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DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER from RICHARD III Act 1 Scene 2

Character's age: 40+

1 Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?
Hath blood in thy old blood no living fire?
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
5 Or seven fair branches springing from one root.
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
Some of those branches by the destinies cut;
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
10 One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is cracked, and all the precious liquor spilt;
Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded
By envy's hand and murder's bloody axe.
Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! That bed, that womb,
15 That mettle, that self mould that fashioned thee,
Made him a man; and though thou liv'st and breathest,
Yet art thou slain in him. Thou dost consent
In some large measure to thy father's death
In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,
20 Who was the model of thy father's life.
Call it not patience, Gaunt, it is despair.
In suffering thus thy brother to be slaughtered
Thou show'st the naked pathway to thy life,

Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee.
25 That which in mean men we entitle patience
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.
What shall I say? To safeguard thine own life
28 The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

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