

THE MARGRIAD

or

THE TRAGEDY OF QUEEN MARGARET

**an anti-war ghost story
for seven actors**

**by William Shakespeare
adapted by Séamus Miller**

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A king of shreds and patches—

(Enter Ghost.)

- Hamlet, Act III Scene 4

THE COMPANY

1. The Chorus, also Gloucester, Pirate, Iden, Clifford, Murderers, Messengers
2. Queen Margaret (1), also Elizabeth (Grey), Cade, William
3. Queen Margaret (2), also Suffolk, Henry V, Lady Anne
4. Queen Margaret (3), also Warwick, Prince Ned
5. King Henry VI, also Clarence, Rutland, Buckingham, Young Prince
6. King Edward IV, also York, King Louis of France
7. King Richard III, also Joan of Arc, Somerset, Duchess of Gloucester

THE LOOK

A very deep playing space that falls off into darkness. Royalty built out of trash. One garment can signify a new character. Dark, sharp, shadowy, and cruel.

THE AUDIENCE

In the original production, patrons chose either a **Red Rose** (Lancaster) or a **White Rose** (York) to wear on their persons. Alternatively, they received temporary tattoos featuring the crests of the respective houses. This choice sent them down two paths into separate seating sections. Characters addressed lines to these sections as either friends or foes, respectively.

TWO NOTES ON STYLE

1: Readers will note that this play contains abrupt tonal shifts, from deadly serious and Shakespearean to darkly ridiculous and contemporary (and back again). It is best to *not smooth out these shifts in any way*—in other words, completely invest in the Shakespearean stakes, and then completely commit to a modern authorial tone without warning, gradation, or apology.

2: This play, like most plays, benefits from extremely tight cues. It is helpful to remind actors that, if they don't speak immediately, someone else will speak for them and take away their chance to win the play. However, the contemporary speeches from dead people in Act Two are meant to feel *completely different*, with no heightened stakes, urgency, attachment, or commentary—just simple curiosity, as if trying to remember a dream.

A NOTE ON DIALECTS

In the original production, the Chorus adopted a different dialect (UK & Ireland) for every additional character they played. No other actors used British dialects. Somewhat surprisingly, we received no complaints, criticisms, or questions about this incongruity, and it became a helpful way of quickly differentiating each of the Chorus' roles.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The Margriad premiered at Avant Bard Theatre in March of 2025.

The roles were performed by:

Stephen Kime (1), Alyssa Sanders (2), Sara Barker (3), Kathleen Akerley (4), Samuel Richie (5), Kiana Johnson (6), Devin Nikki Thomas (7), and Rachel Johns (Sidestudy).

The show was directed by Séamus Miller, stage managed by Laura Schlactmeyer, and designed by Solomon Haileselassie (Lights), Marcus Kyd (Sound), James Finley (Fights & Intimacy), and Charlie Van Kirk (Costumes).

The show was performed with two, ten-minute intermissions (with a total run time of 2 hours and 15 minutes).

PRODUCTION RIGHTS

Much of this play is drawn from Shakespeare's plays, primarily the *Henry VI* trilogy and *Richard III*. The cut, adaptation, and original text are copywritten by Séamus Miller and may only be performed or adapted—in whole or in part—with his written consent. The doubling and breakdown listed above is suggestive only, but imaginative casting is strongly encouraged. All rights are reserved by the adapter.

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PROLOGUE (A)

The Prologue occurs in two sections. In this first section, the three MARGARETS are a hydra-like, three-headed organism—or something. The tone is that of a ghost story, a graveyard at midnight, a vision of the underworld. Other VOICES come out of the surrounding darkness. Perhaps everything is lit by flashlights.

CHORUS

I want to show you something.

Darkness.

VOICE of CHORUS

Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,
When spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves,
That time best fits the work we have in hand.

MARGARET 3 (*Whispering*)

Which of you trembles not that looks on me?

Low light fades up on the Margarets (or they are lit by CHORUS' flashlight)

VOICE 5

Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost.

MARGARET 2

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge.

VOICE 6

Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost.

MARGARET 1

Margaret my name, and daughter to a king.

VOICE 7

A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.

VOICE 5

Remember Margaret was a prophetess.

MARGARET 1

Blood against blood

MARGARET 2

Self against self.

MARGARET 3

Margaret shall be queen, and none but she.

VOICE 6

Belike she minds to play the Amazon.

MARGARET 2

My mourning weeds are laid aside,
And I am ready to put armor on.

Henry VI half-emerges from darkness.

HENRY VI

Marriage! Alas, my years are young!

VOICE 7

I'll undertake to make thee Henry's queen.

HENRY VI

Gentle Margaret, hear me speak.

MARGARET 1

Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone.

Henry fades away.

VOICE 6

Fool! Fool!

MARGARET 1

Where is thy husband now?

MARGARET 2

Where be thy brothers?

MARGARET 3

Where are thy children?

Richard III half-emerges from darkness.

RICHARD III

Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou in my sight?

VOICE 6

Remember Margaret was a prophetess.

MARGARET 3

Out, devil! I remember thee too well.

MARGARET 1

The time will come—

MARGARET 1 & 2

The time will come—

MARGARET 1, 2, & 3

The time will come—

MARGARET 3

When thou shalt wish for me

To help thee curse that poisonous bunch-back'd toad.

VOICE 5

So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

MARGARET 1

Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?

MARGARET 2

Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!

MARGARET 3

Long die thy happy days before thy death!

VOICE 6

Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

MARGARET 3

What were you snarling all before I came?

RICHARD III

Have done thy charm, thou hateful wither'd hag!

MARGARET 2

And leave out thee?

MARGARET 1

O, let me make the period to my curse!

RICHARD III

'Tis done by me, and ends in—

RICHARD & VOICES

Margaret!

Richard fades away.

VOICE 5

Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads.

MARGARET 1 (*building and overlapping*)

I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him /

I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:

Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;

Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him!

MARGARET 2

I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him /

I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:

Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him!

MARGARET 3

I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;

Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him!

They build to an overlapping crescendo—then suddenly stop.

Blackout.

PROLOGUE (B)

CHORUS shines a flashlight on their own face, like a child telling a ghost story. A major tonal shift; the CHORUS is almost cheerful; blowing through hundreds of pages of bloody exposition, but with real enjoyment and dark complicity.

CHORUS

Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen,

Our bending author hath pursued the story,

In little room confining mighty men,

Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.

Small time, but in that small most greatly lived

This star of England:

CHORUS illuminates HENRY V with their flashlight. HENRY is fully & immediately in the middle of his speech.

HENRY V

Then shall he strip his sleeve and show his scars

And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day!'
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of—

He cannot say the word. He has died. CHORUS goes back to lighting their own face.

CHORUS

King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!

VOICE 4

England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

VOICE 6

We mourn in black: why mourn we not in blood?

VOICE 2

Henry is dead and never shall revive.

CHORUS

Fortune made his sword;
By which the world's best garden he achieved,
And of it left his son imperial lord:

Flashlight on HENRY VI. The exact opposite of his father.

KING HENRY VI

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne,
And could command no more content than I?
Was never subject long'd to be a king
As I do long and wish to be a subject.

CHORUS

Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd King.

KING HENRY VI

[Aside] I know not what to say; my title's weak.

VOICE 2

I would your highness would depart the field:
The queen hath best success when you are absent.

Henry VI exits.

CHORUS

This Henry did our Henry Fifth succeed;
Whose state so many had the managing,
That they lost France and made his England bleed.

Enter Joan La Pucelle with her hands bound. CHORUS lights her.

CHORUS

Joan of Arc, lioness of France, is taken prisoner.

VOICES

O, burn her, burn her! Hanging is too good.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

I never had to do with wicked spirits:
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,
Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

VOICES

Away with her to execution!

JOAN

Thus I leave my curse:
May darkness and the gloomy shade of death
Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!

An actor lights a candle at her feet (or something), and we experience the first five seconds of someone being burned alive. A heart wrenching scream. Suddenly, the lights go out and the scream stops.

CHORUS

Useless victory.
So thus it stands, betwixt England and France:
The Hundred Years War:

Year one-hundred-and-seven.
The House of Lancaster favors peace,
The House of York, revenge.
Henry is weak, and everybody's mad!

HENRY VI

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul!
I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
To join your hearts in love—

WARWICK (*Interrupting him*)

I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here,
Giving my verdict on the white rose side.

CHORUS

Warwick and York.

Those two hold up white roses.

SUFFOLK

Prick not your finger as you pluck it off,
Lest bleeding you do paint the white rose red.

CHORUS

Suffolk and Somerset. Henry and Margaret.

Those four hold up Red Roses—maybe Henry does this half-heartedly; perhaps he is more interested in the rose itself than what it represents. During the following, there is a physical showdown between YORK and SOMERSET. WARWICK and SUFFOLK speak as their “right-hand men,” respectively.

WARWICK

Hath not thy rose a canker, Suffolk?

SUFFOLK

Hath not thy rose a thorn, my Lord of Warwick?

WARWICK

Against proud Somerset and Suffolk's cause,
Will I upon York's party wear this rose:
And here I prophesy: this brawl to-day,
Shall send between the red rose and the white
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

CHORUS

Two households, both devoid of dignity,
Present to you: The Wars of the Roses.

ALL

Year one.

VOICE 7

Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
Wailing our losses, as if the tragedy
Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors?

CHORUS

O let the earth be drunken with our blood!
For only War himself will tell you
War's true purpose:

VOICE 5

We kill people and steal their shit.

A small beat.

CHORUS

These days are dangerous.
France.

VOICE 5

Enter Margaret.

VOICE 7

Enter Suffolk.

CHORUS

And begin.

ACT I

Enter SUFFOLK with MARGARET in his hand

SUFFOLK

Be what thou wilt, thou art my prisoner. (*Gazes on her*)
O fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!
For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;
Who art thou? Say, that I may honour thee.

MARGARET

Margaret my name, and daughter to a king.

SUFFOLK

An earl I am, and Suffolk am I call'd.
Be not offended, nature's miracle,
Thou art allotted to be ta'en by me:
Yet, if this servile usage once offend.
Go, and be free again, as Suffolk's friend.
O, stay! (*Aside*) I have no power to let her pass;
My hand would free her, but my heart says no;
Fain would I woo her, yet I dare not speak:
I'll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.
Fie, Suffolk! Disable not thyself;
Hast not a tongue? Is she not here?

MARGARET

Say, Earl of Suffolk--if thy name be so--
What ransom must I pay before I pass?
For I perceive I am thy prisoner.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit,
Before thou make a trial of her love?

MARGARET

Why speak'st thou not? What ransom must I pay?

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore to be won.

MARGARET

Wilt thou accept of ransom? Yea, or no.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

Fond man, remember that thou hast a wife;
Then how can Margaret be thy paramour?

MARGARET (*Aside*)

I were best to leave him, for he will not hear.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

There all is marr'd; there lies a cooling card.

MARGARET (*Aside*)

He talks at random; sure, the man is mad.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

And yet a dispensation may be had.

MARGARET

And yet I would that you would answer me.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

I'll win this Lady Margaret. For whom?

Why, for my king: tush, that's a wooden thing!

MARGARET (*Aside*)

He talks of wood: it is some carpenter.

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

Yet so my fancy shall be satisfied, and peace established
between these realms.

MARGARET

Are you not at leisure?

SUFFOLK (*Aside*)

It shall be so.

Henry is youthful and will quickly yield.

(*To Margaret*) Madam, I have a secret to reveal!

MARGARET (*Aside*)

What though I be enthralld? He seems a knight,
And will not any way dishonour me.

SUFFOLK

Lady, vouchsafe to listen what I say.

MARGARET (*Aside*)

Perhaps I shall be rescued by the French;
And then I need not crave his courtesy.

SUFFOLK

Sweet madam, give me hearing in a cause--

MARGARET (*Aside*)

Tush, women have been captivate ere now.

SUFFOLK

Lady, wherefore talk you so?

MARGARET

I cry you mercy, 'tis but Quid for Quo.

SUFFOLK

Say, gentle princess, would you not suppose
Your bondage happy, to be made a queen?

MARGARET

To be a queen in bondage is more vile
Than is a slave in base servility;
For princes should be free.

SUFFOLK

And so shall you,
If happy England's royal king be free.

MARGARET

Why, what concerns his freedom unto me?

SUFFOLK

I'll undertake to make thee Henry's queen,
To set a precious crown upon thy head,
If thou wilt condescend to be my--

MARGARET

What?

SUFFOLK

His love.

MARGARET

I am unworthy to be Henry's wife.

SUFFOLK

No, gentle madam; I unworthy am
To woo so fair a dame to be his wife,
And have no portion in the choice myself.
How say you, madam, are ye so content?

MARGARET

An if my father please, I am content.

SUFFOLK

Then, madam, at your father's castle walls
We'll crave a parley, to confer with him.

CHORUS

He treats her like a princess.
By which, I mean, he buys her from her dad.
Reigner, her father.

Perhaps CHORUS puts on a French accent and a ridiculous hat.

CHORUS as REIGNER

Since thou dost deign to woo her little worth
To be the princely bride of such a lord;
Upon condition I may quietly
Enjoy mine own, the country Maine and Anjou,
My daughter shall be Henry's, if he please.

SUFFOLK

That is her ransom; I deliver her;
And those two counties I will undertake
Your grace shall well and quietly enjoy.
Reigner of France, I give thee kingly thanks,
Because this is in traffic of a king.
(Aside) And yet, methinks, I could be well content
To be mine own attorney in this case.

MARGARET

Farewell, my lord: good wishes, praise and prayers
Shall Suffolk ever have of Margaret.

SUFFOLK

Farewell, sweet madam: but hark you, Margaret;
No princely commendations to my king?

MARGARET

Such commendations as becomes a maid.

SUFFOLK

No loving token to his majesty?

MARGARET

Yes, my good lord, a pure unspotted heart
I send the king.

SUFFOLK

And this withal.

Kisses her.

MARGARET

That for thyself: I will not so presume
To send such peevish tokens to a king.

*Exeunt SUFFOLK and MARGARET. WARWICK is revealed in a
different light and space.*

CHORUS

This news strikes Warwick to the quick—

WARWICK

Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?
After the slaughter of so many peers,
So many captains, gentlemen and soldiers,
That sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?
O Warwick, Warwick! I foresee with grief
The utter loss of all the realm of France.

CHORUS

And reaches Henry. Observe their conference:
I'll be an auditor—an actor, too, perhaps, if I see cause.

Enter HENRY VI and SUFFOLK.

KING HENRY VI

Your wondrous rare description, noble earl,
Of beauteous Margaret hath astonish'd me!

SUFFOLK

Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale
Is but a preface of her worthy praise.

KING HENRY VI

Therefore, my lord protector—

CHORUS

Gloucester.

KING HENRY VI

—give consent
That Margaret may be England's royal queen.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

You know, my lord, your highness is betroth'd
Unto another lady of esteem:
How shall we then dispense with that contract,
And not deface your honor with reproach?

SUFFOLK

A poor earl's daughter is unequal odds,
And therefore may be broke without offense.

GLOUCESTER

Why, what, I pray, is Margaret more than that?

SUFFOLK

Yes, lord, her father is a king.

GLOUCESTER

But without a liberal dower—

SUFFOLK

A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,
That he should be so abject, base and poor,
To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.
Henry is able to enrich his queen
And not seek a queen to make him rich;
So worthless peasants bargain for their wives.
Whom should we match with Henry, being a king,
But Margaret, that is daughter to a king?

Perhaps MARGARET appears in the background as a statue/vision.

SUFFOLK

Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit,
More than in women commonly is seen,
Will answer our hope in issue of a king;
For Henry, son unto a conqueror,
Is likely to beget more conquerors.
Then yield, my lords; and here conclude with me
That Margaret shall be queen, and none but she.

KING HENRY VI

I feel such sharp dissension in my breast,
Such fierce alarms both of hope and fear,
As I am sick with working of my thoughts.
Take, therefore, shipping; post, my lord, to France;
Agree to any covenants, and procure
That Lady Margaret do vouchsafe to be
King Henry's faithful and anointed queen!

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and HENRY.

SUFFOLK

Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd; and thus to France.
Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king;

But I will rule both her, the king and realm.

Exit. Music. Enter MARGARET 1. She and SUFFOLK kiss, after which they immediately introduce MARGARET to HENRY VI.

SUFFOLK

I humbly now upon my bended knee
Deliver up my title in the queen.

KING HENRY VI

Suffolk, arise. Welcome, Queen Margaret:
I can express no kinder sign of love
Than this kind kiss. *(He kisses her hand)*
Such is the fulness of my heart's content.
Lords, with one cheerful voice welcome my love.

ALL

Long live Queen Margaret, England's happiness!

QUEEN MARGARET

We thank you all.

SUFFOLK

My lord protector, so it please your grace,
Here are the articles of contracted peace.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

[Reads] 'Imprimis, it is agreed between the French
king Charles, and William of
Suffolk, ambassador for Henry King of England, that
the said Henry shall espouse the Lady Margaret,
and crown her Queen of England, upon which time, the
duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine shall be released
and delivered to the king her father--

He lets the paper fall.

KING HENRY VI

Uncle, how now!

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Pardon me, gracious lord; I can read no further.

KING HENRY VI

I pray, read on.

GLOUCESTER

[Picking it up and reading, with difficulty] 'Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the king her father, and she sent to England without having any dowry.'

KING HENRY VI

They please us well.
Come, let us in, and with all speed provide
To see her coronation be perform'd.

Exeunt KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and SUFFOLK

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,
To you poor Gloucester must unload his grief!
What! Did my brother Henry spend his youth,
His valor, coin, and people, in the wars
To conquer France, his true inheritance?
Have you yourself, victorious Warwick,
Received deep scars in France and Normandy?
And shall these labors and these honors die?
O peers of England, shameful is this league!
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,
Undoing all, as all had never been!

WARWICK

My sword should shed hot blood, mine eyes no tears.
Anjou and Maine! Myself did win them both;
Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer:
And are the cities, that I got with wounds,
Delivered up again with peaceful words?
France should have torn and rent my very heart,
Before I would have yielded to this league.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Warwick, farewell; and say, when I am gone,
I prophesied France will be lost ere long.

They exit. YORK comes forward.

CHORUS

Enter Richard, Duke of York.

He's Richard the Third's dad,
But he's *not* Richard the Second,
Which is confusing as shit—
And we're all just gonna get through that together.

YORK

So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue,
While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.
Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!
Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,
Even as I have of fertile England's soil.
A day will come when York shall claim his own;
And, when I spy advantage, claim the crown.
Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,
Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist.
Nor wear the diadem on his head,
Whose church-like humours fit not for a crown.
Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:
Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,
And, force perforce, I'll make him yield the crown,
Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.

*Exit YORK. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER,
WARWICK, and the DUCHESS (wife of Gloucester)*

KING HENRY VI

For my part, noble lords, I care not which;
Either Somerset or York, all's one to me.

WARWICK

Dispute not that: York is the worthier.

SUFFOLK

Ambitious Warwick, let thy betters speak.

WARWICK

Show some reason, then
Why Somerset should be preferred in this.

QUEEN MARGARET

Because the king, forsooth, will have it so.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Gloucester again—
Madam, the king is old enough himself

To give his censure: these are no women's matters.

QUEEN MARGARET

If he be old enough, what needs your grace
To be protector of his excellence?

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Madam, I am protector of the realm;
And, at his pleasure, will resign my place.

SUFFOLK

Resign it then and leave thine insolence.
Since thou wert king--as who is king but thou?--
The commonwealth hath daily run to wreck.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thy sale of offices and towns in France,
If they were known, as the suspect is great,
Would make thee quickly hop without thy head!

*Exit GLOUCESTER, refusing to argue with them. His wife trails
behind him.*

DUCHESS of GLOUCESTER

My lord! (*Aside*)

CHORUS (*removing his GLOUCESTER attire*)

Gloucester's wife—

DUCHESS of GLOUCESTER

Follow I must; I cannot go before;
Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
I would remove these tedious stumbling-blocks
And smooth my way upon their headless necks!

QUEEN MARGARET drops her fan,

QUEEN MARGARET (*to the Duchess*)

Give me my fan: what, minion! Can ye not?

She gives the DUCHESS a box on the ear.

QUEEN MARGARET

I cry you mercy, madam; was that you?

DUCHESS

Was't I! yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman:
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
I'd set my ten commandments in your face!

KING HENRY VI

Sweet aunt, be quiet; 'twas against her will.

DUCHESS

Against her will! good king, look to't in time;
She'll hamper thee, and dandle thee like a baby:
Though in this place most masters wear no breeches,
She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unrevenged.

Exit all but MARGARET and SUFFOLK

QUEEN MARGARET

My Lord of Suffolk, say, is this the guise,
Is this the fashion in the court of England?
What shall King Henry be a pupil still
Under the surly Gloucester's governance?
Am I a queen in title and in style,
And must be made a subject to a duke?
I tell thee, Suffolk, when in France
Thou ran'st a tilt in honour of my love
I thought King Henry had resembled thee
In courage, courtship and proportion:
But all his mind is bent to holiness,
To number Ave-Marias on his beads;
I would the college of the cardinals
Would choose him pope, and carry him to Rome!

SUFFOLK

Madam, be patient—

QUEEN MARGARET

Beside the haughty protector, have we Warwick,
And grumbling York, and not the least of these
But can do more in England than the king.

SUFFOLK

And he of these—

QUEEN MARGARET

Not all these lords do vex me half so much
As that proud dame, the lord protector's wife!

She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
More like an empress than Lord Gloucester's wife:
Strangers in court do take her for the queen:
Shall I not live to be avenged on her?
Contemptuous base-born callet as she is!

SUFFOLK

Madam, myself have limed a bush for her;
She'll never mount to trouble you again.
So, let her rest: and, madam, list to me;
One by one, we'll weed them all at last,
And you yourself shall steer the happy helm.

CHORUS

A trap is laid, to catch the Duchess in her conjurations.

The Duchess engages in a conjuration of evil spirits.

DUCHESS

Well said, my masters; and welcome all.
Wizards know their times.

It thunders and lightens terribly; then the Spirit riseth.

DUCHESS

Answer that I shall ask!
'First of the king: what shall of him become?'

CHORUS (as EVIL SPIRIT)

Vos omnes morituri!!!

*Sound abruptly stops, lights pop on, and we see she is surrounded
by YORK's forces.*

YORK

Lay hands upon this traitor and her trash!
Bedlam, I think we watch'd you at an inch.

She is dragged out.

YORK

The king is now in progress towards Saint Alban's,

With him the husband of this lovely lady:
Thither go these news, as fast as horse can
carry them:
A sorry breakfast for my lord protector.

We suddenly jump into:

KING HENRY VI

What tidings with our cousin York?

YORK

Such as my heart doth tremble to unfold.
Lady Eleanor, the protector's wife,
Have practiced dangerously against your state,
Raising up wicked spirits from under ground,
Demanding of King Henry's death.

KING HENRY VI

O God!

QUEEN MARGARET

Gloucester, see here the tainture of thy nest.
And look thyself be faultless, thou wert best.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Madam, for myself, to heaven I do appeal,
How I have loved my king and commonweal:
And, for my wife, I know not how it stands;
Sorry I am to hear what I have heard:
Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.
I beseech your majesty, give me leave to go—

KING HENRY VI

Stay: ere thou go, give up thy staff:
Henry will to himself protector be.

QUEEN MARGARET

Give up your staff.
I see no reason why a king of years
Should need to be protected like a child.
God and King Henry govern England's realm.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

My staff? Here, noble Henry, is my staff:
See—even as willingly at thy feet I leave it

As others would ambitiously receive it.

Exit GLOUCESTER.

QUEEN MARGARET

Why, now is Henry king, and Margaret queen;
This staff of honour raught, there let it stand
Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand.

She puts the staff in his hand. They exit. Enter the DUCHESS in a white sheet. VOICES boo and shame her.

DUCHESS

I never had to do with wicked spirits!
Come you, my lord, to see my open shame?

GLOUCESTER

Be patient, gentle Nell; forget this grief.

DUCHESS

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself!
For whilst I think I am thy married wife
Methinks I should not thus be led along,
Mail'd up in shame, with papers on my back,
And followed with a rabble that rejoice
To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans!

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell.

He starts to go.

DUCHESS

What, gone, my lord, and bid me not farewell!

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Witness my tears, I cannot stay to speak.

Exit Gloucester and Duchess, severally. Enter KING HENRY VI and MARGARET.

KING HENRY VI

I muse my Lord of Gloucester is not come.

QUEEN MARGARET

Can you not see? Or will ye not observe
How insolent of late he is become,
Disdaining duty that belongs to us?
Small curs are not regarded when they grin;
But great men tremble when the lion roars;
And Gloucester is no little man in England.
First note that he is near you in descent,
And should you fall, he as the next will mount.
The reverent care I bear unto my lord
Made me collect these dangers in the duke.
If it be fond, call it a woman's fear.

SUFFOLK

Well hath your highness seen into this duke;
Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep;
And in his simple show he harbors treason.

KING HENRY VI

The duke is virtuous, mild and too well given
To dream on evil or to work my downfall.

QUEEN MARGARET

Is he a lamb? His skin is surely lent him,
For he's inclined as is the ravenous wolf.

Enter GLOUCESTER

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Pardon, my liege, that I have stay'd so long.

SUFFOLK

Nay, Gloucester, know that thou art come too soon;
I do arrest thee of high treason here.

GLOUCESTER

Who can accuse me? Wherein am I guilty?

MARGARET

'Tis thought, my lord, that you took bribes of France,
And, being protector, stayed the soldiers' pay.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Is it but thought so? What are they that think it?
I never robb'd the soldiers of their pay,
Nor ever had one penny bribe from France.

SUFFOLK

It serves you well, my lord, to say so much.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

I say no more than truth, so help me God!

SUFFOLK

My lord, these faults are easy, quickly answered:
But mightier crimes are laid unto your charge,
Whereof you cannot easily purge yourself.

KING HENRY VI

My lord of Gloucester, 'tis my special hope
That you will clear yourself from all suspect.

CHORUS (as GLOUCESTER)

Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous:
Virtue is choked with foul ambition
And charity chased hence by rancour's hand.
I know their complot is to have my life,
And if my death might make this island happy,
And prove the period of their tyranny,
I would expend it with all willingness:
But mine is made the prologue to their play;
For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.
By false accuse they level at my life:
Ay, all you have laid your heads together--
Myself had notice of your conventicles--
And all to make away my guiltless life.
I shall not want false witness to condemn me,
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;
The ancient proverb will be well effected:
'A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.'

SUFFOLK

My liege, his railing is intolerable.
Sirs, take away the duke, and guard him sure.

Exit, guarded

KING HENRY VI

My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,
Do or undo, as if ourself were here.

QUEEN MARGARET

What, will your highness leave the parliament?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drown'd with grief.
His fortunes I will weep; and, 'twixt each groan
Say 'Who's a traitor? Gloucester he is none.'

Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET, SUFFOLK, and YORK.

QUEEN MARGARET

Henry my lord is cold in great affairs,
Too full of foolish pity, and Gloucester's show
Beguiles him as the mournful crocodile.
This Gloucester should be quickly rid the world,
To rid us of the fear we have of him.

SUFFOLK

Madam, 'tis true;
'Tis no matter how, so he be dead.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thrice-noble Suffolk, 'tis resolutely spoke.

SUFFOLK

Here is my hand, the deed is worthy doing.

QUEEN MARGARET

And so say I.

YORK

And I, and now we three have spoke it,
It skills not greatly who impugns our doom.

The three of them physically seal their oath. Whatever this triumvirate gesture looks like, it can be repeated each time three characters seal a pact (before betraying each other, of course).

CHORUS

Don't kill the messenger!

CHORUS (as MESSENGER)

Great lords, from Ireland am I come amain,
To signify that rebels there are up
And put the Englishmen unto the sword.

QUEEN MARGARET

My Lord of York,
To Ireland will you lead a band of men,
And try your hap against th'uncivil kerns?

YORK

I will, my lady.

Exeunt all but YORK, and we jump into:

YORK

Now, York, or never. Steel thy fearful thoughts
And change misdoubt to resolution
Be that thou hop'st to be, or what thou art.
Resign to death: it is not worth th' enjoying.
My brain more busy than the laboring spider
Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.
Well, nobles, well, 'tis politicly done,
To send me packing with an host of men:
'Twas men I lack'd and you will give them me:
I take it kindly; and yet be well assured
You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.
I will stir up in England some black storm
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
(Cade appears in the shadows) John Cade.
This devil here shall be my substitute.
Say that he thrive, as 'tis great like he will,
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;
For Gloucester being dead, as he shall be,
And Henry put apart, the next for me.

*Exit. During the end of the preceding monologue, MARGARET
and SUFFOLK murder GLOUCESTER, smothering him with a
pillow.*

KING HENRY VI

Go, call our uncle to our presence straight;
Say we intend to try his grace to-day.
If he be guilty, as 'tis published.

SUFFOLK

I'll call him presently, my noble lord.

Exit SUFFOLK.

QUEEN MARGARET

God forbid any malice should prevail,
That faultless may condemn a nobleman!

KING HENRY VI

I thank thee, Meg; these words content me much.

Re-enter SUFFOLK

KING HENRY VI

How now! Where is our uncle? What's the matter, Suffolk?

SUFFOLK

Dead in his bed, my lord; Gloucester is dead.

QUEEN MARGARET

Marry, God forfend!

KING HENRY VI swoons

QUEEN MARGARET

How fares my lord? Help, lords! The king is dead.
Run, go, help, help! O Henry, ope thine eyes!

SUFFOLK

He doth revive again: madam, be patient.

KING HENRY VI

O heavenly God!

QUEEN MARGARET

How fares my gracious lord?

SUFFOLK

Comfort, my sovereign! gracious Henry, comfort!

KING HENRY VI

What, doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?
Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words!
Lay not thy hands on me; forbear, I say;
Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!
Yet do not go away: come, basilisk,

And kill the innocent gazer with thy sight;
For in the shade of death I shall find joy;
In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead.

QUEEN MARGARET

Why do you rate my Lord of Suffolk thus?
When he most Christian-like laments his death:
And for myself, foe as he was to me,
I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
And all to have the noble duke alive.
What know I how the world may deem of me?
For it is known we were but hollow friends:
It may be judged I made the duke away;
So shall my name with slander's tongue be wounded,
This get I by his death: ay me, unhappy!
To be a queen, and crown'd with infamy!

KING HENRY VI

Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man!

QUEEN MARGARET

Be woe for me, more wretched than he is.
What, dost thou turn away and hide thy face?
I am no loathsome leper; look on me!
Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb?
Why, then, dame Margaret was ne'er thy joy.
Erect his statue and worship it!
Ay me, I can no more! die, Margaret!
For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long.

CHORUS

Don't kill the messenger.

CHORUS (as MESSENGER)

It is reported, mighty sovereign,
That good Gloucester traitorously is murder'd
By Suffolk!

Re-enter WARWICK

WARWICK

As surely as my soul intends to live
I do believe his violent hands were laid
Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke.

QUEEN MARGARET

Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?

SUFFOLK

I wear no knife to slaughter sleeping men;
But here's a vengeful blade, rusted with ease,
That shall be scoured in his rancorous heart
That slanders me with murder's crimson badge.

WARWICK

What dares not Warwick, if false Suffolk dare him?

SUFFOLK and WARWICK draw their weapons

KING HENRY VI

Why, how now, lords! your wrathful weapons drawn
Here in our presence! dare you be so bold?

WARWICK

Unless Lord Suffolk straight be done to death,
Or banished fair England's territories,
I will by violence tear him from your palace!
I say, by him the good Duke Gloucester died;
I say, in him I fear your highness' death.

KING HENRY VI

I thank thee for thy tender loving care;
And I do purpose as you do entreat;
He shall not breathe infection in this air
But three days longer, on the pain of death.

QUEEN MARGARET

O Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk!

KING HENRY VI

Ungentle queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!
If, after three days' space, thou here be'st found
On any ground that I am ruler of,
The world shall not be ransom for thy life.

Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET and SUFFOLK

QUEEN MARGARET

Mischance and sorrow go along with you!
There's two of you; the devil make a third!

And threefold vengeance tend upon your steps!

SUFFOLK

Cease, gentle queen, these execrations,
And let thy Suffolk take his heavy leave.

QUEEN MARGARET

Fie, coward woman and soft-hearted wretch!
Hast thou not spirit to curse thine enemy?

SUFFOLK

A plague upon them! Wherefore should I curse them?
Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,
Then even now my burdened heart would break,
Should I not curse them. Poison be their drink!
All the foul terrors in dark-seated hell--

QUEEN MARGARET

Enough, sweet Suffolk; thou torment'st thyself!

SUFFOLK

You bade me ban, and will you bid me leave?

QUEEN MARGARET

O, let me entreat thee cease. Give me thy hand,
That I may dew it with my mournful tears;
Nor let the rain of heaven wet this place,
To wash away my woeful monuments.
So, get thee gone, that I may know my grief;
'Tis but surmised whiles thou art standing by.
I will repeal thee, or, be well assured,
Adventure to be banished myself:
And banished I am, if but from thee.
Go; speak not to me; even now be gone.
O, go not yet! Even thus two friends condemn'd
Embrace and kiss and take ten thousand leaves,
Loather a hundred times to part than die.
Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee!

SUFFOLK

Thus is poor Suffolk ten times banished;
Once by the king, and three times thrice by thee.
'Tis not the land I care for;
For where thou art, there is the world itself,
And where thou art not, desolation.
I can no more.

QUEEN MARGARET

Now get thee hence: the king, thou know'st, is coming.

SUFFOLK

O, let me stay, befall what may befall!

QUEEN MARGARET

Away!

To France, sweet Suffolk.

SUFFOLK

I go.

QUEEN MARGARET

And take my heart with thee.

SUFFOLK

This way fall I to death.

QUEEN MARGARET

This way for me.

MARGARET exits. SUFFOLK starts to exit, but:

CHORUS

And then—incidental pirates!

CHORUS (as PIRATE)

Thy lips that kiss'd the queen shall sweep the ground!

SUFFOLK

It is impossible that I should die
By such a lowly vassal as thyself.

CHORUS (as PIRATE)

Great men oft die by vile bezonians,
And Suffolk dies by pirates.

SUFFOLK is killed.

CHORUS (as PIRATE)

There let his head and lifeless body lie,
Until the queen his mistress bury it.

MARGARET enters and cradles SUFFOLK's dead body.

CHORUS (Singing - "Red is the Rose")

Red is the rose, that in yonder garden grows;

Fair is the lily of the valley;
Clear is the water that flows from the Lune,
But my love is fairer than any.

SUFFOLK's eyes open. During the following verse, the actor slowly stands and is re-costumed by the ensemble.

CHORUS + 1 HARMONY (*Singing, Cont.*)

Red is the rose, that in yonder garden grows;
Fair is the lily of the valley;
Clear is the water that flows from the Lune,
But my love is fairer than any.

In a remarkable, tender, and upsetting alchemical event, DEAD SUFFOLK has become MARGARET 2. MARGARET 1 places the crown upon her head.

MARGARET 1

(To Margaret 2)
Margaret.

Blackout. End of Act I.

ACT II

The ensemble sings/chants some of "My Son John" (reference recording)—perhaps they are all wounded (head bandages, crutches, in wheelchairs, missing limbs, acute PTSD, etc.) and they do a silly and very disturbing dance number to:

CHORUS (*Singing*)

My son John was tall and slim,
And he had a leg for every limb!

ALL

But now he's got no legs at all
For he ran a race with a cannonball!
Timmy roo dun da, fadda riddle da
Whack fo' the riddle Timmy roo dun da!

CHORUS

Well were ya drunk or were ya blind
When ya left your two fine legs behind?

ALL

Or was it sailin' on the sea
Wore your two fine legs right down to the knee?
Timmy roo dun da, fadda riddle da
Whack fo' the riddle Timmy roo dun da!

CHORUS

Each foreign war I'll now denounce
'tween the King of England and the King of France!

ALL

For I'd rather my legs as they used to be
Than the king of Spain and his whole navy!
Timmy roo dun da, fadda riddle da
Whack fo' the riddle Timmy roo dun da!

Lights change abruptly, everyone disappears except CHORUS.

CHORUS

Well, I say it was never merry world in England since
gentlemen came up. Margaret, our gracious Queen,
perambulates about the court, still cradling her lover's
severed head, which just makes it... hard to relax.

Enter MARGARET 2, cradling a skull that is wearing SUFFOLK's hat (or something).

QUEEN MARGARET

Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast:
But where's the body that I should embrace?
Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind,
And makes it fearful and degenerate;
Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.
But who can cease to weep and look on this?

Enter Henry.

KING HENRY VI

How now, madam!
Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death?
I fear me, love, if that I had been dead,
Thou wouldst not have mourn'd so much for me.

CHORUS

DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER!!!

KING HENRY VI

How now! what news?

CHORUS (as MESSENGER)

The rebels are in Southwark! Fly, my lord!
Jack Cade proclaims himself a rebel king!

KING HENRY VI

O graceless men! they know not what they do.
Come, Margaret; God, our hope, will succor us.

They exit, enter CADE.

VOICES

John Cade! John Cade! John Cade!

CADE

Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows
reformation! There shall be in England seven
halfpenny loaves sold for a penny: the three-hooped
pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony
to drink light beer. When I am king, as king I will be--

ALL

God save your majesty!

CADE

The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

VOICE 7

Vile populist!

CADE

It is to you, good people, that I speak,
For I am rightful heir unto the crown.

VOICE 5

Jack Cade, the Duke of York hath taught you this.

CADE

[Aside] He lies, for I invented it myself.
Tell the king from me, that, he
hath gelded the commonwealth and made it an eunuch: and
more than that, he can speak French; and
therefore he is a traitor.

VOICE 7

O gross and miserable ignorance!

CADE

And here, standing upon London-stone, I charge and
command that, of the city's cost, the pissing-conduit run
nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. Come,
then, let's go set London bridge on fire; and, if you can, burn
down the Tower too!

CHORUS

But Cade is ambushed—

CADE is unseated in some surprising and disrespectful way.

CHORUS

Iden.

CADE

Villain! I'll make thee eat iron like an ostrich and leave you all as dead as a
doornail!

They fight. CADE is slain.

CHORUS (as IDEN)

Is't Cade that I have slain, that monstrous traitor?
Hence will I drag thee headlong to a dunghill
And there cut off thy most ungracious head;
Which I will bear in triumph to the king.

He starts dragging CADE off. Enter MARGARET and HENRY VI.

MARGARET

Cade is fled, and all his powers do yield!

VOICES

God save the king! God save the king!

CHORUS

Don't kill the messenger!

CHORUS (as MESSENGER)

Please it your highness to be advertised
The Duke of York is newly come from Ireland,
And with a mighty power—to remove from thee
The Duke of Somerset, whom he terms traitor.

KING HENRY VI

Thus stands my state, 'twixt Cade and York distress'd.
Like to a ship that, having 'scaped a tempest,
Is straightway calm'd and boarded with a pirate:
Go ask him what's the reason of these arms.
Hide Somerset until York's army be dismiss'd.
Come, wife, let's in, and learn to govern better;
For yet may England curse my wretched reign.

They exit.

CHORUS

York arrives.

YORK

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right;
I am far better born than is the king,
More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts—

CHORUS

The king hath yielded unto thy demand:
The Duke of Somerset is in the Tower.

YORK

Upon thine honour, is he prisoner?

CHORUS

(Crossing fingers) Upon mine honour, he is prisoner.

YORK

Then I do dismiss my powers—
So Somerset may die.

Enter HENRY, we jump into:

YORK

In all submission and humility
York doth present himself unto your highness.

KING HENRY VI

Then what intends these forces thou dost bring?

YORK

To heave the traitor Somerset from hence,
And fight against that monstrous rebel Cade—

Enter IDEN, flash-lighting CADE'S "severed" head.

CHORUS (as IDEN)

If one so rude and of so mean condition
May pass into the presence of a king,
Lo, I present your grace a traitor's head,
The head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.

KING HENRY VI

The head of Cade! Great God, how just art Thou!

Enter QUEEN MARGARET and SOMERSET

KING HENRY VI

See, Somerset comes with the queen:
Go, bid her hide him quickly from the duke.

QUEEN MARGARET

For thousand Yorks he shall not hide his head,
But boldly stand and front him to his face.

YORK

How now! Is Somerset at liberty?

False king! why hast thou broken faith with me,
Knowing how hardly I can brook abuse?
King did I call thee? No, thou art not king,
Not fit to govern and rule multitudes!
Give place: by heaven, thou shalt rule no more!

QUEEN MARGARET

O monstrous traitor!

SOMERSET

I arrest thee, York,
Of capital treason 'gainst the king and crown;

QUEEN MARGARET

Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace.

KING HENRY VI

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?
O, where is faith? O, where is loyalty?

YORK

I am resolved for death or dignity!

CHORUS

The Battle of St. Alban's.

SOMERSET is wounded, everything changes, and he looks out at the audience. He speaks as if he is trying to remember a dream.

SOMERSET

My name is Edward Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.
I died at St. Alban's.
There was a boy on the battlefield.
He had a head but not a face.
I stared.
An axe cut through my shoulder.
I tried to think about the war...
I think I started it.
But it felt so insubstantial, far-off, like a dream.
Then something else happened.

CHORUS gestures for SOMERSET to exit, and he does.

CHORUS

Victory for York and Warwick.

"Yorick," if you will.

MARGARET and HENRY enter, fleeing the battle.

QUEEN MARGARET

Away, my lord! you are slow; for shame, away!

KING HENRY VI

Can we outrun the heavens? good Margaret, stay.

QUEEN MARGARET

What are you made of? you'll nor fight nor fly.

If you be ta'en, we then should see the bottom

Of all our fortunes: but if we haply scape

We shall to London get, where you are loved!

KING HENRY VI

Oh god, oh god!

QUEEN MARGARET

For shame!

She drags him off.

WARWICK

I wonder how the king escaped our hands.

YORK

See where he comes.

Enter HENRY, meeting them.

KING HENRY VI

What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?

Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;

I am the son of Henry the Fifth,

Who made the Dauphin and the French to stoop

And seized upon their towns and provinces.

WARWICK

Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.

KING HENRY VI

The lord protector lost it, and not I:

When I was crown'd I was but nine months old.

YORK

You are old enough now, and yet, methinks, you lose.

KING HENRY VI

Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne,

Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?

No: first shall war unpeople this my realm!

Why faint you, lords?

My title's good, and better far than his.

WARWICK

Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.

KING HENRY VI

Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.

YORK

'Twas by rebellion against his king.

KING HENRY VI

[*Aside*] I know not what to say; my title's weak.

All will revolt from me, and turn to him.

[*To York*] Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?

YORK

What then?

KING HENRY VI

Let me for this my life-time reign as king.

YORK

Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs,

And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou livest.

KING HENRY VI

I am content: Richard Duke of York,

Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

UGH!

I'm Clifford now.

(*To Henry*) What wrong is this unto the prince your son!

Base, fearful and despairing Henry!

I cannot stay to hear these articles. I'll tell the queen these news.

Exeunt CLIFFORD,

WARWICK

Why should you sigh, my lord?

KING HENRY VI

Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.
But be it as it may: I here entail
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath
To cease this civil war, and, whilst I live,
To honour me as thy king and sovereign.

YORK

This oath I willingly take and will perform.
Now York and Lancaster are reconciled.

WARWICK

Accursed be he that seeks to make them foes!

They make a triumvirate oath. Enter QUEEN MARGARET.

WARWICK

Here comes the queen, whose looks bewray her anger:
Let's steal away.

KING HENRY VI

So will I.

Exit York and Warwick.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee!

KING HENRY VI

Be patient, gentle queen, and I will stay.

QUEEN MARGARET

Who can be patient in such extremes?
Ah, wretched man! Would I had died a maid
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast proved so unnatural a father.
Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?

KING HENRY VI

Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me,
The Earl of Warwick and the duke enforced me.

QUEEN MARGARET

Enforced thee! Art thou king, and wilt be forced?

I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!
Thou hast undone thyself, thy son and me.
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou preferr'st thy life before thine honour:
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
Until that act of parliament be repeal'd
Whereby my son is disinherited.
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colors
Will follow mine, to thy foul disgrace
And utter ruin of the house of York.
Thus do I leave thee.

KING HENRY VI

Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone.

Exeunt QUEEN MARGARET, we jump into:

YORK

I will be king, or die. I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.

CHORUS

Don't kill the messenger.

YORK

But, stay: what news?

CHORUS as Messenger

The queen intends here to besiege your castle:
She is hard by with twenty thousand men;
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK

A woman's general! What should we fear?

CHORUS

The Battle of Wakefield.

RUTLAND runs on, stops, and speaks to the audience.

RUTLAND

My name is Rutland, son of York.
I died at Wakefield.
This was my first battle.
Maybe that's obvious.
I was fourteen years old.

CHORUS

It's time, Rutland.

RUTLAND

I want to speak to them.

CHORUS

(Gently) Rutland. It's time.

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

Clifford.

RUTLAND

Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die—

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

No! The sight of any of the house of York
Is as a fury to torment my soul;
Therefore--

RUTLAND

O, let me pray before I take my death!
I never did thee harm—

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

Thy father hath!

Stabs him.

RUTLAND

Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!

VOICE 7

"Infamy shall follow thee for this."

He Dies. Exit CLIFFORD. Enter YORK

YORK

The army of the queen hath got the field,
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury:

The sands are number'd that make up my life;
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, and CLIFFORD

YORK

Come, bloody Clifford! rough Margaret!
My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all.

CHORUS (as Clifford) goes to stab him.

QUEEN MARGARET

Hold, valiant Clifford! for a thousand causes
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.

They lay hands on YORK, who struggles.

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

What would your grace have done unto him now?

QUEEN MARGARET

Come, make him stand upon this molehill here.
What! was it you that would be England's king?
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?
Where is that valiant crook-back prodigy,
Dicky your boy? Where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with his blood,
And if thine eyes can water for his death,
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.
Why art thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.
A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:

Putting a paper crown on his head.

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!
Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,
And this is he was his adopted heir.
But how is it that great Plantagenet
Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?
O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable!
Off with the crown, and with the crown his head;
And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

CLIFFORD

That is my office, for my father's sake.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, stay; lets hear the orisons he makes.

YORK

She-wolf of France!
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But, God he knows, thy share thereof is small.
O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!
Bids't thou me rage? why, now thou hast thy wish:
Wouldst have me weep? why, now thou hast thy will:
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears:
This cloth thou dip'dst in blood of my sweet boy,
And I with tears do wash the blood away.
Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this:
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,
Then even my foes will shed fast-falling tears,
And say 'Alas, it was a piteous deed!'
There, take the crown, and, with the crown, my curse!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world:
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!

CLIFFORD

Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death.

He stabs him.

QUEEN MARGARET

And here's to right our gentle-hearted king.

She stabs him.

QUEEN MARGARET

Off with his head, and set it on York gates;
So York may overlook the town of York.

Exit MARGARET.

VOICE of RICHARD III

Father. I cannot weep.
Richard, Duke of York; I bear thy name.

CHORUS

Richard, third of that name.

RICHARD III

Father, I will venge thy death,
Or die renowned attempting it.

Exit. Enter HENRY and MARGARET.

QUEEN MARGARET

Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.
Yonder's the head of your arch-enemy:

The CHORUS flash-lights YORK's "severed" head.

QUEEN MARGARET

Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wreck:
Withhold revenge, dear God! 'tis not my fault!

CHORUS

Don't kill the—

CHORUS (as Messenger)

Royal commanders, be in readiness:
For with a band of thirty thousand men
Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York!

A tiny beat.

HENRY

If only Clifford were here!

CHORUS

Bollocks! (*Grabbing costume piece*) Clifford!

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

I would your highness would depart the field:
The queen hath best success when you are absent.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.

KING HENRY VI

Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.

Enter RICHARD and WARWICK.

RICHARD

For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.

WARWICK

What say'st thou, Henry, wilt thou yield the crown?

QUEEN MARGARET

Why, how now, long-tongued Warwick! dare you speak?
When you and I met at Saint Alban's last,
Your legs did better service than your hands.

KING HENRY VI

Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET

Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

KING HENRY VI

I prithee, give no limits to my tongue:
I am a king, and privileged to speak.

RICHARD

Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?

QUEEN MARGARET

Speak not, thou foul mis-shapen stigmatic!

Everyone reacts to this insult.

RICHARD

Sound trumpets! let our bloody colors wave!
These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

CHORUS

The Battle of Towton.

Enter WILLIAM.

WILLIAM

Hello.

CHORUS

Who the fuck are you?

WILLIAM

My name is William, sir.

CHORUS

William—a good name.

WILLIAM

Farmer. I died at Towton.

A little after, actually.

I got an arrow through my belly,

And the head stuck in there—

Right there, see?

They tried to take it out with rusty pliers.

I think it didn't work.

Can you do me a favor?

CHORUS

No.

WILLIAM

There's a girl in Coventry.

Eleanor, I love her—I loved her.

I loved her.

Would you give her this?

William offers a piece of paper. CHORUS takes it from him with a pair of rusty pliers.

CHORUS

Goodbye, William.

WILLIAM

Goodbye, sir.

WILLIAM exits. Enter HENRY.

KING HENRY VI

Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead! If God's good will were so;
For what is in this world but grief and woe?

Exit. Enter CLIFFORD, wounded.

CHORUS (as CLIFFORD)

Clifford.
Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies—
O, Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do,
Giving no ground unto the house of York,
I and ten thousand in this luckless realm
Had left no mourning widows for our death.
Bootless are plaints, and cureless are my wounds.
Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest;
I stabb'd your fathers' bosoms, split my breast.

He faints. Enter EDWARD IV, RICHARD WARWICK,

RICHARD

Some troops pursue the bloody-minded queen!

CLIFFORD groans and dies.

EDWARD IV

Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?

CHORUS

(Briefly waking up from being dead) Enter Edward, son of York.

EDWARD IV

See who it is: let him be gently used.

RICHARD

Revoke that doom of mercy, for 'tis Clifford!

WARWICK

Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?

RICHARD

Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?

WARWICK

They mock thee, Clifford: swear as thou wast wont.

RICHARD

What, not an oath? nay, then the world goes hard
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.

WARWICK

Ay, but he's dead: off with the traitor's head,
And rear it in the place your father's stands.
And now to London with triumphant march,
There to be crowned England's royal king:
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen:
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread
The scatter'd foe that hopes to rise again.

EDWARD

Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester.

RICHARD

Let me be Duke of Clarence,
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.

*Perhaps RICHARD mimes getting smothered with a pillow,
calling back to how Gloucester died in Act I.*

WARWICK

Tut, that's a foolish observation:
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London,
To see these honors in possession.

*A coronation. Music. The crown is taken from HENRY by the ensemble and
handed off until it reaches EDWARD. Perhaps RICHARD holds onto the crown a
little too long.*

KING HENRY VI

My queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone, to crave the French king's sister

To wife for Edward: if this news be true,
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost;
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Louis a prince soon won with moving words.
Besides, she's come to beg, Warwick to give;
She weeps, and says her Henry is deposed;
He smiles, and says his Edward is install'd;
And in conclusion wins the king from her.

CHORUS

Second Gamekeeper.

CHORUS (as GAMEKEEPER)

Say, what art thou that talk'st as if thou wert a king?

KING HENRY VI

Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.

CHORUS (as GAMEKEEPER)

But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

KING HENRY VI

My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Nor to be seen: my crown is called content:
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

CHORUS (as GAMEKEEPER)

Well, if you be a king crown'd with content,
Your crown content and you must be contented
To go along with us; for as we think,
You are the king King Edward hath deposed!
To the tower with him!

HENRY is dragged off. Enter LADY GREY (later QUEEN ELIZABETH), RICHARD, and EDWARD.

CHORUS

Lady Bona? No—while Warwick seeks a better match in
France, King Edward woos the Widow Grey at home.

RICHARD III

(Aside) The widow likes him not, she knits her brows. He is
the bluntest wooer in Christendom.

KING EDWARD IV

To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

LADY GREY

To tell thee plain, I would rather lie in prison.

KING EDWARD IV

Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?

LADY GREY

'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord:

'Twill grieve your grace my sons should call you father.

KING EDWARD IV

No more than when my daughters call thee mother.

Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;

And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,

Have other some: why, 'tis a happy thing

To be the father unto many sons.

Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

Brother, you muse what chat we two have had.

RICHARD III

The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

CHORUS

Don't kill me.

CHORUS (as MESSENGER)

My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken,

And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.

KING EDWARD IV

See that he be convey'd unto the Tower:

Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honorably.

Exeunt all but RICHARD III

RICHARD III

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.

Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all!

Alas, I do but dream on sovereignty.

Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;

What other pleasure can the world afford?

Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:

She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,

To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;

To disproportion me in every part,

Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp

That carries no impression like the dam.

Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

He exits. Enter MARGARET and LOUIS. Note that LOUIS only appears in this scene, and it is important to distinguish him (visually, vocally, however you choose) from the English royalty.

CHORUS

Margaret in France. King Louis.

QUEEN MARGARET

Now, therefore, be it known to noble Louis,
That Henry is become a banish'd man,
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York
Usurps the regal title and the seat
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid—

KING LOUIS XI

Renowned queen, with patience calm the storm—
(*Enter Warwick.*)

Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings thee to France?

WARWICK

Your majesty, from worthy Edward,
I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,
To crave a nuptial knot. Vouchsafe to grant
That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,
To England's king in lawful marriage.

QUEEN MARGARET

[*Aside*] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.
King Louis, hear me speak! His demand
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity—

WARWICK

Injurious Margaret!

KING LOUIS XI

Queen Margaret,
Vouchsafe, at our request, to stand aside,
While I use further conference with Warwick.

QUEEN MARGARET

(Standing Aside) Heavens grant that Warwick's words
bewitch him not!

KING LOUIS XI

Now Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,
Is Edward your true king?

WARWICK

Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honor.

KING LOUIS XI

Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's;
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

QUEEN MARGARET

Deceitful Warwick!
Before thy coming Louis was Henry's friend.

KING LOUIS XI

And still is friend to him and Margaret:
But if your title to the crown be weak,
As may appear by Edward's good success,
Then 'tis but reason that I be released
From giving aid which late I promised.

WARWICK

Henry now lives in Scotland at his ease,
Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.

QUEEN MARGARET

Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick, peace,
Proud setter up and puller down of kings!

CHORUS

Oh god don't kill me.

KING LOUIS XI

Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

CHORUS as Messenger *(with three letters)*

[To WARWICK] My lord ambassador, these letters are for
you. *[To KING Louis XI]* These from our king unto your
majesty. *[To QUEEN MARGARET]* And, madam, these for
you; from whom I know not.

KING LOUIS XI

Warwick, what are thy news? and yours, fair queen?

QUEEN MARGARET

Mine, such as fill my heart with unhop'd joys.

WARWICK

Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

KING LOUIS XI

What! has your king married the Lady Grey!

Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

QUEEN MARGARET

I told your majesty as much before:

This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.

WARWICK

King Louis, I here protest, in sight of heaven,
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's;
No more my king, for he dishonours me!
I here renounce him and return to Henry.
My noble queen, let former grudges pass,
And henceforth I am thy true servitor.

QUEEN MARGARET

Warwick, these words have turn'd my hate to love;
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,
And joy that thou becomest King Henry's friend.

WARWICK

So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,
That, if King Louis vouchsafe to furnish us
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,
I'll undertake to land them on our coast
And force the tyrant from his seat by war.

QUEEN MARGARET

Renowned prince, how shall poor Henry live,
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?

WARWICK

My quarrel and this English queen's are one.

KING LOUIS XI

I firmly am resolved; you shall have aid.

They form a triumvirate oath.

QUEEN MARGARET

Let me give humble thanks for all at once.

KING LOUIS XI

Then, England's messenger, return in post,
And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Louis of France is sending over masquers
To revel it with him and his new bride.

QUEEN MARGARET

Tell him, my mourning weeds are laid aside,
And I am ready to put armor on.

WARWICK

Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.

Exit all but WARWICK

WARWICK

'Tis better using France than trusting France.
I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe:
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery.

Exit. We jump into:

CHORUS (as Messenger)

'Tell Edward, 'quoth she, 'my mourning weeds are done,
And I am ready to put armor on.'

KING EDWARD IV

Belike she minds to play the Amazon.
But what said Warwick to these injuries?

CHORUS

He is more incensed against your majesty
Than all the rest.

KING EDWARD IV

Ha! Well I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd:
But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?

CHORUS

Ay, gracious sovereign.

KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

RICHARD III

Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so! then am I sure of victory.

They exit. Darkness.

CHORUS

Enter Warwick unto Edward's camp. The dead of night.

WARWICK

This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.

WARWICK slits a guard's throat. Lots of death and chaos in the dark. Re-enter WARWICK and the rest, bringing KING EDWARD IV out in captivity.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, Warwick, when we parted,
Thou call'dst me king.

WARWICK

Ay, but the case is alter'd:
When you disgraced me in my embassy,
Then I degraded you from being king,
And come now to create you Duke of York.

EDWARD

Edward will always bear himself as king:
Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

WARWICK

Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king:
But Henry now shall wear the English crown.

During the following, the crown is passed back to HENRY.

KING EDWARD IV

What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

CHORUS

But Edward escapes from Henry, then Edward captures Henry—and, honestly, it's too complicated to explain.

HENRY VI

What?!

Very quickly, EDWARD is released and HENRY is captured. The crown lands back on EDWARD's head.

KING EDWARD IV

Thanks unto you all!
Seize on the shame-faced Henry, bear him hence;
And once again proclaim us King of England.
Hence with him to the Tower; let him not speak.

Exeunt some with KING HENRY VI

WARWICK

Henry is still my king, I, Warwick his subject.

RICHARD III

Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down!

WARWICK

I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,
And with the other fling it at thy face!

CHORUS

The Battle of Barnet.

They Fight, Warwick is mortally wounded. Exit all but Warwick.

WARWICK

Ah, who is nigh? Come to me, friend or foe,
And tell me who is victor, York or Warwick?
Why ask I that? my mangled body shows,
That I must yield my body to the earth
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.
These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil,
Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,
To search the secret treasons of the world:
For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?

Lo, now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!
Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?
And, live we how we can, yet die we must.

He dies.

CHORUS (*Singing, but at a much slower, creepier tempo*)
My son John was tall and slim...

WARWICK opens his eyes. He speaks to the audience as if he was trying to remember a dream.

WARWICK

My name is Richard, Earl of Warwick.

CHORUS (*Singing*)

And he had a leg for every limb...

WARWICK

The last thing I saw was a boot,
With chunks of a leg in it.
I thought, "Someone's gonna take that.
Another man will trudge upon that sole."
I died at Barnet.
I don't remember why.

He exits. Enter MARGARET.

CHORUS

Margaret lands in England one day too late.

QUEEN MARGARET

Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
What though the mast be now blown overboard,
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course!

Enter a Messenger, crossing himself. During the following, the ensemble lines up in a shadowy battle formation upstage.

CHORUS (as Messenger)

Prepare you, madame, for Edward is at hand.

QUEEN MARGARET

Lords, knights, and gentlemen;
Henry, your sovereign,
Is prisoner to the foe; his state usurp'd,
His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,
And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.
Be valiant and give signal to the fight!

The ensemble charges. Very quickly, we hear the sound of arrows hitting bodies, everyone falls to the ground, and the lights go out. Lights slowly come back up on the CHORUS stepping through a field of dead bodies.

CHORUS

The Battle of Tewksbury.
Queen Margaret and her son are taken prisoner.

KING EDWARD IV and RICHARD III reanimate, with QUEEN MARGARET & PRINCE NED as prisoners.

PRINCE NED

Varlets!

KING EDWARD IV

Bring forth the gallant, let us hear him speak.
What! can so young a thorn begin to prick?

PRINCE NED

Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York!

QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, that thy father had been so resolved!

RICHARD III

By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.

RICHARD III

For God's sake, take away this captive scold.

PRINCE NED

Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather.

KING EDWARD IV

Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.

PRINCE NED

Lascivious Edward, and thou mis-shapen Dick,
I tell ye all, traitors as ye are:
That thou usurp'st my father's right and mine!

They go to stab NED. Time stops.

PRINCE NED

My name is Edward, Prince of Wales.
Ned. Heir to the English throne,
Son of Margaret, the root of all her hopes.
A child I am, and a child I was,
That day I died at Tewksbury.

Time starts and he is instantly killed.

QUEEN MARGARET

--No!

RICHARD III

Take that, to end thy agony.

QUEEN MARGARET

O, kill me too!

RICHARD III

Marry, and shall.

KING EDWARD IV

Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done too much.

RICHARD III

Why should she live, to fill the world with words?

QUEEN MARGARET

O Ned, sweet Ned! speak to thy mother, boy!
Canst thou not speak? O traitors! murderers!
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst, and if I speak:
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.
Butchers and villains! bloody cannibals!

KING EDWARD IV

Away with her; go, bear her hence perforce.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here!

KING EDWARD IV

By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

QUEEN MARGARET

So come to you and yours, as to this Prince!

CHORUS

There's just one thing we'll never quit:

CHORUS & RICHARD III & EDWARD IV

We kill people and steal their shit.

They exit. MARGARET clutches her son's body.

MARGARET 2 (*Whisper-singing*)

Red is the rose, that in yonder garden grows,
Fair is the lily of the valley,
Clear is the water, that flows from the Lune,
But my love is fairer than any.

*PRINCE NED opens his eyes, receives the crown, and becomes
MARGARET 3.*

MARGARET 2

(To Margaret 3)

Margaret.

Blackout. End of Act II.

ACT III

Low, lurking light on MARGARET.

VOICE of MARGARET 3

Here in these confines slyly have I lurk'd,
To watch the waning of mine adversaries.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret.
See, see, see.

She fades away.

CHORUS

Have you ever killed someone to make yourself feel better?
And, more importantly—
Did it work?

An uncomfortable beat.

CHORUS

The Tower.

Lights up on RICHARD and HENRY VI.

KING HENRY VI

Wherefore dost thou come? is't for my life?

RICHARD III

Think'st thou I am an executioner?

KING HENRY VI

If murdering innocents be executing,
Why, then thou art an executioner.

RICHARD III

Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.

KING HENRY VI

Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume,
Thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine.
And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand,
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.
The owl shriek'd at thy birth--an evil sign;

Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
And, yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump!
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
To signify thou camest to bite the world--

RICHARD III

I'll hear no more: die, prophet in thy speech!

Stabs him.

KING HENRY VI

God forgive my sins, and pardon thee!

Dies.

RICHARD III

Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither!

Stabs him again.

RICHARD III

Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;
The midwife wonder'd and the women cried
'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light.
I have no brother. I am myself alone.
King Henry and the prince his son are gone:
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest,
Counting myself but bad till I be best

Exit RICHARD and HENRY. Coronation/transition to:

KING EDWARD IV

Once more we sit in England's royal throne,
Re-purchased with the blood of enemies.

Now am I seated as my soul delights,
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.

CHORUS

What will your grace have done with Margaret?

KING EDWARD IV

Away with her, and waft her hence to France.
And now what rests but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?
Sound drums and trumpets! farewell sour annoy!
For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy.

All exit save RICHARD.

RICHARD III

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried—

CHORUS

Have done, they know this one.

LADY ANNE

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not!

CHORUS

Richard woos Anne.

RICHARD III

Say that I slew them not?

LADY ANNE

Why, then they are not dead:
But dead they are, and dead by thee.

CHORUS

Correction—
Having killed her entire family,
Richard woos Anne.
Think, when we talk of corpses, that you see them.
Her father, Warwick.

VOICE of WARWICK

Dead.

CHORUS

Her father-in-law, Henry.

VOICE of HENRY

Dead.

CHORUS

Her boy-husband, Ned.

VOICE of NED

Dead.

CHORUS

Dead Ned. Ned the dead.

RICHARD III

I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE

Why, then he is alive.

RICHARD III

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

LADY ANNE

In thy foul throat thou liest.

LADY ANNE + VOICE OF MARGARET 3

Queen Margaret saw

Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood.

LADY ANNE (Cont.)

O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

RICHARD III

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

LADY ANNE

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

RICHARD III

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.

RICHARD III

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

LADY ANNE

Some dungeon.

RICHARD III

Your bed-chamber.

LADY ANNE

Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.

RICHARD III

If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

He lays his breast open and give her his weapon.

RICHARD III

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.

RICHARD III

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

LADY ANNE

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

RICHARD III

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

LADY ANNE

I have already.

RICHARD III

Tush, that was in thy rage:
Speak it again.

LADY ANNE

I would I knew thy heart.

RICHARD III

'Tis figured in my tongue.

LADY ANNE

I fear me both are false.

RICHARD III

Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE

Well, well, put up your sword.

RICHARD III

Say, then, my peace is made.

LADY ANNE

That shall you know hereafter.

RICHARD III

But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE

All men, I hope, live so.

RICHARD III

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE

To take is not to give.

RICHARD III

Bid me farewell.

LADY ANNE

'Tis more than you deserve;
But since you teach me how to flatter you,
Imagine I have said farewell already.

Exeunt LADY ANNE

RICHARD III

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.

CHORUS

Richard kills his brother, Clarence.

CLARENCE

O, I have pass'd a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster
That had befall'n us.

CHORUS

Correction—

*Richard makes *me* kill his brother, Clarence.*

CLARENCE

I trembling waked, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell,

Such terrible impression made the dream.

CHORUS (as Murderer)

Ho! who's here?

CLARENCE

In God's name what are you, and how came you hither?

CHORUS (as Murderer)

I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

CLARENCE

How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!

Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

CHORUS (as Murderer)

To, to, to--

CLARENCE

To murder me?

CHORUS (as Murderer)

What I will do, I do upon command.

And he that hath commanded is the king.

CLARENCE

I will send you to my brother Gloucester,
Who shall reward you better for my life
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

CHORUS (as Murderer)

You are deceived, your brother Gloucester hates you.

CLARENCE

O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear!

CHORUS (as Murderer)

'Tis he that sent me hither now to slaughter thee.

CLARENCE

It cannot be; for when I parted with him,
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labour my delivery.

CHORUS (as Murderer)

Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee.

CLARENCE is drowned in a bucket. When he stops struggling:

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.
I never did incense his majesty

Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.

*During this, dead CLARENCE exits while CHORUS cleans the
water off the stage.*

RICHARD III

I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch:
Since every Jack became a gentleman
There's many a gentle person made a Jack.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty
With those gross taunts I often have endured.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, behind and unseen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

QUEEN MARGARET

(Aside) And lessen'd be that small, God, I beseech thee!
Thy honour, state and seat is due to me.

RICHARD III

What! threat you me with telling of the king?
Tell him, and spare not.

QUEEN MARGARET

(Aside) Out, devil! I remember thee too well:
Thou slewest my husband Henry in the Tower,
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury.

RICHARD III

Ere you were queen, yea, or your husband king,
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs;
To royalize his blood I spilt mine own.

QUEEN MARGARET

(Aside) Yea, and much better blood than his or thine.

RICHARD III

I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;

Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine.
I am too childish-foolish for this world.

QUEEN MARGARET

(Aside) Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave the world,
Thou cacodemon! There thy kingdom is.
I can no longer hold me patient. *(Coming forward)*
Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out
In sharing that which you have pill'd from me!
Which of you trembles not that looks on me?

RICHARD III

Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou in my sight?
Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

QUEEN MARGARET

I was; but I do find more pain in banishment
Than death can yield me here by my abode.
A husband and a son thou owest to me;
And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance:
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

RICHARD III

The curse my noble father laid on thee,
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper;
Those curses now are fall'n upon thy head;
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

RICHARD III

No man but prophesied revenge for it.

QUEEN MARGARET

What were you snarling all before I came,
Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?
Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven?
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment,
Could all but answer for that peevish brat?
Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
If not by war, by surfeit die your king!

Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's loss;
Long die thy happy days before thy death;
And, after many lengthen'd hours of grief,
Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!

RICHARD III

Have done thy charm, thou hateful wither'd hag!

QUEEN MARGARET

And leave out thee? Stay, villain, for thou shalt hear me.
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!
Thou rag of honour! thou detested--

RICHARD III

Margaret.

QUEEN MARGARET

Richard!

RICHARD III

Ha!

QUEEN MARGARET

I call thee not.

RICHARD III

I cry thee mercy then, for I had thought
That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

QUEEN MARGARET

Why, so I did; but look'd for no reply.
O, let me make the period to my curse!

RICHARD III

'Tis done by me, and ends in 'Margaret.'

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

QUEEN MARGARET

Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider,
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
Fool, fool! thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.
The time will come when thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse that poisonous bunchback'd toad.

RICHARD III

Dispute not with her; she is lunatic.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Have done! for shame, if not for charity.

QUEEN MARGARET

Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
And shamefully by you my hopes are butcher'd.
O Queen take heed of yonder dog!
Look, when he fawns, he bites.

RICHARD III

What doth she say?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.

QUEEN MARGARET

What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel?
And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?
O, but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say poor Margaret was a prophetess!

Exit MARGARET.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.

RICHARD III

And so doth mine.

We jump into the court. Enter EDWARD and ELIZABETH—and RICHARD, troubled.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so: now have I done a good day's work!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your majesty
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

RICHARD III

Why, madam—

Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

They all start

RICHARD III

You do him injury to scorn his corpse.

KING EDWARD IV

Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

All seeing heaven, what a world is this!

KING EDWARD IV

Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

RICHARD III

But he, poor soul, by your first order died;
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too lag to see him buried.

KING EDWARD

O God, I fear thy justice will take hold
On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!
Come, Elizabeth, help me to my closet.
Oh, poor Clarence!

*Exit EDWARD with ELIZABETH. As EDWARD leaves, the
CHORUS holds on to the crown.*

CHORUS

King Edward dies of grief. But also syphilis, bulimia, alcohol poisoning, and typhoid.

Reenter ELIZABETH.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!
Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre!
I see, as in a map, the end of all.

Exit.

VOICE of YOUNG PRINCE

Say, uncle Gloucester,

Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

RICHARD III

If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower.

VOICE of YOUNG PRINCE

I do not like the Tower, of any place.
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?

RICHARD III

[*Aside*] So wise so young, they say, do never
live long.

VOICE 6

O bloody Richard! miserable England!

VOICE 2

Now Margaret's curse is fallen upon my head!

VOICE 5

Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head.
They smile at me that shortly shall be dead.

ALL

Long live Richard, England's royal king!

CHORUS places the crown on RICHARD's head.

CHORUS

Come, Lady Anne, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

LADY ANNE

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!
When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corpse,
O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,
This was my wish:

Richard appears as a statue or a vision—in a tableau from the earlier scene.

LADY ANNE

'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed,
For making me, so young, so old a widow!
And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;

And be thy wife--if any be so mad--
As miserable by the life of thee
As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Even in so short a space,
I proved the subject of my own soul's curse.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

She begins to exit.

KING RICHARD III

Rumor it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is sick and like to die.

Anne stops. She is dead. Exit.

KING RICHARD III

I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!

Enter BUCKINGHAM.

CHORUS

Enter Buckingham.
The Great Appeaser.
Boot-licker of tyrants.
Thus always with boot-lickers!
O, Buckingham, Buckingham—the best friend I had!

KING RICHARD III

Edward's heirs live: think now what I would say.

BUCKINGHAM

Say on, my loving lord.

KING RICHARD III

Why, Buckingham, I say, I would be king,

BUCKINGHAM

Why, so you are, my thrice renowned liege.

KING RICHARD III

Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead.
What sayest thou? speak suddenly; be brief.

BUCKINGHAM

Your grace may do your pleasure.

KING RICHARD III

Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCKINGHAM

Give me some breath, some little pause, my lord—

KING RICHARD III

I am not in the giving vein to-day.

Darkness. Sound of two children screaming. Silence. RICHARD exits.

QUEEN MARGARET

Here in these confines slyly have I lurk'd,
To watch the waning of mine adversaries.
Who comes here?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, my young princes! ah, my tender babes!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air
Hover about me with your airy wings
And hear your mother's lamentation!

VOICE

Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost.

QUEEN MARGARET

If sorrow can admit society,
Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine:
I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him;

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

QUEEN MARGARET

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge.
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward:
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
And the beholders of this tragic play,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
but at hand, at hand, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say, the dog is dead!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

QUEEN MARGARET

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
Where are thy children? wherein dost thou, joy?
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?
Farewell, Edward's wife, queen of sad mischance:
These English woes will make me smile in France.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

QUEEN MARGARET

Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is:
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My words are dull; O, quicken them with thine!

QUEEN MARGARET

Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine.

RICHARD enters as she is exiting. She grabs him by his withered arm.

QUEEN MARGARET

Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

She exits. ELIZABETH starts to go.

KING RICHARD III

Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I have no more sons of the royal blood
For thee to murder.

KING RICHARD III

You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

And must she die for this?

KING RICHARD III

I love thy daughter,
And mean to make her queen of England.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

How canst thou woo her?

KING RICHARD III

That would I learn of you,
As one that are best acquainted with her humour.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding-hearts; thereon engrave
Edward and York; then haply she will weep:
Therefore present to her--as sometime Margaret
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood,--
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.
If this inducement force her not to love—

KING RICHARD III

Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way
To win your daughter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What were I best to say? her father's brother
Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?
Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?

KING RICHARD III

Say, I will love her everlastingly.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

KING RICHARD III

So long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

So long as hell and Richard likes of it.

KING RICHARD III

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

O no, my reasons are too deep and dead;
Two deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave.

KING RICHARD III

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.

KING RICHARD III

Good mother--I must call you so--
Be the attorney of my love to her:
Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
Not my deserts, but what I will deserve:
Urge the necessity and state of times,
And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

CHORUS

And then—she plays him.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

KING RICHARD III

Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But thou didst kill my children.

KING RICHARD III

But in your daughter's womb I bury them.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

KING RICHARD III

And be a happy mother by the deed.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I go.

KING RICHARD III

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

He kisses her. It's gross. Exit QUEEN ELIZABETH.

KING RICHARD III

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

RICHARD sleeps. All three MARGARETS appear and surround him.

MARGARETS 1, 2, & 3

To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!

KING RICHARD III

Have mercy, Jesu!--Soft! I did but dream.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
I am a villain:

MARGARETS 1, 2, & 3 (*Whispering*)

Villain!

KING RICHARD III

Yet I lie. I am not.
Methought the ghosts of Margaret
Came to my tent; and every one did threat
Their vengeance on the head of Richard.

CHORUS

The Battle of Bosworth Field.

KING RICHARD III

A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!

RICHARD is outnumbered and surrounded by GHOSTS of MARGARET.

KING RICHARD III

My name is Richard, third of that name!
King I am, and king I shall remain!

MARGARET 1

Think on Margaret; despair and die!

RICHARD III

I did not die at Bosworth field!

MARGARET 2

Think on Margaret; despair and die!

RICHARD III

I did not die at Bosworth Field!

MARGARET 3

Think on Margaret!

RICHARD

I DID NOT DIE—

They stab him. RICHARD dies.

VOICE 6

The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead;

VOICE 5

We will unite the white rose and the red.

VOICE 6

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.

VOICE 5

We kill people and steal their shit.

The ensemble—minus the chorus—addresses the audience:

MARGARET 3

My name is Margaret of Anjou.

MARGARET 1

I died in poverty in France.

MARGARET 2

Exhumed by a mob in the Revolution.

MARGARET 3

Location of remains—unknown.

RICHARD III

They buried me under a parking lot.

VOICE 5

They chopped off my head.

VOICE 6

They burned me alive.

CHORUS

Enough!

The CHORUS drags on a wooden stump or block with an axe stuck in it. During this, the lights fade down to only the CHORUS' flashlight. Perhaps the other actors shine flashlights on themselves and click them off as the axe thuds after each of their respective lines.

CHORUS

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of queens:

ACTOR 2 (MARGARET 1)

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars!
I died at Tewksbury.
I don't remember why.

(Axe thud—the actor walks into the distance)

CHORUS

How some have been deposed—

ACTOR 6 (YORK)

Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see:
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.
I died at Da Nang.
I don't remember why.

(Axe thud—the actor walks into the distance)

CHORUS

Some slain in war—

ACTOR 3 (MARGARET 2)

Once more into the breach, dear friends—once more.

I died in Helmand Province.
I don't remember why.

(Axe thud—the actor walks into the distance)

CHORUS

Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed—

ACTOR 7 (RICHARD III)

Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery, hence!
I died in Gaza City.
I don't remember why.

(Axe thud—an actor walks into the distance)

CHORUS

Some poison'd by their husbands—

ACTOR 5 (HENRY VI)

No, no! The drink, the drink!
I died in Kharkiv.
I don't remember why.

(Axe thud—an actor walks into the distance)

CHORUS

Some sleeping kill'd—

ACTOR 4 (MARGARET 3)

I died in hell—
They called it Passchendaele.

(He goes to swing the axe, but she interrupts him. CHORUS and MARGARET 3 make eye contact.)

ACTOR 4 (MARGARET 3)

--Margaret my name, and daughter to a king!

CHORUS

(Gently) It's time.

(Axe thud—MARGARET 3 walks into the distance)

CHORUS

All murder'd. For within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a queen,
Keeps Death his court.
There was a time when the people who started wars
Actually fought in them.
Right or wrong, they were dreadfully accountable.
Which is... different.
But perhaps, to the dead, it is all the same.

The CHORUS illuminates the most distant, upstage area, revealing the other six actors, who have formed a pile of dead bodies, gruesomely splayed on top of one another. The audience sits with this tableau for a suspended moment; all the deaths of this pointless conflict left in a sad, silent mound.

CHORUS

Which of you trembles not that looks on them?

Blackout. End of Play