



O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!

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Richard:

"O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!"

[King Richard III \(V. iii. 179\)](#)

The evil Richard finally confronts his conscience in this scene, one of the most exciting in the play. In his tent on Bosworth Field, Richard takes some wine and goes to bed before the next day's battle. He has a terrible dream in which one by one, ten ghosts appear to him, the souls of those whom Richard murdered in his bloodthirsty climb to the crown. Prince Edward, son of Henry VI, is first, followed by others in the order in which they were murdered. Each ghost speaks to him and wishes him despair and death as they depart. Richard wakes up startled from this dream, asking for his horse, and then realizes that he has been dreaming. He blames his "coward conscience" for speaking up at last. This marks the beginning of the end of King Richard.

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