

Henry VI, Part 3

by William Shakespeare

Act 1, sc. 4 (line 1 - Verse)

York

The army of the queen hath got the field:

My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;

And all my followers to the eager foe

Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind

Or lambs pursued by hunger-starved wolves.

My sons, God knows what hath bechanced them:

But this I know, they have demean'd themselves

Like men born to renown by life or death.

Three times did Richard make a lane to me.

And thrice cried 'Courage, father! fight it out!'

And full as oft came Edward to my side,

With purple falchion, painted to the hilt

In blood of those that had encounter'd him:

And when the hardiest warriors did retire,

Richard cried 'Charge! and give no foot of ground!'

And cried 'A crown, or else a glorious tomb!

A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!'

With this, we charged again: but, out, alas!

We bodged again; as I have seen a swan

With bootless labour swim against the tide

And spend her strength with over-matching waves.

A short alarum within

Ah, hark! the fatal followers do pursue;
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury:
And were I strong, I would not shun 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, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, PRINCE EDWARD, and Soldiers

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland,
I dare your quenchless fury to more rage:
I am your butt, and I abide your shot.