



Off with his head!

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Richard:

"Off with his head!"

[King Richard III \(III, iv, 76\)](#)

Richard shouts these words in the Tower of London, where he has accused Lord Hastings of plotting to destroy him. Hastings, who thought himself safe in his friendship with Richard, began a meeting of the Council wishing to set a date for the coronation of Prince Edward as new king. Richard arrives late for the meeting, and realizes Hastings must be removed from his path to the crown. Killing two birds with one stone, he discredits the Queen (who is another obstacle) by suggesting she participated in witchcraft to cause his deformity, baring his withered arm to drive home the point. He tricks Hastings into saying that anyone who practices witchcraft must be executed. At this point Richard jumps up, points to Hastings, and accuses him of "devilish plots" and "damned witch craft," calling him traitor and ordering him immediately beheaded.

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