Lady Anne discovers that the corpse of King Henry VI has begun to bleed. This is a sort of resurrection, a sort of returning to life or the physiological processes of life.

O gentlemen, see, see! Dead Henry’s wounds
Ope their congealèd mouths and bleed afresh.—
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity,
For ’tis thy presence that ex-hales this blood
From cold and empty veins where no blood dwells.
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,
Provokes this deluge supernatural. (1.2.55–61)\(^1\)

For viewers of the play who were also aware of the chronicle histories from which Shakespeare drew in writing Richard III, the linkage between this unnatural blood flow from a dead corpse and Christ’s miraculous resurrection would have been strengthened by the fact that King Henry’s corpse bled on the eve of Christ’s Ascension Day. As Holinshed writes,

The dead corpse on the Ascension Even was conveyed with bills and glaives pompously (if you will call that a funeral pomp) from the Tower to the church of St. Paul, and there laid on a bier or coffin barefaced; the same in presence of the beholders did bleed; where it rested the space of one whole day. From thence he was carried to the Blackfriars, and bled there likewise.\(^2\)
Shakespeare modifies this source material in an important way by implying that Richard Gloucester's presence caused the corpse to bleed.

Lady Anne emphasizes the wondrous nature of this spectacle by inviting the assembled stage characters and by extension the theater spectators to “see, see!” the blood flowing freshly from King Henry’s wounds. One wonders whether or not a special effect could have been employed here to make blood flow through the wounds. It seems more likely that Anne and the assembled stage characters see this wonder themselves, respond to it as a wonder, and cue the audience members to gape in awe with them. While many unnatural or inexplicable occurrences such as the fresh bleeding of a new corpse are open sites—open wounds—for interpretation, Shakespeare’s handling of this particular wonder is definitive. It was believed that a murdered corpse often bled when in the presence of its murderer. In essence, then, Shakespeare recasts an ambiguous prodigy as a marvelous confirmation of Richard’s guilt.

The scene is particularly arresting because it represents the confluence of multiple prodigies. After referring to Richard as a “foul devil” and a “dreadful minister of hell” Lady Anne describes him as a monstrous birth here, a “lump of foul deformity” (1.2.57). Monstrous or unnatural births represented a major class of prodigies in the early modern period, and a great deal of critical attention has been paid to monstrous births in recent years. Like other prodigies, monstrous births were usually considered portents either of political upheaval or of the Last Judgment. William E. Burns has usefully distinguished between “annalistic” prodigies, which foretold particular political or social events, and “apocalyptic” prodigies, which were related to the end of time itself.3

There is a bit of situational irony in this scene of prodigious confluence because immediately before Richard Gloucester appears on the road Lady Anne curses the murderer of Henry VI by wishing him monstrous issue:

If ever he have child, abortive be it,
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view,
And that be heir to his unhappiness. (1.2.21–25)

Though she does not yet know this, the audience members are well aware that in cursing Richard’s issue Anne is cursing her own future children with Richard. In production Anne’s lines could be given additional weight by having Richard overhear them before he approaches the guards to stop the procession. Anne’s curse is an oblique and accidental introduction. Richard is an abortive and untimely monster who brings grief to his mother.