

Richard III - Shakespeare

Exit [Brakenbury with Keeper].

Second Murderer. What, shall we stab him as he sleeps? 100

First Murderer. No, he'll say 'twas done cowardly when he wakes.

Second Murderer. Why, he shall never wake until the great Judgment Day. 105

First Murderer. Why, then he'll say we stabbed him sleeping.

Second Murderer. The urging of that word "judgment" hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

First Murderer. What, art thou afraid? 110

Second Murderer. Not to kill him, having a warrant; but to be damned for killing him, from the which no warrant can defend me.

First Murderer. I thought thou hadst been resolute.

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115 *Second Murderer.* So I am—to let him live.

First Murderer. I'll back to the Duke of Gloucester and tell him so.

120 *Second Murderer.* Nay, I prithee stay a little. I hope this passionate humor^o of mine will change; it was wont to hold me but while one tells^o twenty.

First Murderer. How dost thou feel thyself now?

Second Murderer. Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

125 *First Murderer.* Remember our reward when the deed's done.

Second Murderer. Zounds,^o he dies! I had forgot the reward.

First Murderer. Where's thy conscience now?

130 *Second Murderer.* O, in the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

First Murderer. When he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

Second Murderer. 'Tis no matter, let it go. There's few or none will entertain it.

135 *First Murderer.* What if it come to thee again?

Second Murderer. I'll not meddle with it; it makes a man a coward. A man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but it checks him; a man cannot lie with his neighbor's wife, but it detects him. 'Tis a blushing shamefaced spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom. It fills a man full of obstacles. It made me once restore a purse of gold that, by chance, I found. It beggars any man that keeps it. It is turned out of towns and cities for a dangerous thing, and every man that means to live well endeavors to trust to himself and live without it.

119 *passionate humor* compassionate mood 120 *tells* counts 126 *Zounds* (an oath, from "By God's wounds")

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First Murderer. Zounds, 'tis even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the Duke.

Second Murderer. Take the devil in thy mind, and believe him^o not. He would insinuate with thee but 150 to make thee sigh.

First Murderer. I am strong-framed; he cannot prevail with me.

Second Murderer. Spoke like a tall^o man that respects thy reputation. Come, shall we fall to work? 155

First Murderer. Take him on the costard^o with the hilts of thy sword, and then throw him into the malmsey butt^o in the next room.

Second Murderer. O excellent device! And make a sop^o of him. 160

First Murderer. Soft, he wakes.

Second Murderer. Strike!

First Murderer. No, we'll reason^o with him.