The nature of a king, no less than lesser men,  
 accepteth certain persons, and abaseth others. 211

**Hastings:** Ha, he pleads it loud!

**Howard:** His mind, that rules the sapience of his tree;  
 his heart, whence airy, fiery vital spirits flow;  
 his threads of life, 212  
 wherein attractive and repulsive powers run;  
 those virtues in a king we hold most dear.  
 The common weal — moreover, the weal of our prince’s soul —  
 hath nobler interest than that the king thereof 140 213  
 should wait on his kinsmen’s trough!

**Grey:** Call in the lie! *Clamour*

**Q. Elizabeth:** Retract the slur, do! *Clamour*

**Dorset:** Speaks Calumny’s imp! *Clamour*

**Bishop Russell:** Pray, lords, calm the storm!  
 Prithee, lend audience!  
 Thus. (*Prose sets up a contrast here.*)  
 Rash it would be, and feeble-brain’d, did we, full of  
 native innocence, rely ourselves upon the atonement 150  
 lately concluded betwixt factions at King Edward’s dying.  
 That remain are given to note that nothing doth so evidence  
 our war-apparell’d state as this counter-affirmation doth,  
 abundant in his fury.

<sup>210</sup> 2.4.125. *bears himself in hand*: deludes himself.

<sup>211</sup> 2.4.132. *accepteth certain persons*: In a modern context this might be called a ‘Freudian slip’. Hence Hastings’ terse rebuttal. A biblical Hebraism, in English since Wyclif, this phrase suggests corrupt practices such as conceding undue influences to favorites. Cf. Galatians 2.6, in part: ‘God accepteth no man’s person’ — God doesn’t play favourites!

<sup>212</sup> 2.4.36. *threads of life*: nerves.

<sup>213</sup> 2.4.140. *thereof*: Cf. 1.1.154.

No contract drawn out, hot at hand, in sorry grace, can  
 put men in mind to love one another, where accustom'd variance  
 is rooted in them, lo, this nineteen years. Since our hating  
 begun, the moon's *annus magnus* has come full about, pardie! 214 | 215

The king is dead; but yet as well the king lives  
 as his realm. Our land is one; our only voice speaks several 160  
 parts. By that, the condition of the time changes the mode. 216  
 Solemn office is given us, or to fall the sword upon our head,  
 or to decide the peace.

Hither, we were best be prudent. Needs perforce Gloucester 217  
 must arbitrate our discord, for that King Edward shall be  
 harmless, lees'd of sudden, jealous, wayward nor capricious  
 counsel — if such were verily his puissant father's will. 218

**Dorset:** The dead are not fit to rule the quick.

Thus, anciently, the Parliament.

**Councillor 1, to his fellows:** It were to be wished 170  
 that King Edward had written it down.

**Russell:** Moreover, that the duke doth greet her highness well,  
 his letters did declare the love he bears his nephew,  
 and this Council.

**Dorset:** Or rather bear a brain, lords!

This drift shall sort to woe. 219

<sup>214</sup> 2.4.158. *the moon's annus magnus*: The classical Great Year, or *megas eniautos*, was originally, and usually, applied to a cosmic cycle postulated in Platonic philosophy. Russell uses it here, loosely, to describe the moon's nineteen year cycle, after which it returns to approximately the same apparent position with respect to the sun. Later (1696) the phenomenon would be named the Metonic Year after the Athenian astronomer given credit for describing it (although there is evidence that this cycle was known to the builders of Stonehenge). On the face of it, Russell simply alludes to the fact that the state of quarrel and turbulence in England's politics has continued through a full lunar cycle of nineteen years. Implicit to his fifteenth century listeners is a suspicion that a Christian bishop could not voice: That a natural cycle was coming to an end, and that, for better or worse, things would change.

Russell's passage is written in prose, to contrast with the preceding arguments.

<sup>215</sup> 2.4.158. *pardie*: verily, indeed. A mild oath, fit for a bishop.

<sup>216</sup> 2.4.161. *By that*: In consequence, Therefore.

<sup>217</sup> 2.4.164. *Hither*: To that end, For that reason.

<sup>218</sup> 2.4.167. *prudent*: No evidence links Russell to this speech. However, if Russell was the Croyland Chronicler, he used the word *prudent* to describe those at the meeting who subscribed to this policy. Clearly he agreed with it.

<sup>219</sup> 2.4.176. *sort to*: result in (Bacon).

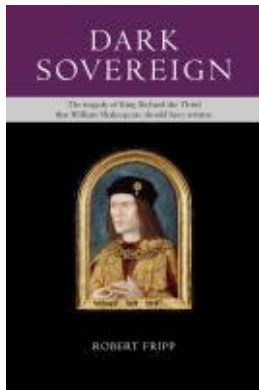
- Rotherham:** Never did regent, of yore, give up his staff lightly.  
Who rules the king, is king!
- Dorset:** Whose nature is not grac'd with majesty, of God,  
corrupteth of authority. 180
- Hastings:** Dorset! y'are that cannot lack advantage  
on the young king's ear. The turn you walk'd  
on royal camomile is done.
- Q. Elizabeth:** We make to a divided house. Belike we are to fall,  
unless we do our diligence to cease from strifes.
- Howard:** Bid we then Gloucester do office,  
and to be Protector of the prince. 220
- Hastings:** Divers examples do precedent us  
i' th' like carriage of affairs.
- Dorset:** We have importancy, and powers enow, to govern. 190  
Ask England else. Bid Gloucester steal about  
his Northern barbary. Wales, and other England else,  
shall be our fee.
- Hastings:** Till war infest your head!  
You sweat ambition out for youthful sap.  
Ware, Dorset, like t'a tree grown over tall,  
ambition without 's root 's obnoxious to a fall. 221
- Dorset:** The king shall have his kingdom;  
England have her king; and we obtain the government!
- Q. Elizabeth:** We shall win nothing at blows; 200  
but much, and we were compromis'd.  
As modesty announce your virtue, Russell, 222  
so let modesties claim ours. 223  
I urge, that we send to Gloucester ...
- Dorset:** Here's harsh deliverance foisted upon us.
- Q. Elizabeth:** Howbeit, we shall not appoint the duke 'Protector',  
lest, as it is thought for, haughtiness possess him

<sup>220</sup> 2.4.187. *and to be*: An infinitive of intention. See this construction in *Merry Wives*, 4.4.57: 'Then let them all encircle him about, And, fairy-like, to pinch the unclean knight'. Cf. note 2.1.144.

<sup>221</sup> 2.4.197. *obnoxious to*: exposed to, open to, liable to.

<sup>222</sup> 2.4.202. *modesty*: moderation, spirit of compromise.

<sup>223</sup> 2.4.203. *modesties*: Shakespeare uses the plural when assigning this quality to more than one person.



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