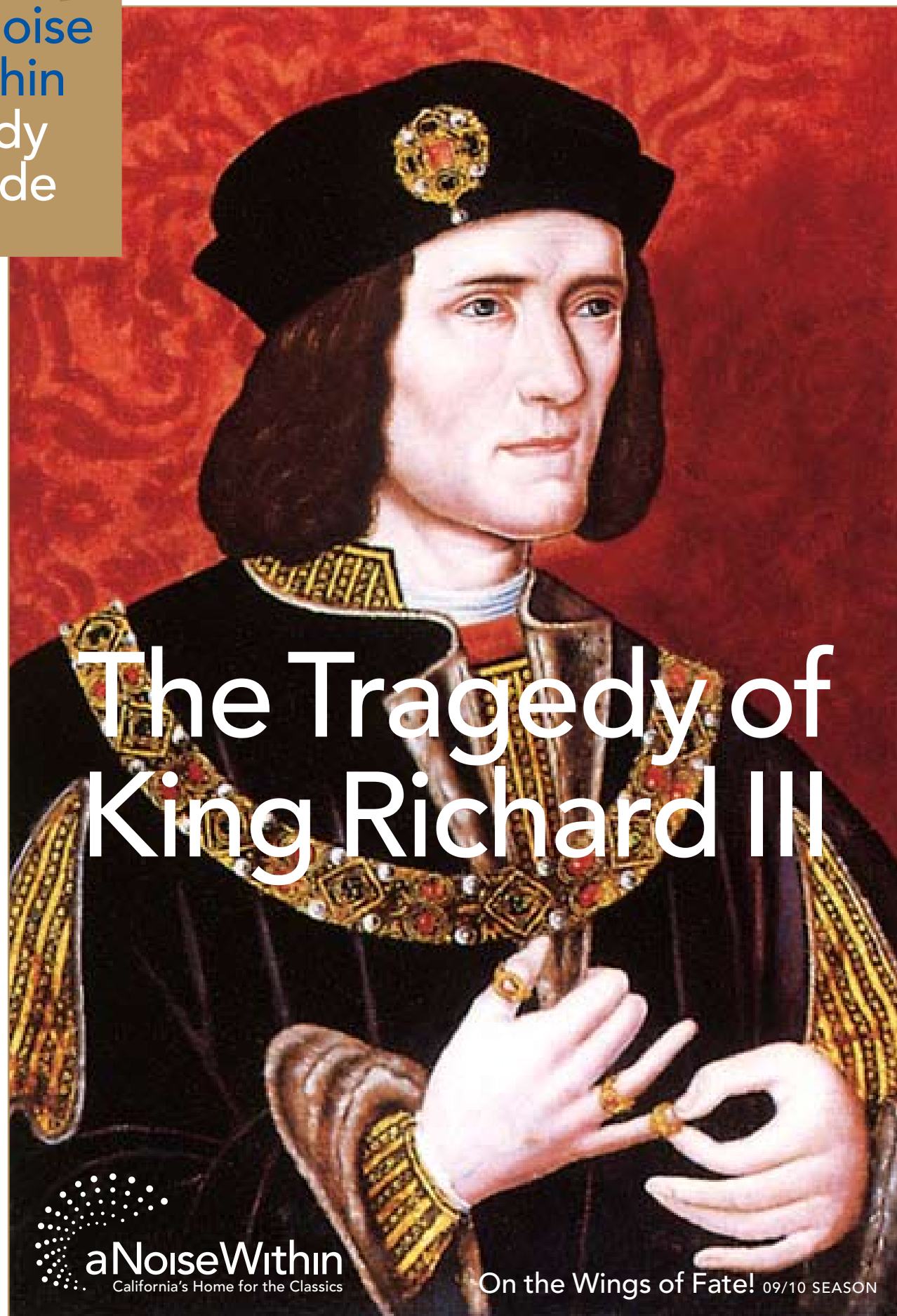


A Noise  
Within  
Study  
Guide



# The Tragedy of King Richard III



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California's Home for the Classics

On the Wings of Fate! 09/10 SEASON

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Costume Design by Nikki Delhomme.

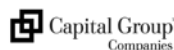
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## About the Play: Synopsis

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### **ACT I, Scene one**

Richard, the duke of Gloucester, opens the play with his infamous speech, "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this sun of York." In the speech, Richard reveals his intentions to usurp the crown. Immediately thereafter, Richard pits his ailing brother, King Edward IV, against the third brother Clarence in an effort to nullify Clarence's claim to the throne. Clarence is imprisoned in the Tower of London. As the scene ends, Richard tells the audience of his intended path to the throne: Clarence's probable execution, Edward's natural death, and Richard's hopeful nuptial alliance with the recently widowed Lady Anne Neville.

### **ACT I, Scene two**

Lady Anne, a member of the House of Lancaster, enters accompanying the body of her late father-in-law, King Henry VI. The late King—along with Anne's late husband, his son Edward—was recently killed in battle by members of the House of York. Anne believes Richard to have committed both of these crimes. In her anger, she prays aloud that any wife Richard may take should be as tormented as Anne herself.

Richard enters, halts the funeral procession and proceeds to attempt to woo Lady Anne. Lady Anne resists, and she continues to accuse Richard of the two murders. Richard finally hands her a sword and gives her a chance to avenge their deaths. As she lunges towards him, Richard insists it was Anne's beauty and his passion for her that drove him to commit these killings. These startling words stop her attack. Richard presents a ring and proposes to Anne. She accepts the ring, but not the marriage offer. When Richard presses further, she agrees to a later rendezvous. Alone, Richard gloats about swaying Anne's emotions so quickly.

### **ACT I, Scene three**

King Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth, laments to her accompanying family members that her husband is unlikely to

survive this sickness. Her two sons, Prince Edward and George, the young Duke of York, are too young to rule. The Queen expresses dismay that the elder prince comes of age—and her great distaste and distrust of Richard cause great concern. Buckingham and Stanley enter, proclaiming that King Edward wishes to make amends between Queen Elizabeth's kinsman and Richard's. However, Richard appears, brazenly accusing Queen Elizabeth of slander and of inventing the entire feud. He further asserts that she is in the throes of enacting a plan to imprison Clarence. In fact, Richard himself has such a plan in mind.

Queen Margaret (wife of the dead Henry VI), who as a York had been banished from the kingdom, comes out of her hiding place in the shadows and begins to curse nearly everyone present. Hurling numerous curses to and fro, she commands the attention of the entire room. Among Margaret's many hexes, she prays that Richard will never sleep peacefully and mistake his enemies for friends. All exit, leaving Richard alone. He is thereafter met by two men he has hired to murder Clarence in the Tower.

### **ACT I, Scene four**

Clarence awakes and tells the Tower guard, Brackenbury, of his dream in which he and Richard were sailing to France together. On the dream voyage, Richard pushed Clarence overboard. While Clarence was drowning, he saw the ghosts of members of the House of Lancaster killed in battle when the Yorks took control of the crown. Most notably, Clarence saw the ghost of Lady Anne's late husband Prince Edward, who cursed Clarence as the Furies dragged the Yorks to hell. Clarence awoke from his dream lamenting, "O Lord! Methought what pain it was to drown..."

Clarence asks Brackenbury to stay with him as he falls back asleep once again. The murderers then appear and use a warrant

## Fun Fact

In 1890 Eugene Schieffelin released eighty starlings in New York's Central Park because they were mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. In *Henry IV, Part One* Hotspur says "I shall have a starling shall be taught to speak" Act IV part I, scene 3. There are now over 200 million starlings in America. Quite a return for a single line.

Richard has issued to force Brackenbury to leave the Tower. The two men argue over the best method to kill Clarence. Both feel pangs of guilt, but ultimately Richard's promised monetary reward wins them over. Suddenly, Clarence springs up from slumber and begs for his life, saying Richard will save him. The murderers tell Clarence the truth—that they were sent by Richard. When Clarence does not believe them, they stab him and hide his body before fleeing the scene.

### ACT II, Scene one

King Edward IV enters with his family. He has yet to hear of Clarence's death. He convinces Buckingham and Hastings to make peace with their rivals Rivers, Dorset and Gray (Queen Elizabeth's kinsmen.) Finally, Richard enters and makes a speech to all those present, falsely apologizing for any perceived hostility on his part. Queen Elizabeth then proclaims that if Edward has indeed sent this letter to the Tower, Clarence should be brought immediately to court. To this news, Richard feigns offense and informs the family of Clarence's death. He slyly manipulates Edward into taking the blame for Clarence's death. Stanley then begs the King to pardon a condemned servant. Edward cries out, asking why a nobleman intercedes on behalf of a lowly servant, but no one stopped him from condemning his own brother. The sickly King is overcome by grief, and has to be carried to his bedchamber.

### ACT II, Scene two

The Duchess of York—mother to Richard, Clarence, and King Edward—comforts Clarence's children. She laments Richard's evil, which only she seems aware of. Queen Elizabeth tears into the room, shrieking that King Edward has died. Rivers and Dorset enter, reminding Elizabeth that her oldest son Prince Edward must be taken to London to be crowned King. Richard and his kinsmen join the scene, and all present agree that a few men must accompany the young prince on this journey. All exit but Richard and Buckingham, who tells Richard that they should be the ones to accompany the Prince on his journey to London.

### ACT II, Scene three

Three commoners on the street discuss the state of the monarchy, revealing that as the young Prince Edward is too young to rule, Elizabeth and Richard's kinsmen are in the midst of an intense power struggle over who shall be the Prince's advisor. The commoners share the Duchess of York's fears about Richard's character.

### ACT II, Scene four

Elizabeth discovers that Richard and Buckingham have had Rivers and Gray arrested and brought to Pomfret, a fortress where prisoners often are executed. The Prince is just two days away from London. Elizabeth and her youngest son Edward Duke of York take sanctuary, where she believes Richard cannot pursue them.

### ACT III, Scene one

Prince Edward arrives in London and is greeted by Richard, Buckingham, and Catesby. From his dialogue with Richard that follows, it is apparent that the Prince is suspicious of Richard. Lord Hastings enters and informs Buckingham that Elizabeth and young York have taken sanctuary. Buckingham convinces Hastings to forcibly retrieve that child and bring him to London. Richard then tells the Prince that the two boys will take residence in the Tower until the coronation—ostensibly for their own safety.

Richard then gathers together Buckingham and Catesby to discuss Hastings and Stanley's allegiances. Catesby maintains that Hastings is fiercely loyal to the late King Edward IV, and Stanley will follow suit. Buckingham suggests that the next day they hold "divided counsels" which will consist of a secret meeting to cement the plot to crown Richard King, and then an official counsel to determine when to hold Prince Edward's coronation.

### ACT III, Scene two

Hastings awakes very early to the sound of Stanley's messenger pounding on the door. The messenger tells Hastings of the "divided counsels" and relates a nightmare Stanley had in which he was killed by a boar (Richard's royal symbol.) The messenger begs Hastings to flee with him immediately, but Hastings declines. Catesby arrives and

broaches the idea that Richard should rule instead of the Prince. Hastings's horrified reaction prompts Catesby to inform Richard that his allegiance remains with the late King and therefore the young Princes. Lastly, Stanley himself comes to the house; Hastings dismisses him and leaves for the council meeting.

#### **ACT III, Scene three**

Queen Elizabeth's kinsmen are locked away in Pomfret awaiting their imminent executions and Gray notes that this is the manifestation of Margaret's curse.

#### **ACT III, Scene four**

Richard enters the divided council session and meets with Buckingham, who relays Catesby's information that Hastings will not break his allegiance to the Princes. Upon hearing this news, Richard feigns anger and shows his withered arm, claiming Queen Elizabeth and Hastings' mistress (Lady Shore) cursed his arm. He blames Lady Shore's supposed curse on Hastings himself, and orders his execution. Hastings realizes Stanley was correct in his assumptions of Richard's nature and he, too, notes Margaret's curse at work.

#### **ACT III, Scene five**

Richard and Buckingham realize they must now sway the English public to believe Richard should rightfully be King. The first step to this end is to convince the Lord Mayor of London that Hastings did indeed commit treason. Buckingham does indeed convince the Lord Mayor of this. Richard then sends Buckingham to deliver a public speech, proclaiming the illegitimacy of Edward IV's heirs.

#### **ACT III, Scene six**

The scrivener—a man who has just finished copying down Buckingham's speech for later in the day—announces that he sees right through the propaganda he has transcribed. He blames Richard for inventing an excuse to execute a political threat.

#### **ACT III, Scene seven**

Buckingham reports to Richard that the British public did not take to the ideas presented in the speech. They stared

in horrified silence when Buckingham proposed Richard should take the throne, and only a handful of Buckingham's men responded positively. The pair scheme to manipulate the Lord Mayor into begging Richard to take the throne. Their scheme succeeds—later, Buckingham and the Lord Mayor find Richard in feigned prayer and implore him repeatedly to take the crown. Finally, Richard consents to being crowned the next day.

#### **ACT IV, Scene one**

Elizabeth, Dorset, the Duchess of York and Lady Anne all convene in front of the Tower of London. They intend to visit the two Princes, only to discover that Richard has forbidden access to all. Stanley then arrives to take Anne to the coronation so that she might be crowned Queen. Anne laments her fate while the Duchess of York commands that Dorset go to France to join Richmond's ranks.

#### **ACT IV, Scene two**

The newly crowned King Richard is still wary about the princes' right to the throne, and orders that Buckingham murder them. However, for the first time, Buckingham wavers and does not immediately take action. Richard hires a new henchman (Tyrell,) who carries out the killings. He then tells Catesby to let it be known that Queen Anne is on her deathbed. Privately, he reveals his intention to murder Anne and marry Young Elizabeth, his niece. Buckingham asks for the Earldom, which Richard earlier promised to bestow upon him. Richard storms out and ignores the request—most likely in response to Buckingham's refusal to kill the Princes. Buckingham fears for his life and flees to Wales.

#### **ACT IV, Scene three**

As Tyrell returns to report the Princes are dead, Richard recaps the progress of his scheming to eliminate all other rightful claims to the throne. Ratcliffe cuts this glee short by announcing that nearly all the noblemen have fled to aid Richmond. Further, Buckingham is leading his own Welsh army against Richard. Richard takes action by building his own army to return the attack.

## Fun Fact

### SOLILOQUY VS. MONOLOGUE

A soliloquy is a speech that a character delivers when alone on the stage—whereas a monologue is a long speech given to another character. The term “soliloquy” didn’t come into popular use until some 40 years after Shakespeare’s time, so it’s likely he did not use the term himself. Modern examples of a soliloquy would include the “confessionals” often featured in reality shows, when one contestant speaks privately to the camera.

#### ACT IV, Scene four

Margaret enters while Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess are mourning the deaths of the Princes. Verbally accosting the pair, Margaret calls the Duchess the mother of a monster and tells Elizabeth that her sons’ deaths are payment for the Lancaster deaths of Henry VI and Prince Edward. Margaret then leaves for France. Richard enters. The Duchess tells him she wishes that she never gave birth to him and curses him to die a gruesome death. Richard then takes Elizabeth inside and informs her that he intends to marry his daughter. Though she initially protests, citing incest and Richard’s acts of murder, she eventually consents to speak with her daughter about the matter. Richard then receives news that Richmond is approaching England at an alarming rate in a fleet of battle ships and Richard decides it is time to meet him in battle.

#### ACT IV, Scene five

Stanley meets Richmond’s men in secret. Richard, suspicious of Stanley’s loyalties, has demanded that Stanley hand over his son. His son will be Richard’s hostage, and should Stanley desert Richard, he will be slain. Stanley relays this story to the noblemen, and wishes his stepson luck in battle.

#### ACT V, Scene one

Buckingham, on “the block of shame” awaiting execution, remembers Margaret’s words, “Remember this another day, / When he [Richard] shall split thy very heart with sorrow.” He declares that he deserves to die.

#### ACT V, Scenes two, three and four

Richmond receives the information from Stanley about Richard’s whereabouts and relays it to his men. They march onward, only a day away from reaching Richard. At camp, Richard attempts to galvanize his men, informing them that Richmond only has one-third as many soldiers. Richard is confident in his own victory. Also at camp, Stanley hopes for more helpful intelligence from his stepfather, and receives a messenger from Richard.

#### ACT V, Scene five

The messenger brings Stanley news that Richard intends to kill his son if he does not bring his troops to him by sunrise. Meanwhile, Stanley visits Richmond and promises any secret support he can manage. Both Richmond and Richard go to sleep and begin a shared dream. In the dream, the ghosts of Richard’s victims parade through the camps to speak of the atrocities Richard has committed. Richard awakes, horrified. For the first time, he realizes the extent of his evil.

#### ACT V, Scene six

While Richard is rallying his troops, a messenger arrives informing Richard that Stanley has joined Richmond’s camp and refuses to bring troops. However, Richmond’s army is within sight, so Richard prepares for battle with no time to execute Stanley’s son.

#### ACT V, Scene seven

Catesby informs Norfolk that Richard’s horse has been slain and Richard is in a frenzy searching for Richmond on foot. Richard appears, crying the infamous line, “...my kingdom for a horse,” but he does not find one. Richard continues on foot, killing all those in sight.

#### ACT V, Scene eight

Richard and Richmond finally duel face to face. Richmond emerges victorious, slaying Richard with his sword. As the rest of the battle dies down, Stanley appears. He has removed the crown from Richard’s corpse, and he uses it to crown Richmond. Richmond becomes King Henry VII in this pivotal moment. His first act as King is to decree that all of Richard’s soldiers who swear allegiance to the new king be given amnesty. King Henry VII also announces that he, a Lancaster, intends to marry Young Elizabeth, a York. This act will end the War of the Roses and create the new line of Tudor. ❖

# Cast of Characters



**Richard, Duke of Gloucester**  
Steve Weingartner



**King Edward IV**  
Apollo Dukakis



**Queen Elizabeth**  
Susan Angelo



**Edward, Prince of Wales**  
Arlen Smith



**Henry, Earl of Richmond**  
Freddy Douglas



**Duke of Buckingham**  
Jeremy Rabb



**Lady Anne**  
Lenne Klingaman

**King Edward IV**, King of England when the play begins

**Edward, Prince of Wales**, later King Edward V, the 12 year old son of King Edward IV

**George, Duke of York** his brother and younger son (age 9) of King Edward IV. Also called "York"

**Young Elizabeth**, daughter of King Edward IV

**Queen Elizabeth**, also known as Lady Grey, a member of the Woodeville family, wife of King Edward IV and mother to York and Prince Edward

**Duchess of York**, mother of King Edward IV, Richard III, and George Duke of Clarence.

**George, Duke of Clarence**, brother of King Edward IV, also called "Clarence"

**Richard, Duke of Gloucester**, brother of King Edward IV. Called "Gloucester" in the beginning of the play, later becomes King Richard III

**Henry, Earl of Richmond**, later King Henry VII, also called "Richmond"

**Stanley** step-father of Henry, Earl of Richmond

**Queen Margaret**, the former Queen of England, married to King Henry VI of the House of Lancaster who was killed in battle. Following the killing, ruling power was transferred to the House of York.

**Lady Anne**, daughter-in-law of King Henry VI, widow of Prince Edward, later married to Richard III

**Duke of Buckingham**, Richard's chief advisor and confidant.

**Cardinal Bouchier**, Archbishop of Canterbury

**Thomas Rotherham**, Archbishop of York

**John Morton**, Bishop of Ely

**Duke of Norfolk**

**Earl of Surrey**, son of Norfolk

**Anthony Woodeville**, also known as Earl Rivers, brother of Queen Elizabeth

**Marquess of Dorset**, Queen Elizabeth's son from a previous marriage.

**Lord Grey**, Queen Elizabeth's son from a previous marriage

**Earl of Oxford**

**Lord Hastings**

**Lord Stanley**, also called Earl of Derby

**Lord Lovel**

**Sir Thomas Vaughn**

**Sir Richard Ratcliffe**

**Sir William Catesby**

**Sir James Tyrrel**

**Sir James Blunt**

**Sir Walter Herbert**

**Sir Robert Brakenbury**, Lieutenant of the Tower

**Sir Williams Brandon**

**Priests** (Christopher Urswick among others)

**Tressel and Berkeley**, gentlemen attending on Lady Anne

**Keeper of the Tower**

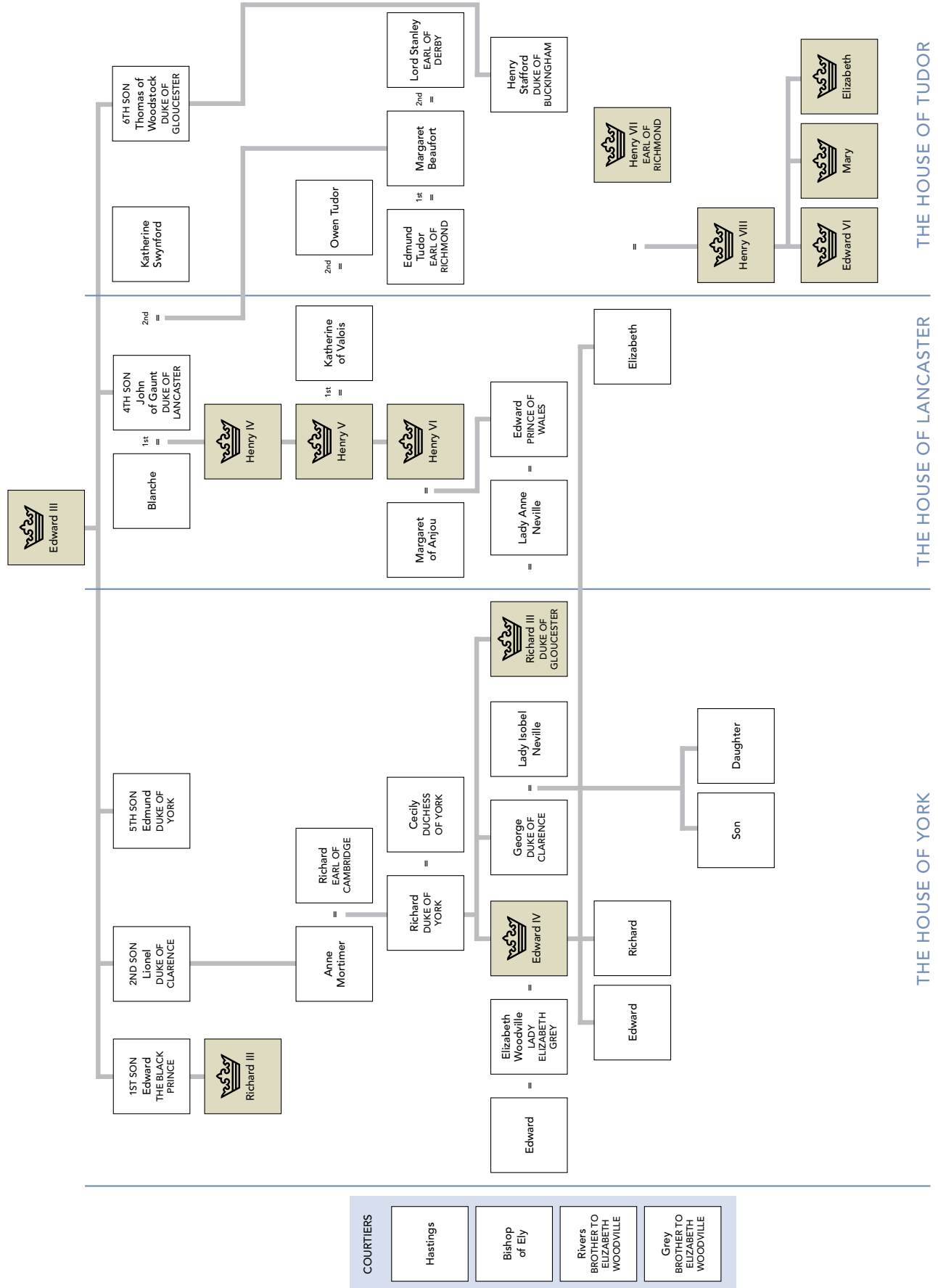
**Lord Mayor of London**

**Sheriff of Wiltshire**

**Edward (Earl of Warwick) and Margaret Plantagenet**, Clarence's children

# Who's Who in the Play: A Family Tree

## The Houses of York, Lancaster and Tudor



# Who's Who in the Play: Order of Succession and Victims

## THE ORDER OF SUCCESSION IN RICHARD III

This is the order which determines who would become King (or Queen) in the event of King Edward IV's death.



Edward IV's eldest son,  
Prince Edward of Wales (age 12)

1



Edward IV's second son,  
Richard Duke of York (age 9)

2



Edward IV's daughter, young  
Elizabeth

3



George, Duke of Clarence,  
Edward IV's next eldest brother

4



George's son,  
Edward, Earl of Warwick

5



George's daughter,  
Margaret Plantagenet

6



Richard, Duke of Gloucester

7



King Henry VI

### RICHARD'S VICTIMS

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, begins the play seventh in line for the throne. In his quest to move his position closer, he had members of the royal family and their allies killed. In order of their death, these were:

- **Edward** of Westminster, Prince of Wales, a Lancaster and Lady Anne's husband at the beginning of the play *Richard III*. Killed in battle of Tewkesbury by Richard and his brothers before the play begins.
- **King Henry VI**, his father, also killed in battle before the play begins. Husband to "Mad Margaret."
- **George**, Duke of Clarence, his brother
- **Vaughan**, kinsmen of King Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth
- **Rivers**, kinsmen of King Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth
- **Hastings**, kinsmen of King Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth
- **Grey**, kinsmen of King Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth
- **Prince Edward** of Wales (age 12)
- **George**, Duke of York (age 9)
- **Lady Anne Neville**, remarried to Richard III during the play
- **Buckingham**, Richard III's strongest ally at the beginning of the play, beheaded by the end
- **King Edward IV** died of natural causes, although in the play he suffered considerable emotional distress because of the death of Clarence, and this likely contributed to his death

## Theatre Lore

Why do actors say "break a leg"?

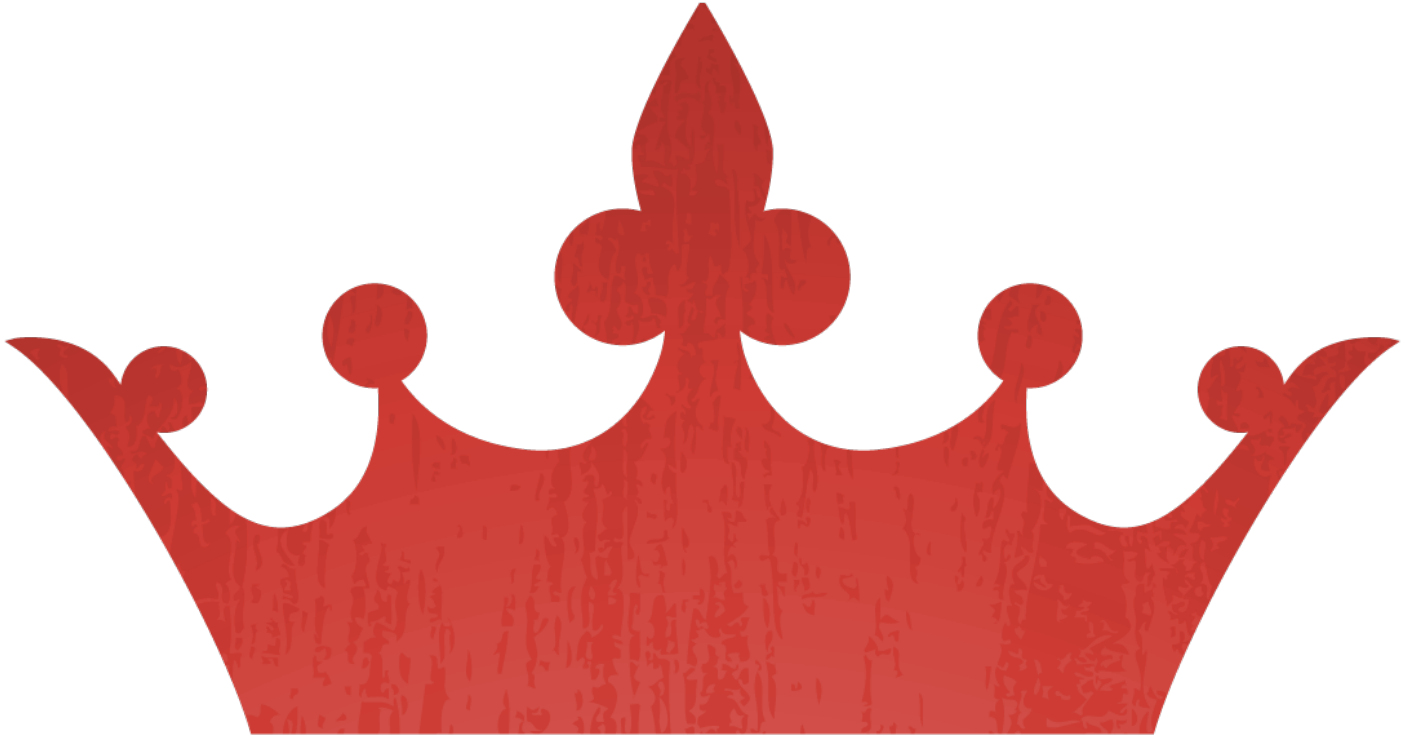
Perhaps the saying comes—in a complicated way—from the use of "leg." In theatre, a "leg" is a part of the mechanics that open and close the curtain. To break a leg is to earn so many curtain calls that opening and closing the curtain over and over during final applause causes the curtain mechanics to break. At the outset of theatre tradition, players acted outdoors, where there were no stages or curtains. Applause came in the form of foot stomping, which could indicate another origin of this phrase.

### Important Figures Referred to, But Not Appearing in *Richard III*

- **Warwick**, Powerful Northern English Lord and father to Lady Anne Neville
- **Elizabeth**, daughter of Edward IV. Richard seeks to strengthen his position by marrying her after Lady Anne's death
- **Mistress Jane Shore**, Mistress to King Edward IV and after his death mistress to Lord Hastings
- **Duke of York**, Husband to the Duchess of York and father to King Edward IV, Rutland, Clarence and Richard
- **Rutland**, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, second son to the Duke and Duchess of York and older brother to Richard—murdered by Lancastrian Clifford years before

## A Brief History of The War of the Roses

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### What were the Wars of the Roses?

The Wars of the Roses were a series of civil wars fought over control of the crown in England from 1455 to 1487 C.E. between the Houses of Lancaster and York, two branches of the royal Plantagenet family. Both families were descended from sons of King Edward III—John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Edmund, Duke of York. The houses both claimed their right to the throne based on their direct descendency from these two sons; on both sides, the desire for power and disputes over the proper order of succession led to outbreaks of violence as rulers were usurped and killed. Historians named the conflicts the “Wars of the Roses” because, during the wars, the Yorkists used a white rose as their badge and the Lancastrians used a red rose. At the end of the war, the victorious Tudor family created an emblem of a single rose with both red and white petals, symbolizing the union of the two houses and a new time of peace. In *Richard III*, Shakespeare dramatizes the very end of the series of wars and the triumph of Henry Tudor.

### In Medieval England, what were the rules of succession?

In England, kings were selected based on a political and religious concept called the Divine Right of Kings. Divine Right was based on the premise that the monarch was anointed, or chosen to rule, by God. There were strict rules of succession that ensured that only members of the king’s royal bloodline could become the next monarch, so that the country would continue to be ruled by Godgiven authority. When a king died, the crown passed to his eldest son. If his eldest son died and had no children, the crown passed to the king’s next oldest son, and so on through the sons. If the king had no children, the crown would go to his oldest brother. If the oldest brother died and had no children, the crown passed to the king’s next oldest brother, and so on. The order of succession stretched far beyond siblings and children to guarantee an undisputed heir to the throne, even if the king’s entire immediate family died before him. According to Divine Right, any attempt to remove a proper monarch from the throne was an act against God.

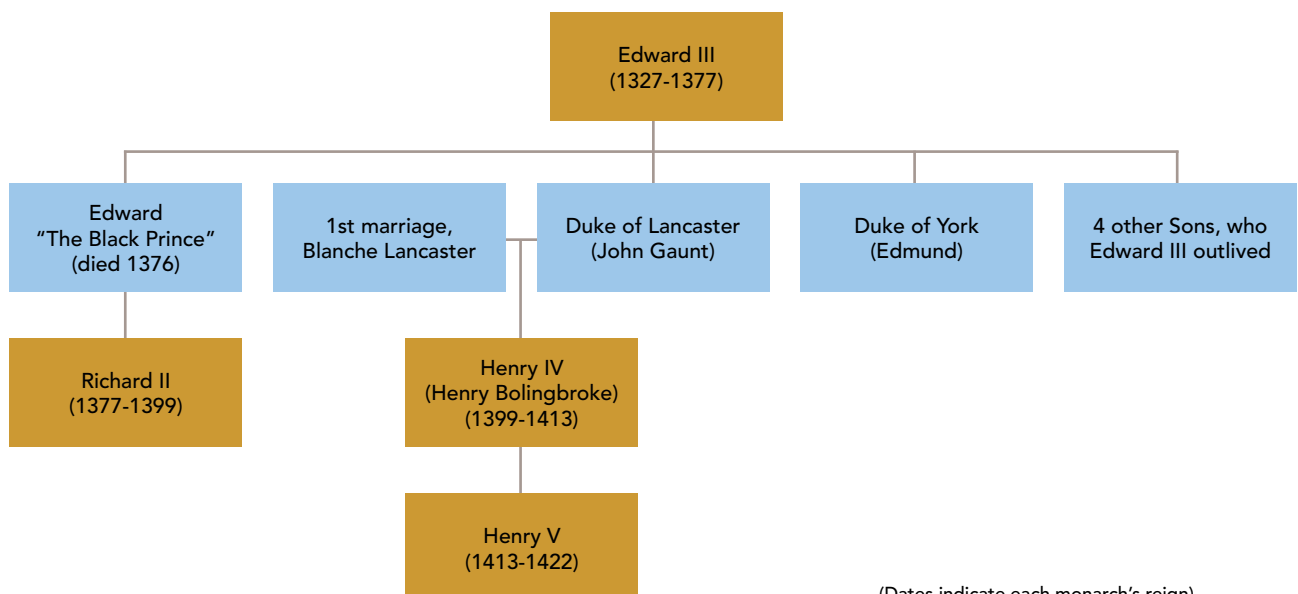
**If there were such strict rules about succession of kings, why were there disputes over the crown?**

In 15th century England, the king held almost all the political power of the country. However, the political structure was not an absolute monarchy. In 1215 C.E., a document called the Magna Carta limited the powers of the king and led to the creation of Parliament, the English legislative body. The king was required to consult with Parliament before making important decisions—mostly raising taxes—which guaranteed nobles and landowners a say in lawmaking. In addition, the king required the support of these nobles to maintain his rule over the country. At this time, England operated under feudalism, a political/economic system in which landowning nobles allowed farmers to live and work on their property in exchange for their pledge of loyalty in times of armed conflict. If the king made unpopular decisions or was viewed as incompetent by his wealthier subjects, the nobles were able to call up armies and threaten him with an uprising. During the Wars of the Roses, disputes surrounding the proper order of succession led to years of rebellion, as nobles raised armies and vied for power

when dissatisfied with kingly rule. When a conqueror took the crown, he took steps to ensure that he was viewed as the proper king according to Divine Right—which often involved killing anyone else who had a claim to the throne.

**How did the dispute over succession begin in the Wars of the Roses?**

The conflict began with the death of King Edward III in 1377 C.E. Edward III outlived his eldest son—also named Edward and called the Black Prince—who, according to Divine Right, should have succeeded Edward III. The Black Prince had a son, Richard, who was the next in line for the crown. However, Richard was only 10 years old and Edward III had two other living sons, the Dukes of Lancaster and York, who both believed that they would make better candidates than their nephew, the young Richard. Upon King Edward III's death, his privy council (his advisory group of wealthy, powerful lords) decided that the boy should be crowned King Richard II and his uncles should act as regents, or primary advisors, until the boy came of age. The Dukes of York and Lancaster accepted the decision, but used their power to maintain regent status well into Richard II's adulthood. In



(Dates indicate each monarch's reign)

his 30s, King Richard II finally began ruling England on his own, but he proved an ineffective ruler and failed to appease the frequently feuding English lords. Eventually even Richard II's own privy council thought he was a bad king. The negative opinions of the king led the houses of Lancaster and York to consider asserting their right to the throne. The Duke of Lancaster's eldest son, Henry Bolingbroke, claimed that he had more of a right to be king than Richard II as a descendent of the eldest surviving son of Edward III. In 1399, with the support of friends and noblemen angry with Richard's rule, Bolingbroke demanded that Richard II renounce the throne and crowned himself King Henry IV. Finally, he threw Richard II into jail, where the former king died with no heirs. England was now under Lancastrian rule, but with a monarch many felt had violated Divine Right. (Shakespeare dramatizes these events in the play *Richard II*.)

#### **How long did the Lancaster family rule England?**

Despite the controversy surrounding King Henry IV's rise to power, he ruled for 14 years and his son succeeded him without dispute. King Henry V was a competent and powerful leader, and his wars to reclaim the French lands once held by Edward III made him popular with his subjects. (Shakespeare dramatizes Henry V's adolescence, rise to power and reign in the plays *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2 and *Henry V*.) Unfortunately, Henry V's untimely death in 1422 again raised questions about succession when his infant son was crowned King Henry VI. Older relatives acted as regents until Henry VI came of age. During his reign, Henry VI lost all French lands gained by his father and struggled with mental illness. He was made even more unpopular by a poor attempt to make peace with France by marrying the French king's daughter, Margaret of Anjou. Already viewed as a weak king, Henry VI suffered a mental breakdown in 1453, rendering him incapable of ruling the country. The powerful and popular Richard, Duke of York (grandson of the first Duke of York), was named Protector of the Realm and ruled in Henry's stead. Clearly a stronger ruler, the Duke of York also felt he had a valid claim to the throne because of his direct descent from Edward III's son.

He began to assert his authority in minor clashes with powerful supporters of Henry VI. When Henry recovered in 1455 and took back control of the crown, Queen Margaret built up an alliance against Richard, Duke of York, to attempt to diminish his influence. The first battle of the Wars of the Roses broke out in 1455 when the thwarted Richard, Duke of York, raised a small army and marched on London, meeting Henry VI's forces at St. Albans. Richard battled bitterly with the king's army, commanded by Margaret. The battle was a Yorkist victory, regaining some influence for Richard, and the Yorkists and Lancastrians compromised to maintain the peace for four years. However, disputes over who would be heir to the throne continued—Henry VI had a young son, but many powerful nobles believed Richard, Duke of York, should be the successor. The dispute broke out into violence again in 1459, and Richard was killed in the Battle of Wakefield in 1460. Nevertheless, Richard's eldest son, Edward of York, prevailed at the Battle of Towton and was crowned King Edward IV in 1461. Edward banished Margaret and her son to France and imprisoned the former king Henry. (These events are dramatized in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Parts 1, 2 and 3.)

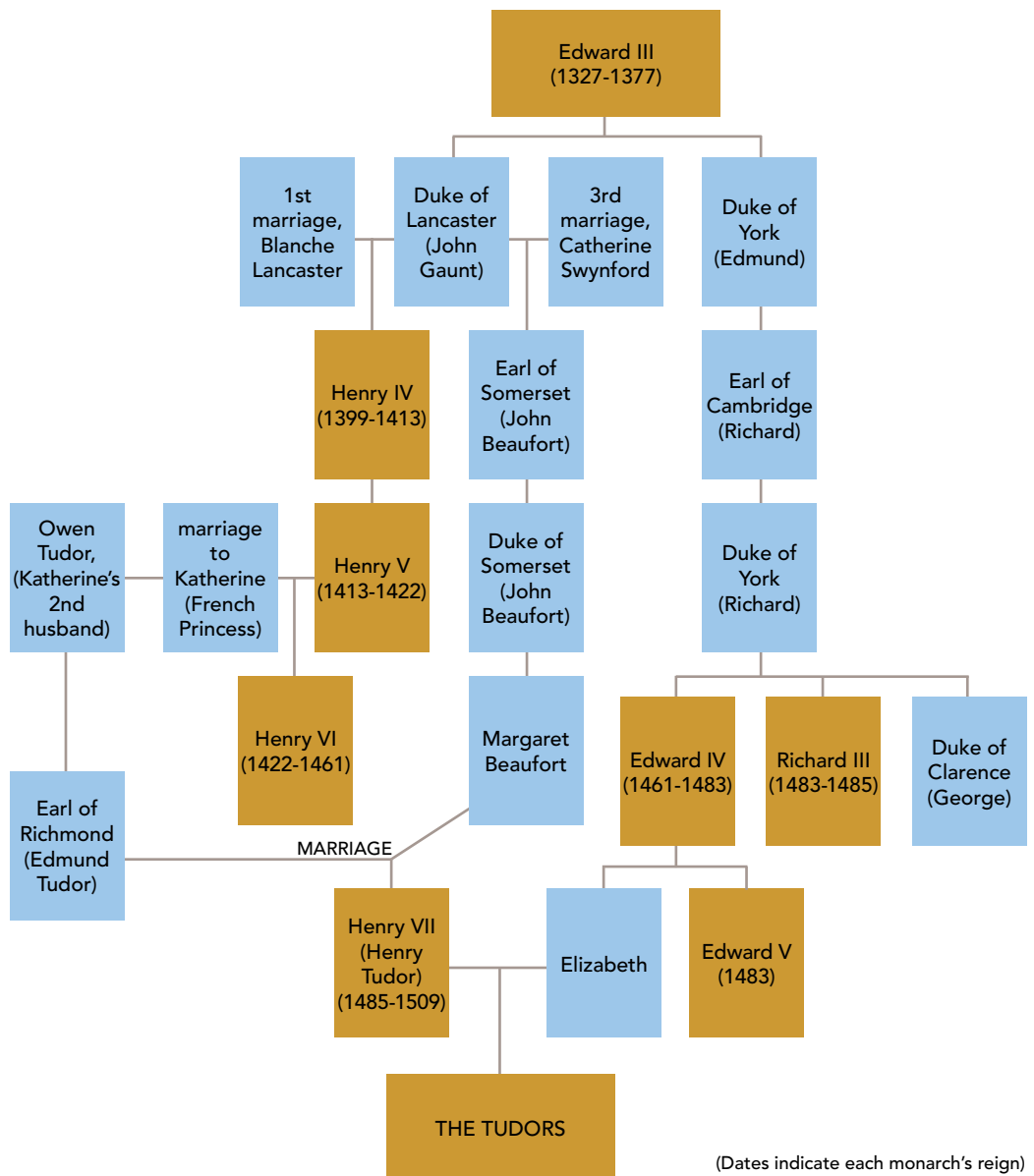
#### **How long were the Yorks in power? Did the Lancaster family get the crown back?**

No, the crown stayed with the Yorks until the wars' end. King Edward IV fought some rebellions against his claim on the English throne. Edward IV had controversially married the widowed commoner Elizabeth Woodville and, at her request, granted her large extended family titles and favors. The King's younger brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and many other nobles resented this. In 1483, King Edward IV died from natural causes, and Richard was appointed regent for Edward IV's 13 year old son, against the wishes of the Queen's relatives. With this position of power, Richard punished the Woodvilles by delaying Prince Edward's coronation. Word broke out that Edward IV had married Elizabeth Woodville while betrothed to another woman, voiding their marriage and making their son illegitimate. Just crowned King Edward V, the English no longer considered the boy of royal blood. At the request of several

nobles, including the Duke of Buckingham, Richard was crowned King Richard III. Full of turmoil and unhappiness, Richard III's two year reign concluded the York's hold on the throne. Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond, a noble distantly descended from the House of Lancaster, raised a rebellion and took the crown in 1485 after defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field. Richmond solidified his claim to the throne by marrying young Elizabeth, King Edward IV's daughter, and uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster. (These events are depicted in *Richard III*.)

### So who won the war?

The Tudor family ended up holding the crown for five generations. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was crowned King Henry VII and ruled from 1485-1509. The beginning of Richmond's rule is depicted in *Richard III*. His successors were Henry VIII (r.1509-1547), Edward VI (r.1547-1553), Mary I (r.1553-1558) and Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603), who ruled during Shakespeare's time. ❖



# The Real Richard III: Debate and Controversy

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Richard III

## Richard III: Villain or Benevolent King?

Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of King Richard III* portrays its central character as a ruthless villain—evil, murderous, lecherous, and rotten to the very core. However, history does not necessarily confirm this characterization.

The historical Richard III was associated with many of the mysterious deaths depicted in the play. However, his guilt or innocence was not proven in most cases – especially with regard to the two young princes who were locked in the tower and then killed.

Many people are determined to prove that Richard III was, in reality, not the bloodthirsty manipulator we have come to know in Shakespeare's play. In fact, *The Fellowship of the White Boar*, is a society whose mission is to discredit these claims. The organization, whose name was changed to the *Richard III Society*, was founded in England in 1924 in order to reform public image of Richard III and reshape his image into one more kindly and benevolent. The society has more than 4000 members worldwide. The central controversy that seems to sway opinion towards Richard's villainy or benevolence is the murder of the two young princes—sons of his brother, the late King Edward IV.

## Two Princes Murdered

Richard's involvement in the disappearances of the young Prince Edward (age 12) and his brother, the young Duke of York (age 9), is the subject of perhaps the most controversy surrounding the historical figure. Richard is widely acknowledged to have had motive for the murder (the princes stood in the way of his succession to the throne), and opportunity (Richard controlled the Tower of London.) Furthermore, the princes' defenders had already been executed at the hands of Richard. However, the lack of objective historic records has cast doubt (in some eyes) on his incontrovertible guilt.

In 1674, workmen discovered a box containing two small human skeletons in the Tower of London during renovations. These were suspected to be the bones of the two princes,



*The Two Princes Edward and Richard in the Tower, 1483 by Sir John Everett Millais, 1878, part of the Royal Holloway picture collection.*



*King Edward V and the Duke of York in the Tower of London, by Paul Delaroche.*

## Did You Know?

The real Richard III died at age 32. Although he was fairly young, the character in Shakespeare's play is often portrayed by a much older actor. Sir Ian McKellen was 56 when he portrayed Richard III in the movie version of the play, and Laurence Olivier was 48.

and were interred in Westminster Abbey by order of Charles II. In 1933, the bones were exhumed and examined in order to attempt to make an identity confirmation. DNA technology was not yet available, thus making it impossible to definitively say they belonged to the two lost princes.

On June 4, 1997, the United States Supreme Court held a mock trial to determine Richard's guilt in the murders. In a 3-0 decision, Chief Justice William Rehnquist and the Honorable Justices Stephen G. Breyer, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg exonerated Richard based on the finding that the prosecution had not established his guilt persuasively and beyond a reasonable doubt. It was established in the trial that Buckingham had motive to have the princes killed, as well. Further, the bones that had been found in the tower were not conclusively shown to be theirs. Tudor propaganda published at the time was biased against Richard (part of the outgoing royal family) and is often the sole source used to point towards his guilt. However, the propaganda was alleged by the defense to be so biased as to rend it devoid of any fact whatsoever.

### Physical Deformity: Real or Imagined?

The real Richard III may have had a slight bodily deformity, but this is debated widely among experts.

Richard III is slandered by Margaret in *Richard III* as a "...poisonous bunch-backed toad..." and a "bottled spider." Anne characterizes him as a "...lump of foul deformity," and a "...diffused infection of a man." Richard III himself claims he has "...a lump like an 'envious mountain' on his back," in *Henry VI Part 3*, and complains he is "...disproportioned in 'every part'." In *Richard III*, Richard's complaints center around his arm, which is "...like a blasted sapling, withered up." However, Shakespeare has based these textual references in his plays to Richard's physical traits largely on the work of English author and lawyer Sir Thomas More. Much has been done to refute these writings by More, which contemporary historians decry as merely published declarations of allegiance to the Tudor family. ❖

# Biography of William Shakespeare

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE** (1564-1616), poet, playwright and actor, was born to Mary Arden and John Shakespeare in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England on April 23, 1564.

Although much is written about him, very little documentation of his life survives beyond the public records of his birth, death, marriage and financial transactions. Shakespeare probably attended the Edward VI Grammar School, where his studies would have been almost exclusively in Latin.

At age 18, he married Anne Hathaway (age 26), who gave birth to daughter Susanna, just six months after the wedding. In 1585, Anne gave birth to twins Hamnet (who lived only 11 years) and Judith. The years 1585-91 are considered the "lost years," for which there are no extant records relating to Shakespeare. Sometime in this period, however, he settled in London.

In 1592 he was listed as an actor with the Lord Strange's Players, for whom he wrote his first play, the highly successful *Henry VI, Part 1*, followed immediately by the sequels *Henry VI, Parts 2 & 3* in the same year. Over the course of 20 years, he wrote 148 sonnets, 3 long poems, and the 37 plays that are in continuous performance around the world today.

1599 marked the opening of the outdoor Globe theatre in which Shakespeare was a shareholder. Between 1610 and 1612, Shakespeare retired to Stratford, where he died in 1616 at age 52. He is buried in Stratford Parish Church.

Other plays by Shakespeare produced at A Noise Within include: *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Coriolanus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Cymbeline*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Pericles*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. ❖

# Shakespeare Timeline 1564-1623

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**1564**

Conquistadores cross the Pacific ocean. William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Galileo Galilei are born.

**1565**

St. Augustine, FL is founded, making it the oldest remaining European settlement.

**1567**

King James VI becomes King of Scotland.

**1572**

The St. Bartholemew's Day Massacre in Paris.

**1577**

Sir Francis Drake sets out on his voyage around the world.

**1579**

Sir Francis Drake lands in California and claims it for Queen Elizabeth I.

**1582**

Pope Gregory XIII implements the Gregorian calendar. William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway marry.

**1583**

Shakespeare's first child, Susana, is born.

**1585**

Shakespeare's twins, Hamnet and Judith, are born.

**1587**

A group of settlers arrive off Roanoke Island, VA to resettle the deserted colony. Mary, Queen of Scots, is beheaded. The Rose Theatre is founded in London.

**1590-1591**

*Henry VI* Parts II and III written.

**1592**

*Henry VI* Part I written. *Richard III* completed. *Comedy of Errors* possibly written.

**1593**

Plague epidemic rages in London, killing over 11,000 people. Christopher Marlowe murdered. *Titus Andronicus* probably written. *The Taming of the Shrew* is probably written.

**1594**

Shakespeare is an actor, playwright, and part owner of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. *Love's Labour's Lost* is written. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* possibly written. *Romeo and Juliet* most likely written. *Love's Labour's Won* written (lost play)

**1595**

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is performed for the first time. Shakespeare probably writes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Richard II*.

**1596**

Cambridge University is founded. *King John* probably written. *The Merchant of Venice* first performed.

**1597**

*Henry IV* Part I most likely written.

**1598**

Shakespeare's name begins to appear on the title page of his plays. *Henry IV* Part II probably written.

**1599**

First performance of *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V* in London. Shakespeare most likely writes *Much Ado About Nothing*. Shakespeare probably authors *As You Like It*.

**1600**

Telescope invented by Dutch Opticians. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* completed.

**1601**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* premieres in London. *Othello* possibly written. *Troilus and Cressida* most probably written. Shakespeare drafts *Hamlet*.

**1602**

First performance of *Twelfth Night*.

**1603**

Queen Elizabeth I dies and is succeeded by her cousin, King James I of England, uniting the crowns of England and Scotland. Plague in England. Shakespeare writes *All's Well that Ends Well*.

**1604**

Montreal, Canada is founded. Shakespeare's *Othello* is performed for the first time. *Measure for Measure* performed at court.

**1605**

The Gunpowder Plot. First public library established in Rome. The first part of Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is published. *King Lear* possibly written. *Macbeth* possibly written.

**1606**

*Antony and Cleopatra* possibly written.

**1607**

Jamestown, VA is founded and becomes the first permanent English Colony. *Timon of Athens* possibly written. *Coriolanus* possibly written.

**1608**

Quebec City, Canada is founded by the French. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* possibly written.

**1609**

Galileo demonstrates the first telescope. Henry Hudson discovers the Hudson River. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* are published. *Cymbeline* written.

**1610**

*The Winter's Tale* possibly written.

**1611**

The King James Bible is printed for the first time in England. *The Tempest* is performed for the first time.

**1612**

Henry VIII written. *The Two Noble Kinsman* most likely written. *Cardenio* written (with John Fletcher).

**1613**

A fire destroys London's Globe Theatre.

**1615**

The second volume of Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is published.

**1616**

William Shakespeare dies and is buried in the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon.

**1623**

First Folio published.

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*The dates of Shakespeare's plays are a subject of continuing debate and should be taken as approximate.*

# Shakespeare's Verse and Prose

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Costume Design by Nikki Delhomme.

**MANY PEOPLE** are “turned off” by Shakespeare as they find his works difficult to read and understand. It is hard to believe that people spoke the way his characters do. But with a little information, you too can speak the speech and talk the talk. Shakespeare wrote his plays in two forms: prose and verse.

## PROSE

Prose is the form used by the common people in Shakespearean drama. It is also the form used when a character reads a letter out loud. There is no rhythm or meter in the line. It is everyday language and Shakespeare's audience would recognize it as their language. The members of the royal family rarely uses prose speech, but the citizens on the streets of London frequently use prose. Here, the First Citizen comments on the crowning of the young Prince:

FIRST CITIZEN

So stood the state when Henry the Sixth  
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

## VERSE

The majority of Shakespeare's plays are written in verse, for two primary reasons: tradition and memorization. Since the beginning of theatre, plays had been written in verse. Shakespeare was one of the first playwrights to use both prose and verse when it suited him. Verse is easier to memorize than prose. Shakespeare uses verse to

denote members of the nobility and the upper class. Shakespeare's noble characters may speak in verse, but the average noble did not. The verse form that Shakespeare uses is called blank verse. It does not contain rhyme, but each line has an internal rhythm and a regular rhythmic pattern, like a heartbeat. Shakespeare utilizes iambic pentameter. An iambic pentameter is a combination of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Pentameter means that there are five stressed syllables per line. For a ten-syllable line, iambic pentameter features the accent on alternating syllables, beginning with the second syllable. Like this:

dah-DUM, dah-DUM, dah-DUM, dah-DUM, dah-DUM

Here is an example from *Richard III*:

GLOUCESTER

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;  
And all the clouds that low'r'd upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

Shakespeare and his contemporaries enjoyed using other literary devices such as alliteration, in which the same sound is repeated in a line or group of lines; repetition, where the same word is repeated in the verse; and antanaclasis, the repetition of a certain word or phrase, but with a different meaning each instance. Shakespeare also used puns and

metaphor to illustrate his point of view as with the "sun of York" in the example above referring to King Edward IV son of the Duchess of York.

Sometimes Shakespeare adjusted words to fit the verse. For example, if you have the word glorious, it can be adjusted to fit two syllables: glor-yus as in the example above. Other times, words can be stretched to fit an extra syllable, as in the following example, which stretches the word damned to be spoken as damn-ed. In this instance, the pronunciation is shown with an accent over the "e".

GREY

God bless the Prince from all the pack of you!  
A knot you are of damnèd blood-suckers,

Actors can tell by scanning a line (called "scansion") which words are important and how fast to say them. When two characters are speaking, they will finish the ten syllables needed for a line. This is called a shared line or split line.

ANNE

Where is he?

GLOUCESTER

Here

[ANNE spits at him.]

Why dost thou spit at me?

The next quote is an instance where a word was truncated in order to fit the verse.

ANNE

In thou foul throat thou li'st!

Here, "liest"" is written with an apostrophe so as to clearly indicate that the word is to be pronounced in one syllable so as to fit the verse structure. Part of the actors' homework when preparing for a Shakespearean role is to dissect each line, picking out the words that should be stressed, truncating and elongating words when necessary, and working out where to breathe between lines. Surprisingly, Shakespeare makes this quite easy in the iambic pentameter. He places the most important words on the accent. Words like "the," "is," and "and" are on the unaccented portions.

Shakespeare's language may seem foreign to us today, but it is an older version of our language. Shakespeare and his contemporaries looked upon language as flexible and constantly evolving. He changed and borrowed words from other languages and invented some himself. He used verbs in both their antiquated and modern forms. Glossaries are available defining the archaic words and any editions of Shakespeare's plays contain a glossary or footnotes. However, the Oxford English Dictionary includes many obsolete words and gives examples of usage and when it was first used in literature. Most college and university libraries have a copy of the OED and it is also available on CD-Rom. ❖

## Theatre Lore

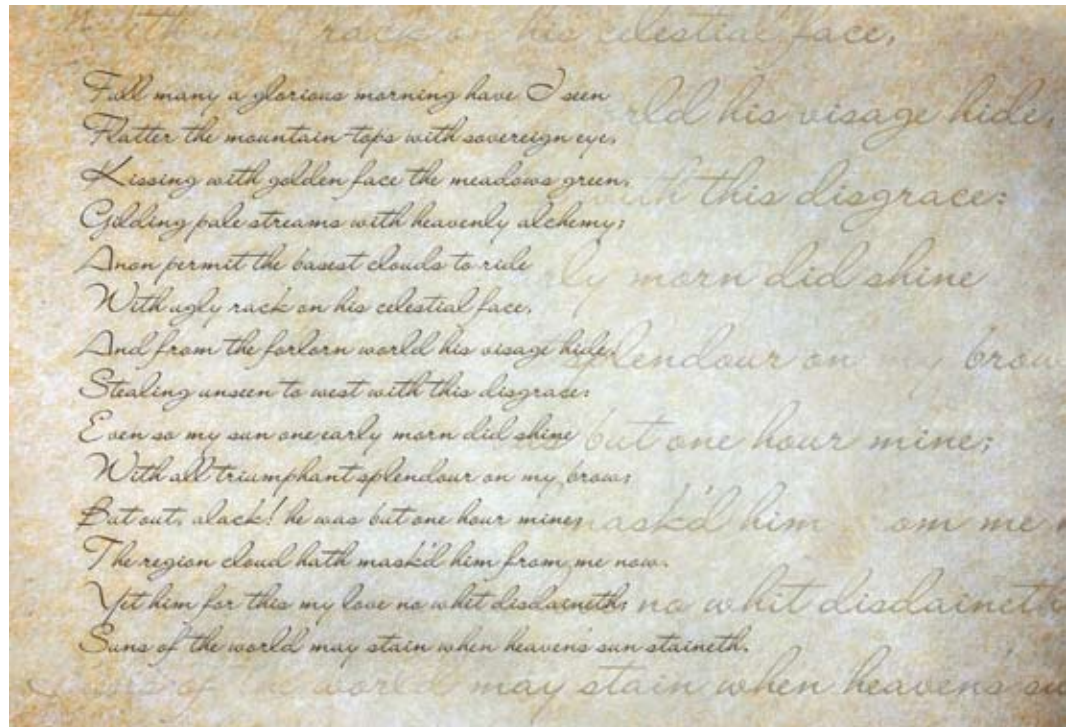
Why are actors called thespians?

In the sixth century B.C., a Greek chorus performer named Thespis was the first person in history to step away from the chorus and speak by himself, exchanging dialogue with the group and impersonating a character instead of simply reciting a story as the chorus had done before then.

# Shakespeare's Words and Phrases

"Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

HAMLET, ACT III, SCENE III



## CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Shakespeare coined words for his plays that were directly and immediately needed to tell his stories. Consider how the words Shakespeare coined for *Richard III* connect to the themes of the play, and ask students to do the same.

## ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to take one of the words coined in the play and describe how it interacts with with one of its characters. fully within the play with respect to one of its characters. For example, Richard III is thoroughly "ungoverned" in the play, as he acts outside the rule of law to subvert the monarchy.
- Note the four instances that a word with the prefix "un" was coined for the play. Ask students to theorize why Shakespeare may have needed so many negative versions of these words.

WHEN SHAKESPEARE WAS WRITING HIS PLAYS, modern English was in a constant state of change. The language was absorbing words from other cultures, due to war, diplomacy and colonization. Many of Shakespeare's contemporaries lacked the vocabulary to express their ideas. So, writers such as Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser or Sir Philip Sidney invented, borrowed or adopted words from other languages. This process is called neologizing. It is estimated that between the years 1500 and 1659, 30,000 new words were added to the English language. Calculating the number of words invented by Shakespeare is difficult, but overlooking variations on already existing words of the day and compounds, it is estimated that Shakespeare coined approximately 600 words deriving from Latin alone. Some experts set the total number of words contributed by Shakespeare to be 10,000. Many of the words we use in our common, everyday language were invented by Shakespeare.

Words that appeared in print for the first time in *Richard III*:

Bottled  
Discontent  
Rancorous  
Traditional (first time used as an adjective)  
Ungoverned  
Unswayed  
Unwillingness  
Urging

BERNARD LEVIN sums up the impact of Shakespeare's phraseology in the following from *The Story of English*. Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil. Viking 1986:

If you cannot understand my argument and declare "It's Greek to me", you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your salad days, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you act more in sorrow than in anger, if your wish is father to the thought, if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green-eyed jealousy, if you have played fast and loose, if you have been tongue-tied, a tower of strength, hoodwinked or in a pickle, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play, slept not one wink, stood on ceremony, danced attendance (on your lord and master), laughed yourself into stitches. Had short shrift, cold comfort or too much of a good thing, if you have seen better days or lived in a fool's paradise—why, be that as it may, the more fool of you, for it is a

foregone conclusion that you are (as good luck would have it) quoting Shakespeare; if you think it is early days and clear out bag and baggage, if you think it is high time and that that is the long and short of it, if you believe that the game is up and that truth will out even if it involves your own flesh and blood, if you lie low till the crack of doom because you suspect foul play, if you have your teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop) without rhyme or reason, then—to give the devil his due—if the truth were known (for surely you have a tongue in your head) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you bid me good riddance and send me packing, if you wish I were dead as a door-nail, if you think I am an eyesore, a laughing stock, the devil incarnate, a stony hearted villain, the bloody-minded or a blinking idiot, then—by Jove! O Lord! Tut, Tut! For goodness sake! What the dickens! But me no buts—it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare.

Other Words Coined by Shakespeare:

|                                |             |               |              |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Accessible                     | Clutch      | Flawed        | Lustrous     | Savagery    |
| Accommodation                  | Coldhearted | Fortuneteller | Madcap       | Schoolboy   |
| Accused                        | Colorful    | Foulmouthed   | Majestic     | Scuffle     |
| Addiction                      | Comply      | Frugal        | Metamorphize | Secure      |
| (Shakespeare meant 'tendency') | Compromise  | Full-grown    | Mimic        | Shipwrecked |
| Admirable                      | Courtship   | Generous      | Monumental   | Skim milk   |
| Advertising                    | Countless   | Gloomy        | Motionless   | Submerge    |
| Amazement                      | Critic      | Gnarl         | Negotiate    | Torture     |
| Assassination                  | Dauntless   | Gossip        | Obscene      | Tranquil    |
| Bandit                         | Dislocate   | Gust          | Overgrowth   | Undress     |
| Belongings                     | Distasteful | Hint          | Pageantry    | Unmitigated |
| Birthplace                     | Distrustful | Hobnob        | Paternal     | Unreal      |
| Blanket                        | Downstairs  | Hurried       | Pious        | Unrivalled  |
| Barefaced                      | Dwindle     | Impede        | Premeditated | Upstairs    |
| Blushing                       | Embrace     | Impartial     | Priceless    | Useful      |
| Bet                            | Engagement  | Invulnerable  | Puking       | Useless     |
| Cater                          | Epileptic   | Jaded         | Radiance     | Worthless   |
| Champion                       | Eventful    | Label         | Reliance     | Zany        |
| Circumstantial                 | Exposure    | Lonely        | Restoration  |             |
|                                | Fashionable | Love Letter   | Retirement   |             |
|                                | Fixture     | Luggage       | Revolting    |             |

# Now is the Winter of our Discontent: The Speech

## GLOUCESTER

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;  
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;  
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;  
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;  
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds  
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;  
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun  
And descant on mine own deformity:  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determined to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.  
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,  
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,  
To set my brother Clarence and the king  
In deadly hate the one against the other:  
And if King Edward be as true and just  
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,  
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,  
About a prophecy, which says that 'G'  
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.

## An Actor Prepares

An interview with A Noise Within's Richard III, Steve Weingartner.



Steve Weingartner

**What are some of the things you think about when approaching a famous speech like this one?**

As an actor one of the challenges involved in this monologue would be to resist playing subtext. Richard is obviously driven by copious amounts of resentment, anger and self pity, but these are interior motives and feelings and must not be "played". I'm not even sure Richard is totally aware of all the forces that swirl around in his heart and mind.

(continued)

## CLASSROOM CONNECTION

■ Go through all of the steps of scansion with 8-10 lines of the speech: Divide into groups of two syllables, adding stressed and unstressed marks. Decide which words are most important to stress, and why. Mark up the passage and read it out loud to the class. Discuss which choices are better and why.

■ Try reading this monologue out loud using an activity. You will need to have it fairly well learned in order to do this. Your activity could be folding laundry, counting money, getting ready for a big party, writing a letter, etc. How does the action affect the way you read the monologue? Is it easier to do with or without the action?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS-Grades 9-12: Reading 1.3, Composition 2.1, Literary Response 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, Listening & Speaking

**What are some of the challenges that you experience as an actor with this piece?**

This first monologue is essential to kicking the play off to the right start. I must somehow communicate in this first speech: 1. The world we're in, 2. Who I am, and 3. What I plan to do. So, I have to engage the audience on a very intimate level. In essence I'm allowing the audience into the depths of my private heart and inviting them to join me as co-conspirators, because they are privy to the truth. (As opposed to the other characters in the play, who are deceived as to my true nature, with the notable exception of Margaret.) While I'm obviously a nasty person, I must be strangely sympathetic to the audience for the play to work.

**Is it difficult to play such an evil person?**

It is a challenge to make a sociopathic killer likeable. This can be done with humor, charm and sarcastic wit—all provided by Shakespeare's terrific script. Unlike Hamlet, most of Richard's monologues are direct address to the audience. In essence, Richard is enlisting the audience to join him on this dark journey. At the beginning of the play the audience is at a bit of a disadvantage—not being aware of the extensive history of the War of the Roses. *Richard III* is the end of Shakespeare's long *Henry IV* trilogy, and so it is extremely important. ❖

## Theatre Lore

Why is it bad luck to say "Macbeth" inside the theatre?

There are many origins for this superstition. Old actors believe the witches' song in *Macbeth* to possess the uncanny power of casting evil spells. The reasons for this fear usually bring tales of accidents and ill-fortunes that have plagued productions of the play throughout the world. An alternative is that the superstition began in the days of stock companies, which would struggle to remain in business. Frequently, near the end of a season, a company would realize it was not going to break even, and, in an attempt to boost ticket sales, would announce the production of a crowd favorite: *Macbeth*. If times were particularly bad, the play would frequently be a portent of the company's demise.

## Animal Symbolism in *Richard III*



**THROUGHOUT *RICHARD III***, characters are referred to using animal imagery or symbolism. The following descriptions should help you to better understand the historical context of the animals as well as their meanings in the play.

### The Boar

The boar serves two historical purposes. According to British records, the boar actually was Richard III's battle symbol that was engraved on his personal crests and shields. In Elizabethan times, certain animals, including the boar, were reserved as private hunting for the royal family. Therefore, a boar could only be killed by a nobleman, just as Richard is finally killed by someone with a more legitimate claim to the throne. Richard is most commonly referred to as the boar by Hastings and Stanley, usually when he is being his most treacherous or deceitful—characteristics often associated with a boar—as in this example when Hastings informs Stanley's messenger that Richard will hunt them if even slightly provoked:

#### HASTINGS

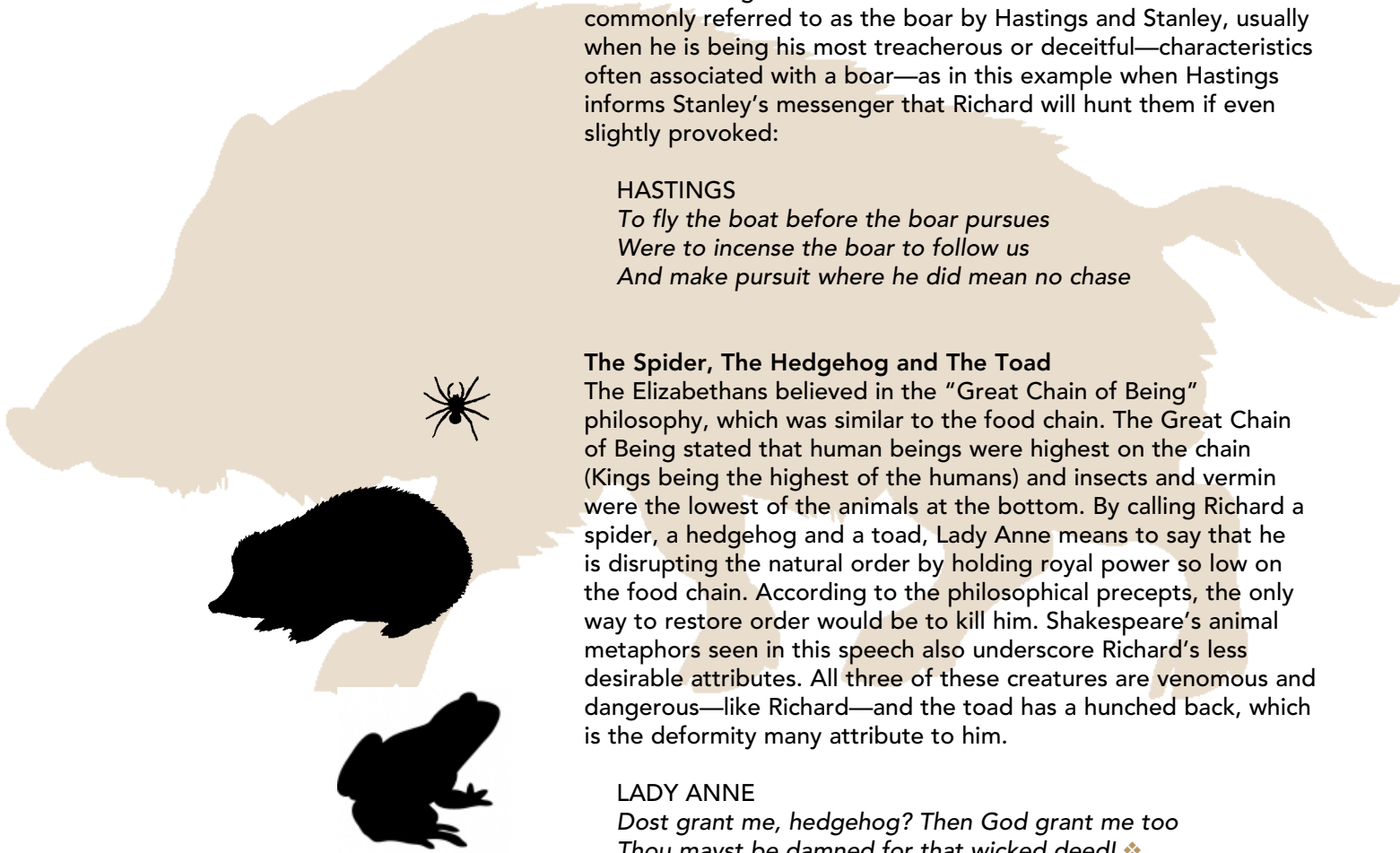
*To fly the boat before the boar pursues  
Were to incense the boar to follow us  
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase*

### The Spider, The Hedgehog and The Toad

The Elizabethans believed in the "Great Chain of Being" philosophy, which was similar to the food chain. The Great Chain of Being stated that human beings were highest on the chain (Kings being the highest of the humans) and insects and vermin were the lowest of the animals at the bottom. By calling Richard a spider, a hedgehog and a toad, Lady Anne means to say that he is disrupting the natural order by holding royal power so low on the food chain. According to the philosophical precepts, the only way to restore order would be to kill him. Shakespeare's animal metaphors seen in this speech also underscore Richard's less desirable attributes. All three of these creatures are venomous and dangerous—like Richard—and the toad has a hunched back, which is the deformity many attribute to him.

#### LADY ANNE

*Dost grant me, hedgehog? Then God grant me too  
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed! ❖*



# Adapting *Richard III* at A Noise Within



Geoff Elliott

Geoff Elliott is Co-Artistic Director at A Noise Within. He has directed over 50 productions to date, including *The Tempest*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Othello*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mr. Elliott has also acted in numerous professional productions with A Noise Within and many other professional theatres.

## Theatre Lore

What is a ghost light?

There is a superstition that if an emptied theater is ever left completely dark, a ghost will take up residence. In other versions of the same superstition the ghosts of past performances return to the stage to live out their glory moments. To prevent this, a single light called a ghost light is left burning at center stage after the audience and all of the actors and musicians have gone.

Now, those in the world of theatre know that a "dark" theatre is one without a play. There is nothing sadder to a dramatic artist than an empty house and a playless stage. Therefore, a light is left burning center stage so that the theatre is never "dark;" it is simply awaiting the next production.

**BECAUSE *RICHARD III*** is one of William Shakespeare's younger plays, there is a raw sense of vitality and forward motion to the piece. I can't help but feel that Shakespeare was beginning to discover the real depth and the full impact of his talent and power, and he shows off a bit with wonderful linguistic fireworks in this play. This makes seeing the performance all the more powerful for the audience—the wonderful witticisms and expletives take on new meaning when actually spoken aloud.

The enduring popularity of the play is largely due to the principal role of Richard. He is such a contagious personality, delighting in the mayhem he has set in motion, and loving every minute of it. As an audience, we almost feel guilty about our secret fondness for him. While I've never directed this piece before, I played the title role in A Noise Within's previous production in 1997 and I'm finding this process to be an interesting adjustment in perspective. Obviously knowing the play well because of my previous experience with it makes me feel that I have a leg up, so to speak, but I now have the additional task of exploring the play from the outside in and not just from Richard's mind out.

I'm setting the production in its intended period: late medieval, 1483, the year of the battle of Bosworth, where Richard was killed. Although it is certainly valid to set this and other Shakespearean plays in different periods, I feel there is an intangible power that emanates from the period Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote *Richard III*. Setting the show in the intended period reminds us that not only is this a great work of Shakespeare's fiction but it is also very much grounded in history and Richard was a very real man.

I hope that, when you see the play, you glean from this interpretation of *Richard III*, a sense of the destructive power of insatiable greed. Richard—and for that matter, most of the other characters in this play—is so bent on seizing power no matter the cost, that when he finally achieves his goal, the throne, his world falls apart. Richard is forced to experience, probably for the first time, complete and desolate loneliness, and I think that's the ultimate message to be found in this text: greed not only destroys the external victims but also can eat away at one's soul. In this way, the play does have a redemptive power—at the end, Richard is transformed from unfeeling into a fully sympathetic person, capable of feeling true culpability and remorse. The play makes Richard human. And, in witnessing this transformation, we are able to reflect on our own humanity. ❖

—GEOFF ELLIOTT, DIRECTOR

## In the Classroom: Suggested Activities

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### Discuss: Before the Performance

- After reading the play, what are your impressions of Richard? Do you think that he commits evil acts solely because he wishes to be King—or is he more intrinsically evil? Given that Kings need to engage in wars and rule with a firm hand, do you think he would he make a good King? Why or why not?
- What is your initial impression of Margaret? Do you find her to be a sympathetic character?
- Do you think that either of the two young Princes know of Richard's plans to get rid of them? What clues in the text support your opinion either way?
- Taking a close look at language, isolate areas in Richard's speeches where he uses artful deception and flowery words. Contrast these with the speeches delivered to the audience where he reveals his true intentions. Does Richard do everything he sets out to do? In what ways does his manipulation of other characters surprise you, or is every move he makes laid out neatly and then enacted, just as he plans?

### Discuss: After the Performance

- After seeing the play, how have your thoughts about Richard's inherent evil and King-like qualities changed? How have they stayed the same?
- The play *Richard III* was originally categorized as a history play, and now it is called a tragedy. Which do you think is more appropriate? What events set the plot in motion, and are they tragic or historic in nature?
- How did the language work with the action to describe the conflict between Petruchio and Katherine? Do their insults and mud-flinging seem totally archaic? Or could some of their jabs be used in common speech today?
- Do you think that setting the play in another time and place would change the way the relationships in the play were conducted? Would you have made the same choice if you were staging the play?

### English Language Arts Activities: Character Description & Soliloquy

■ Women in *Richard III*: Lady Anne Neville chooses to marry the man responsible for her husband and Father-in-law's deaths. Reflect with students on their views of this choice:

1. What are the choices offered to widows during Lady Anne's time? What about contemporary widows—what kinds of social stigma are attached to them nowadays?
2. Why do you think that she marries Richard? Does she, too, yearn for power? Or is she merely trying to make the best of her situation?
3. Have students research the real Lady Anne Neville to help support their views. They will discover, for example, that she had children with Richard. Does this change the way that they see her decisions? What images or stories from television shows, news, movies, books or magazines support these views? How do you see them playing out in your personal experiences?

■ In Shakespeare's plays, most of the main characters have a moment when they speak alone and talk about themselves and their views and desires. This is called a monologue, or soliloquy.

The most famous monologue in *Richard III* is Richard's opening speech that begins, "Now is the winter of our discontent..." Have students use character descriptions from *Richard III* to create a short poem, monologue or rap that will be spoken in class from the first person as if they were that character. Alternatively, have students write a paper describing their chosen character.

### Critical Review

■ Geoff Elliott, Director of *Richard III* at A Noise Within, had a specific vision for the play. In turn with our team of directors and designers, they collaborated to create the play you viewed. Ask students to write a review of their play experience, focusing on either story, plot, acting, directing, or design elements, and share it with us in the Education department at A Noise Within. ❖

## Visual Arts: Creating the World of *Richard III*



The theatre at Epidaurus, Greece.



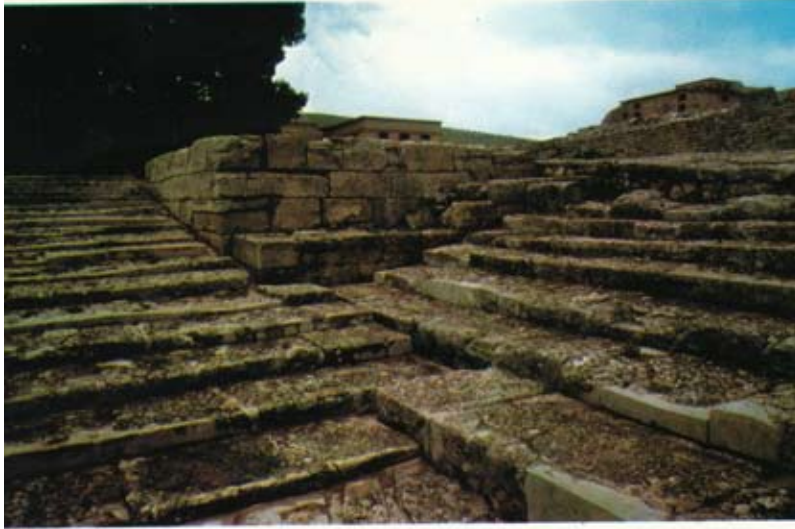
Historic coronation throne at Westminster Abbey. This throne has been used in all coronations since 1308 and is the earliest surviving example of an English royal throne.



Set design for *Richard III* by Darcy Scanlin.

**THE DESIGN FOR *RICHARD III*** draws upon ancient stone ruins in Europe. The cities crumbling in Greece and Western Europe offered inspiration to set designer Darcy Scanlin, as she created a space both inspired and defined by stone monoliths and cascades of stairs. Deeply symbolic, the set created by Scanlin interacts with the play so as to reinforce ideas of the vast history and omnipotence of the monarchy, and also the human struggles that provide so much conflict in the play:

*"The Director Geoff and I wanted to create a space that feels like the ruins of an ancient fortress, set high on a precipice above the cold blustery landscape of England. Geoff was very interested in the idea that this is a cold, hard, wet and unforgiving world, so I began my research by looking at ancient stone structures and found a photo of the ruins at Mycenae—near Epidaurus, the oldest theater in the world. The steps in the photo suggested the narrow winding passageways that descend down into the tower of London and lead up into the castle. Most importantly, the triangular landing suggested a position for the throne, with two opposing and ascending paths leading toward it. We decided to incorporate that architecture into the set. We positioned the throne at the triangular landing, above the rest of the space for visual and staging power. This arrangement of throne to steps is all about conflict, both physically and metaphorically. It creates powerful staging dynamics for the actors, involving different heights, levels, opposites and diagonals and metaphorically signifies the struggle for power."*



#### RUINS AT MYCENAE

Situated in the northwestern corner of the palace at Knossos, this is the earliest known theater in the history of Western architecture. The palace was the residence of the former king of Crete, and dates back to as early as 2000 BC, and became the center of the civilization that dominated the Aegean sea from 1600BC-1400BC. The theater is possibly the first structure constructed for the sole purpose of allowing spectators to view an event. This is the probable location for the myth of King Minos, from "The Minotaur and the Labyrinth."

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Sculptural model: Using air-dry or kiln-fired clay, ask students to model a singular piece of furniture to add to our set for *Richard III*. Students may model a stone bench, chandelier or wall sconce, large table, or throne. Use designs of the set from this study guide and photographs of Ancient Greek ruins and other European ruins such as Stonehenge as sources of visual inspiration. When complete, ask students to explain the nature of the piece—where it belongs on stage, and why it either reinforces or acts in opposition to one of the central themes of the play. For example, if a soft armchair is modeled, ask students to verbally describe or write how it softens the set and acts to negate the harsh, angular reality provided by the all-stone environment. Ask students if their piece reflects a particular character's presence in the room—for example, Lady Anne might use a soft armchair whereas Richard might need something more harsh.

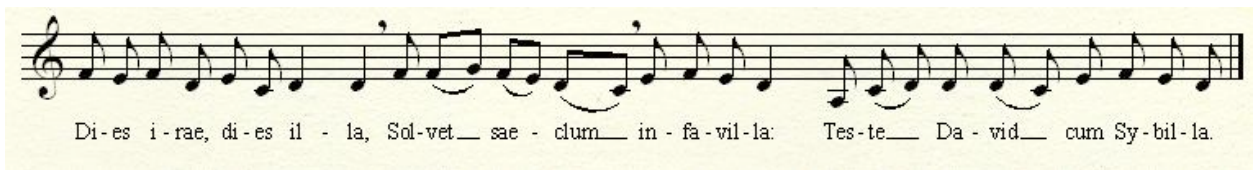
2. Triangular collage: Using only triangular shapes of cut paper with a limited color palette, ask students to create a collage based on an outdoor environment. Use books of garden images and landscapes as inspiration, incorporating cubist, surrealist, and other modern art styles. Try asking students to use only black, grey, and white triangles for their collage in order to focus on the ways that different kinds of triangles interrelate and connect to suggest more rounded shapes. Discuss as a class when finished, making observations about shape and line. What kinds of conglomerate shapes can be devised to use short, squat triangles or long, narrow ones with one obtuse angle? ❖

## Music: Suggested Activities

### The Dies Irae

Richard III is perhaps the most iconic Shakespearean villain. His villainy includes the murder of a long list of enemies, and his story conjures images of scary stories told in the dark at campfires or horror films. For A Noise Within's adaptation of *Richard III*, the music featured includes an appearance of the most often used "creepy" musical motif in western music since the 13th century: the *Dies Irae*.

The *Dies Irae* (Latin for "Day of Wrath") is an ancient hymn based on a poem of 17 stanzas. But more importantly, the Gregorian plainchant tune to which the poem was set is the single most familiar musical fragment in modern music. The *Dies Irae* is shown on the staff below:



The first eight pitches of the *Dies Irae* are used widely in commercials, film scores (often for horror movies,) cartoons, rock music, and classical music. The tune is most often associated with evil, a sense of foreboding, or ominous, dark moods. One well-known example is Tim Burton's *Nightmare Before Christmas*, wherein the melody of the song "Making Christmas" is a direct recitation of the *Dies Irae*.

In A Noise Within's adaptation of *Richard III*, the song *Pie Jesu* is sung by the two Princes. It, too is based on the *Dies Irae*—its lyrics are the final stanza of the poem.

#### Suggested Activities:

1. Listening: Play the *Dies Irae* on a keyboard instrument, use recordings such as Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, or play the podcast suggested below. Ask students to identify the theme within the orchestration. Ask students to explain the devices employed by composers to provide tension and release in the examples played (elongation of notes, shortened figures, phrasing, etc.). If basic rhythm instruments are available, ask students to beat out the rhythms heard for the first 8 notes of the *Dies Irae* in each example.
2. Making Connections: Ask students to bring in examples from contemporary songs that feature elements of suspense, foreboding, and a dark color. Play these examples in class and attempt to identify portions of the *Dies Irae* present. Can clear examples of the *Dies Irae* be found in popular music? What changes have been made, and what emotional effect do these changes have on the piece as a whole? What meaning is derived from the piece because of the inclusion of the *Dies Irae*? Bring a few modern examples to play alongside those offered by the students—like *The Ballad of Sweeney Todd* by Stephen Sondheim from the movie version.



*The Last Judgement Triptych*,  
by Hans Memling (1400-1494)

#### FURTHER STUDY

See Wikipedia's page on the *Dies Irae*, which includes a list of notable appearances in classical music: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dies\\_Irae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dies_Irae)  
Or, listen to this wonderful podcast featuring well-known music based on the *Dies Irae*: [http://cdn1.libsyn.com/fsm-podcast/FSM\\_Podcast\\_029.mp3?nvb=20090901193033&nva=20090902194033&t=0a287f87d1eca91172c76](http://cdn1.libsyn.com/fsm-podcast/FSM_Podcast_029.mp3?nvb=20090901193033&nva=20090902194033&t=0a287f87d1eca91172c76)

MUSIC STANDARDS-Grades 9-12 Proficient: Artistic Perception 1.4-1.6, Creative Expression 2.1, 2.4, Aesthetic Valuing 4.3-4.4.

# Just for Fun: Reproducible *Richard III* Quiz

## Which Shakespearean Villain Are You?

Written by Amanda Fink and Veronica Wickline

**You have to do something that you have qualms about. You:**

- A. Get my boyfriend/girlfriend to do it for me
- B. Ask a friend to do it for me
- C. Get it over with
- D. Do it if my parents insist
- E. Pay someone to do it for me
- F. By asking this question, you assume I have a moral code. Hehehe...bad move, kid, bad move.

**After you do something most people would consider wrong, you:**

- A. Experience a guilt trip to the point of insanity.
- B. Feel guilty once someone finds out that I did it.
- C. If nobody knows, who's to tell? (And I make sure to leave no witnesses.)
- D. Only feel sorry when it's too late to do anything about it.
- E. Nothing is wrong if it moves me higher up.
- F. Bask in the glory of my evil. Mwahaha!

**How important to you are your friends and family?**

- A. Very. Nothing matters more to me.
- B. Enough that I enjoy making their lives... "interesting".
- C. I either want to kill them or marry them, depending on the person.
- D. I respect one member of my family in particular above all others
- E. "I do love thee so, that I will soon send thy soul to Heaven."
- F. I don't have or need either.

**You've been caught! Who do you frame?**

- A. The witches told me to!
- B. My brother.
- D. Whoever is accusing me and my posse.
- D. Me? You're accusing sweet, innocent, blameless little me???
- E. I take the blame because it was so worth it. Plus, no one else is cool enough to pull off the stuff I do.
- F. I don't need to frame anyone, because I don't care!

**If you had a dog:**

- A. I'd name him Spot.
- B. Maybe a dog would fix all of my problems.
- C. I'd sick 'em on the family members that bug me.
- D. I'd teach him how to take down the mailman.
- E. I am one. Why do I need another?
- F. Use him as a pawn in my master plan.

**Usually, when you do something kinda sketchy, it's because:**

- A. I just want my loved ones to make it to the top.
- B. The world was getting to be too perfect.
- C. ...of a girl (or boy).
- D. I want what's owed to me.
- E. I want to be King/Queen.
- F. It's fun to watch people squirm.

**Which of the following would you most likely say:**

- A. *"Put this night's business into my dispatch, which shall to all...give solely sovereign sway and masterdom."* (Or: "I'll do all the dirty work so you can make it big.")
- B. *"I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests."* (Or: "I am what I am, and I can't pretend to be nice if I don't feel like it!")
- C. *"O! my offence is rank, it smells to heaven."* (Or: "Wow, I really screwed up.")
- D. *"The wheel is come full circle: I am here."* (Or: "Stupid karma...")
- E. *"And therefore,—since I cannot prove a lover, To entertain these fair well-spoken days,— I am determined to prove a villain."* (Or: "Mwahaha!!! Cue evil music.")
- F. *"I am not what I am"* (Or: "I am full of mystery and therefore the most interesting person you will ever meet.")

### Student Focus

VERONICA WICKLINE is a 10th grader at Polytechnic High School in Pasadena, California. Avidly enjoying all things Shakespeare, she contributed questions and answers to this quiz in conjunction with the A Noise Within Education Department. Veronica enjoys a wide range of activities, such as competitive Latin trivia, Lincoln Douglas debate, and (of course) acting. Veronica participated in Summer With Shakespeare and conservatory acting classes at A Noise Within for many years. She also wrote this bio.



Costume Design by Nikki Delhomme.

## Theatre Lore

What is a raked stage?

Where do the terms upstage and downstage originate?

Historically, stages were built on inclines, with the backs of the stages slightly higher than the fronts. The incline was called a rake and helped those in the back of the audience see the action onstage. Eventually, theatres started placing seats on inclines instead of stages, but the terminology stuck. Downstage is the front of the stage, closest to the audience, and upstage is the back of the stage. Some theatres, like *A Noise Within*, still participate in the tradition of using raked stages.

### SCORING:

Add up the number of times you answered "A", "B", "C", "D", "E", and "F". Then, read the description below to see which Shakespeare villain you are most like!

#### Mostly As: Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth*

You are devious and manipulative, but most of your plans are to help your friends and family improve their position in the world. Wily and cunning, you can be heartless in this quest. Even your poor dog is dismissed with an evil, "Out, out damned Spot!" Our advice to you is to try to appreciate your life a bit more—life is pretty good just where you are.

#### Mostly Bs: Don John from *Much Ado About Nothing*

You seem to harbor feelings of resentment towards just one or two select friends or family. You would much rather have your friends take care of the "messy business," and seek to avoid it yourself, creating elaborate schemes and deceptions to get what you want. Our advice to you is to take a bit more responsibility your ownself, and live much more truthfully and simply.

#### Mostly Cs: Claudius from *Hamlet*

Having the habit of denying your own feelings for a long time, you are prone to launch into overblown schemes to get back at someone that you feel has wronged you. Although you are essentially kind and good, love can cause you to have such strong feelings that you have to resist the urge to do something unsavory. Our advice to you is to remember that there are always more fish in the sea.

#### Mostly Ds: Edmund from *King Lear*

Feigning innocence, you are determined that everyone should like you no matter what. However, you have a wild streak, and if you're not careful you could end up creating some serious turmoil! Our advice to you is to deal straight and tell it like it is. Keep things on the up-and-up, and smell the roses.

#### Mostly Es: Richard III from *Richard III*

You will do anything you can in order to claw your way to the top, including stepping on friends and family. After being caught in a string of mistakes, you do eventually feel badly about something you've done that isn't so nice—but by that time it's too late! Our advice to you is to turn over a new leaf entirely and cultivate the love, buddy.

#### Mostly Fs: Iago from *Othello*

Super intelligent and supremely manipulative, you will do anything to get what you want if you give in to the urge. You seem most interested in proving that you are right and justifying what you do—and can lapse into being oblivious of others' feelings. Our advice is to, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

# Resource Guide

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## BOOKS

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- Ackroyd, Peter. *Shakespeare: The Biography*. Anchor Books, 2005.
- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. Doubleday, 1978.
- Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Books, 1998 .
- Bloom, Harold, ed. *Modern Critical Interpretations: Richard III*. Chelsea House Publishers, 1998.
- Dickson, Andrew. *The Rough Guide to Shakespeare*. DK Publishing, 2009.
- Fields, Bertram. *Royal Blood: Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes*. Regan books, 2000.
- Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Hicks, Michael. *Richard III (Revealing History)*. Tempus publishing, 2004.
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- Kendall, Paul Murray. *Richard the Third*. W.W. Norton and Co., 1975.
- LoMonico, Michael. *The Shakespeare Book of Lists*. The Career Press, 2001.
- Reynolds, P. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Weinreb, Ben and Christopher Hibbert. *The London Encyclopedia*. Macmillan Publishers, 1983.
- Weir, Alison. *The War of the Roses*. Ballantine Books, 1996.

## WEBSITES

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- Absolute Shakespeare** [www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com)
- In Search of Shakespeare PBS** <http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/works/work195.html#>
- Richard III Society, American Branch** [www.r3.org/intro.html](http://www.r3.org/intro.html)
- Shakespeare High** [www.shakespearehigh.com](http://www.shakespearehigh.com)
- Shakespeare Magazine** [www.shakespearemag.com/intro.asp](http://www.shakespearemag.com/intro.asp)
- Shakespeare Resource Center** [www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net)
- Shakespeare's World** [www.shakespeare.emory.edu](http://www.shakespeare.emory.edu)
- Sir Thomas More's *The History of King Richard the Third*** [www.r3.org/bookcase/more/moretext.html](http://www.r3.org/bookcase/more/moretext.html)
- Wars of the Roses** [www.warsoftheroses.com](http://www.warsoftheroses.com)
- Richard III Society** <http://www.r3.org/>  
This is the website for the American chapter of the Richard III Society. The society is "Dedicated to the study of the life and a reassessment of the reputation of Richard III and the study of fifteenth-century English history and culture."
- Library of Philadelphia Website** <http://www.library.phila.gov/medieval/edward.htm>  
Contains detailed photographs and historical information related to the King Edward IV Roll—a historical manuscript containing illustrations and descriptions, detailing over 50 shields and banners.

## VIDEOS

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- Richard III*, 1995**. Directed by Richard Loncraine and set in the 1930's. Stars Ian McKellen, Annette Bening, Robert Downey, Jr., and Kristin Scott Thomas.
- Richard III*, 1955**. Directed, co-written, and starring Laurence Olivier, co-stars Cedric Hardwicke, John Gielgud, and Nicholas Hannen.
- Looking for Richard*, 1996** (Documentary). Directed and produced by Al Pacino. Stars Al Pacino, Alec Baldwin, Kevin Spacey, Winona Ryder, F. Murray Abraham, Estelle Parsons, Aidan Quinn, Kenneth Branagh, Kevin Kline, James Earl Jones, and Rosemary Harris.



## Being an Audience Member

Today, movies and television take audiences away from what was once the number one form of entertainment: going to the theatre. But attending a live performance is still one of the most thrilling and active forms of spending time. In a theatre, observers are catapulted into the action, especially at an intimate venue like *A Noise Within*, whose thrust stage reaches out into the audience and whose actors can see, hear, and feel the response of the crowd. Although playhouses in the past could sometimes be rowdy, participating in the performance by giving respect and attention to the actors is the most appropriate behavior at a theatrical performance today. Shouting out (or even whispering) can be heard throughout the auditorium, as can rustling paper or ringing phones.

After *A Noise Within*'s performance of *Richard III*, you will have the opportunity to discuss the play's content and style with the performing artists and directors. You may wish to remind students to observe the performance carefully or to compile questions ahead of time so they are prepared to participate in the discussion.

## Theatre Vocabulary

These terms will be included in pre- and post-performance discussions at *A Noise Within*.

**blocking:** The instructions a director gives his actors that tell them how and where to move in relation to each other or to the set in a particular scene.

**character:** The personality or part portrayed by an actor on stage.

**conflict:** The opposition of people or forces which causes the play's rising action.

**dramatic irony:** A dramatic technique used by a writer in which a character is unaware of something the audience knows.

**genre:** Literally, "kind" or "type." In literary terms, genre refers to the main types of literary form, principally comedy and tragedy. It can also refer to forms that are more specific to a given historical era, such as the revenge tragedy, or to more specific sub-genres of tragedy and comedy such as the comedy of manners, farce or social drama.

**motivation:** The situation or mood which initiates an action. Actors often look for their "motivation" when they try to dissect how a character thinks or acts.

**props:** Items carried on stage by an actor to represent objects mentioned in or implied by the script. Sometimes the props are actual, sometimes they are manufactured in the theatre shop.

**proscenium stage:** There is usually a front curtain on a proscenium stage. The audience views the play from the front through a "frame" called the proscenium arch. In this scenario, all audience members have the same view of the actors.

**set:** The physical world created on stage in which the action of the play takes place.

**setting:** The environment in which a play takes place. It may include the historical period as well as the physical space.

**stage areas:** The stage is divided into areas to help the director to note where action will take place.

**Upstage** is the area furthest from the audience. **Downstage** is the area closest to the audience. **Center stage** defines the middle of the playing space. **Stage left** is the actor's left as he faces the audience. **Stage right** is the actor's right as he faces the audience.

**theme:** The overarching message or main idea of a literary or dramatic work. A recurring idea in a play or story.

**thrust stage:** A stage that juts out into the audience seating area so that patrons are seated on three sides. In this scenario, audience members see the play from varying viewpoints. *A Noise Within* features a thrust stage.

## About A Noise Within

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**A NOISE WITHIN'S MISSION** is to produce the great works of world drama in rotating repertory, with a company of professional, classically-trained actors. *A Noise Within* educates the public through comprehensive outreach efforts and conservatory training programs that foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of history's greatest plays and playwrights.

As the only company in southern California working in the repertory tradition (rotating productions using a resident ensemble of professional, trained artists), *A Noise Within* is dedicated solely to producing classical literature from authors such as Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Shaw, and Euripides.

The company was formed in 1991 by founders Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, both of whom were classically trained at the acclaimed American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. They envisioned *A Noise Within* after recognizing a lack of professional, classical productions and education in Southern California and sought out and assembled their own company of actors to meet the need. All of *A Noise Within's* resident artists have been classically

trained, and many hold Master of Fine Arts degrees from some of the nation's most respected institutions, such as Juilliard, Yale, and the American Conservatory Theatre.

In its fourteen-year history, *A Noise Within* has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle's revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

In 2004, *A Noise Within* accepted an invitation to collaborate with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for a tandem performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hollywood Bowl.

More than 25,000 individuals attend productions at *A Noise Within*, annually, and between performances at the theatre and touring productions, the company draws 13,000 student participants to its arts education programs every year. Students benefit from in-school workshops, conservatory training, and an internship program, as well as subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, discussions with artists, and state standards-compliant study guides.

### Study Guides

*A Noise Within* creates California standards-compliant study guides to help educators prepare their students for their visit to our theatre. Study guides are available at no extra cost to download through our website: [www.anoisewithin.org](http://www.anoisewithin.org). All of the information and activities outlined in these guides are designed to work in compliance with Visual and Performing Arts, English Language, and other subject standards as set forth by the state of California.

Study guides include background information on the plays and playwrights, historical context, textual analysis, in-depth discussion of *A Noise Within's* artistic interpretation of the work, interviews with directors and designers, as well as discussion points and suggested classroom activities. Guides from past seasons are also available to download from the website.



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### Study Guide Credits

Written by Samantha Starr  
Production Photography by Craig Schwartz  
Graphic Design by Christopher Komuro

Geoff Elliott & Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, Artistic Directors  
Administrative Office: 234 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91204  
Administration: Tel 818.240.0910 / FAX 818.240.0826  
Website: [www.anoisewithin.org](http://www.anoisewithin.org)  
Box Office: 818.240.0910 ext.1