Shakespeare Quotes

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

King Richard:
A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!

Catesby:
Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.

King Richard:
Slave! I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.

Richard The Third Act 5, scene 4, 7–10

Alternately pathetic and arrogant, the hunchbacked villain-king Richard III is about to meet his doom at the hands of the future Henry VII. Richard's most memorable line is actually supposed to sound halfway valiant—he refuses to forsake the fray although his horse has bit the dust. But even in its day, the line became the stuff of irreverent quotation. Shakespeare's contemporary, the playwright, satirist, and cad John Marston, parodied Richard's outcry obsessively ("A boat, a boat, a boat, a full hundred marks for a boat!"; "A fool, a fool, a fool, my coxcomb for a fool!"—a coxcomb is a fool's cap). Marston set the decidedly less than hilarious pace for generations of wits: the line is always good for a cheap laugh.

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