Prior to this passage, Queen Elizabeth, Rivers, Grey, Hastings, Dorset, and Gloucester (Richard) had been quarrelling in the palace. Gloucester had been accusing Queen Elizabeth of ‘polluting’ the Royal Blood because of her marriage to Edward IV (the current king). Gloucester states, “I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad / That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch. Since every Jack became a gentleman, / There’s many a gentle person made a Jack.” (I.iii.70-73). This quote explains Gloucester’s detest for people who were not born of ‘pure’ Royal Blood. Gloucester considers himself to be ‘above’ the common “gentleman” (I.iii.72). As the arguing continued, without being seen, Queen Margaret had entered into the room and began speaking Asides to the audience. As the feud between Gloucester and Elizabeth gained momentum, Queen Margaret had begun to move closer into entering the conversation. Queen Margaret states, “[Aside] A little joy enjoys the queen thereof; / For I am she, and altogether joyless. / I can no longer hold me patient. [Advancing]” (I.iii.155-157). After Margaret had entered the conversation and began to verbally curse and abuse Gloucester, the passage begins. After the passage, Gloucester had attempted to lay the curse that Margaret that had begun to lie on him, back on her. Just as Margaret was finishing her curse, Gloucester states, “Margaret.” (I.iii.233). This proves that Gloucester saw Margaret’s curses as ‘jokes’. He had never taken her seriously and he believed that he could simply ‘rebound’ the curse back upon Margaret. In turn, the other bodies in the room (Queen Elizabeth, Rivers, Grey, Hastings, and Dorset) interpreted that Queen Margaret was crazy. Dorset states, “Dispute not with her; she is lunatic” (I.iii.254). This quote explicitly explains that the people in the room agreed and ‘stood by’ Gloucester.
Before she exits, Queen Margaret states, “Live each of you subjects to his hate / And he to yours, and all of you to God’s” (I.iii.302-303). The excerpt is placed between these two instances because the passage allows the reader (audience) to understand that people fully support Gloucester; no matter how horrible a person he is thought to be by Queen Margaret.

This passage is about the underestimation of another’s judgments. Specifically throughout *King Richard III*, these underestimations prove to be horrible decisions. When Queen Margaret is cursing Gloucester, not one person in the room (palace) takes her seriously. There are three curses that Margaret places upon Gloucester during the passage. The first curse is found when Margaret states, “The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul! (I.iii.222). This curse describes that Gloucester’s soul is going to be gnawed on by “The worm of conscience” (I.iii.222). This quote implicitly explains that Margaret hopes that Gloucester will be tortured by his own conscience. The second curse that Margaret lays on Gloucester is that he will confuse his allies for traitors and his deepest enemies for friends. Margaret states, “Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest, / And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!” (I.iii.223-224). The final curse that Margaret bestows upon Gloucester is “No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine, / Unless it be while some tormenting dream / Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils. (I.iii.225-227). This final curse explains that, under Margaret’s curses, Gloucester will never sleep, and if he does, he will be tormented by horrible nightmares. Margaret verbally abuses Gloucester as well. For example, Margaret states, “Thou elvish-mark’d, abortive, rooting hog! / Thou that wast seal’d in thy nativity / The slave of nature and the
son of hell!” (I.iii.228-230). All of the curses and facts that Margaret ‘spews out’ to Gloucester should be taken into account by the other bodies in the room; but are not. Everyone in the room simply *underestimates* Margaret’s comments and curses. Not one person in the room considers the curses and facts to be true. Margaret is denied support. Even Gloucester himself *underestimates* Margaret’s curses. Margaret’s second curse is, “Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest, /” (I.iii.223). Gloucester had not taken this curse seriously, however, and in turn, this curse continues to echo throughout the play. For example one of Gloucester’s ‘allies’, Hastings, is later considered to be a traitor by Gloucester. Gloucester states, “Tellest thou me of ifs? Thou art a traitor! Off with his head!” (III.iv.76-77). Gloucester had *underestimated* Margaret’s curses and now suffers the consequences by seeing his ‘allies’ as traitors. Gloucester is not the only person, nevertheless, who suffers later on in the play from *underestimating* Margaret’s curses. For example, Margaret states, “Live each of you subjects to his hate / And he to yours, and all of you to God’s” (I.iii.302-303). Margaret not only cursed Gloucester during the passage, she curses the people who support Gloucester as well. Rivers and Grey, who had been subject to this curse for supporting Gloucester, later pay for their *underestimation* of the curse. Grey states, “Now Margaret’s curse is fall’n upon our heads, / For standing by when Richard stabb’d her son.” This quote is stated as Rivers, Grey, and Vaughn are being marched to death. Queen Elizabeth, who detests Gloucester, was also caught in the ‘collateral damage’ of Margaret’s curses and hatred. Queen Margaret states, “If not by war, by surfeit die your king,” (I.iii.197). The word “surfeit” (I.iii.197) means over-indulgent living, and the “king” (I.iii.197), as mentioned in the curse, is Queen Elizabeth’s husband, Edward IV. This curse echoes throughout the play and King Edward
IV dies after learning of Clarence’s death. Another echo to this curse can also be found at the beginning of the play when Gloucester states, “And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds / To fright the souls of fearful adversaries, / He capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber / To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.” (I.i.10-13). This excerpt of Gloucester’s first speech in the play is a direct echo to that of Margaret’s curse; Edward IV had been over-indulging in life. Even Queen Elizabeth is affected by Margaret’s curses because she had underestimated them. The passage is direct proof of the underestimation of Margaret’s curses and Margaret’s hatred for Gloucester and his supporters. It is for these underestimations that characters suffer throughout the play.