

Inside OUT

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RICHARD

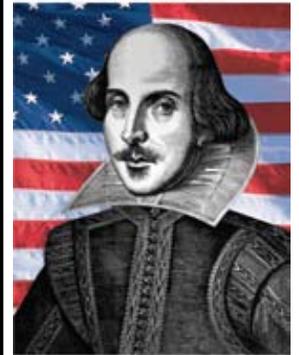
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Jesse Berger

Jan 30 - Feb 28
The Stage Theatre

Box Office 303.893.4100 **DENVERCENTER.ORG**

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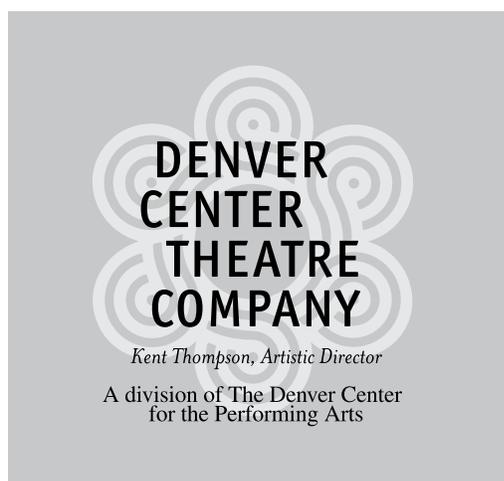
THE DENVER
POST

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SYNOPSIS

Edward IV is England's king, but his younger brother Richard has decided to scheme his own way to the throne. The king's other brother George is being taken as prisoner to the Tower of London. Richard deceitfully promises to work for George's freedom. Lady Anne mourns the death of the former king Henry VI and his son Edward, her husband, but Richard interrupts her lament to woo her for himself. Richard arrives in court and blames George's imprisonment on Queen Elizabeth and her Woodville family. As the various parties launch blame at each other, Henry VI's Queen Margaret appears and curses them all for killing her family and usurping their right to the crown.

Edward IV is ill but hopes to reconcile the factions of his court. All are stunned to hear of George's death, which Richard had secretly ordered. After Edward IV dies, his son and heir Edward V is summoned to London with his Woodville relations. Richard and the Duke of Buckingham go to meet the new king and his party; Richard orders the arrest of Edward V's uncle Rivers and half-brother Grey. Queen Elizabeth fears for her family and takes her remaining children into sanctuary at Westminster Abbey.

Edward V arrives in London with Richard and Buckingham. His younger brother is taken from sanctuary; the two boys go to live in the Tower of London. Richard learns that Hastings will not

support his bid for the crown, so he has Hastings arrested and executed. Buckingham speaks to the public about the illegitimacy of Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, thus excluding his son's right to the throne. Buckingham further encourages the public to support Richard as their king. In a show of piety and reluctance, Richard listens to the people's request and agrees to accept the crown.

Queen Elizabeth, Richard's mother the Duchess of York, and his wife Anne arrive at the Tower of London to visit Edward V, but they are barred access. Instead, Anne is summoned to be crowned Richard III's queen. Richard, now king, hints to Buckingham that the princes in the Tower should be killed; Buckingham hesitates and loses Richard's favor. Richard hires Sir James Tyrrel for the bloody deed. Queen Anne dies, and Richard plots to marry his niece, Edward IV's daughter. Buckingham's armed rebellion fails; he is captured.

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, lands in Wales and marches into England. His army meets that of Richard III at Bosworth Field. The night before the battle, ghosts of Richard III's victims parade before him, cursing him and blessing Henry. In battle, Lord Stanley's forces refuse to mobilize, thus betraying Richard III. Losing the battle, Richard III seeks Henry. The two fight, and Richard III is killed. Henry becomes King Henry VII.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING EDWARD IV AND FAMILY:

King Edward IV: eldest son of Richard Duke of York, succeeds Henry VI to the throne, dies in 1483.

Queen Elizabeth: Elizabeth Woodville by birth, Lady Elizabeth Grey by her first marriage, secretly marries Edward IV in 1464.

Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward V: Edward IV's elder son, reigns for only three months in 1483.

Richard, Duke of York: Edward IV's younger son.

Princess Elizabeth of York: Edward IV's eldest daughter, later marries Henry VII.

DUKE OF YORK AND FAMILY:

Richard, Duke of York: father of Edward VI and Richard III, dies at the Battle of Wakefield in 1460 (not a character in this play).

Cecily Neville, Duchess of York: mother of Edward VI and Richard III.

Edmund, Earl of Rutland: Duke of York's second son, dies at the Battle of Wakefield in 1460 (not a character in this play).

George, Duke of Clarence: Duke of York's third son, Edward IV's brother.

Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick: George's son.

Margaret Plantagenet: George's daughter.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III: Duke of York's fourth son, Edward IV's youngest brother.

Lady Anne Neville: Henry VI's son Prince Edward's widow, later marries Richard III.

Edward of York, Earl of Salisbury: only son of Richard III, dies at age 11 (not a character in this play).

OTHER ROYALS:

Queen Margaret of Anjou: King Henry VI's widow.

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, later King Henry VII: Lancastrian claimant to the throne after Henry VI's death, returns from exile to defeat Richard III and become king.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Anthony Woodville, Earl of Rivers: Queen Elizabeth's brother.

Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset: Queen Elizabeth's

elder son by her first marriage.

Richard, Lord Grey: Queen Elizabeth's younger son by her first marriage.

Sir Thomas Vaughan: Queen Elizabeth's relative, Edward V's Chamberlain.

RICHARD III'S SUPPORTERS:

Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham: helps Richard III to the throne, later rebels against him.

John Howard, Duke of Norfolk: dies fighting for Richard III at Bosworth.

Thomas, Earl of Surrey: Norfolk's son, fights for Richard III at Bosworth.

Lord Francis Lovell: Richard III's boyhood friend and close advisor.

Sir Richard Ratcliffe: Richard III's close advisor, dies fighting for him at Bosworth.

Sir William Catesby: Richard III's close advisor.

Sir Robert Brakenbury: Lieutenant of the Tower of London, dies fighting for Richard III at Bosworth.

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland: Richard III's boyhood friend, helps him to the throne but betrays him at Bosworth.

Sir Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby: Henry VII's stepfather, betrays Richard III at Bosworth.

Lord Mayor of London: encourages Richard III to accept the crown.

Sir James Tyrrel: hired murderer of the princes.

RICHARD III'S OPPONENTS:

William Hastings, Lord Chamberlain: imprisoned by Edward IV but released, later executed by Richard III.

Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York: arrested by Richard III and imprisoned.

John Morton, Bishop of Ely: arrested by Richard III, imprisoned at Buckingham castle.

Christopher Urswick: a priest employed by John Morton, Bishop of Ely, to warn Henry Tudor of Richard III's plans to extradite him from Brittany and arrest him.

John de Vere, Earl of Oxford: fights for Henry VII at Bosworth.

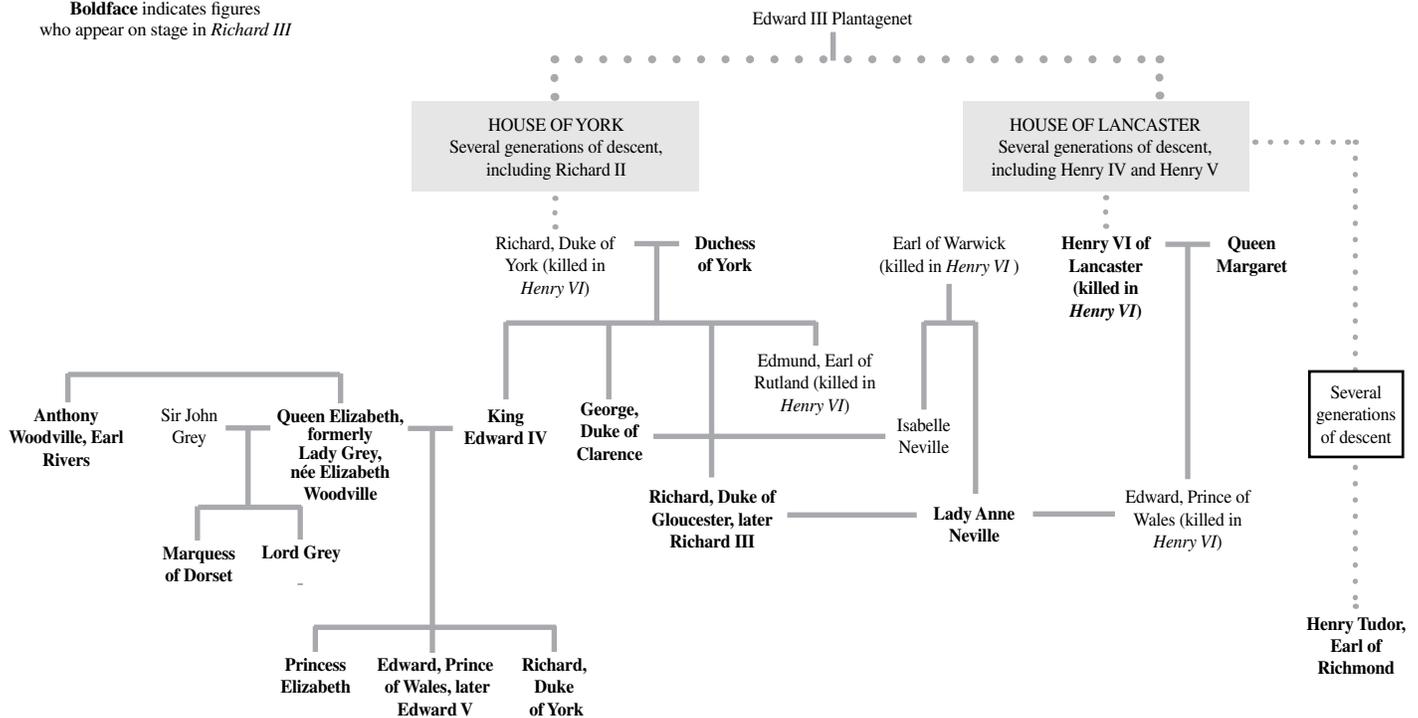
Sir James Blunt: fights for Henry VII at Bosworth.

Sir Walter Herbert: fights for Henry VII at Bosworth.

Sir William Brandon: supporter of Henry VII, killed by Richard III at Bosworth.

THE HOUSES OF YORK AND LANCASTER

Boldface indicates figures who appear on stage in *Richard III*



HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1471: Battle of Tewkesbury, death of Lancastrian Henry VI and his son Edward.

1474: Richard of Gloucester (later Richard III) married Anne Neville.

1475: Henry VI's Queen Margaret returns to France, ransomed by King Louis XI.

1476: Richard of Gloucester's son Edward is born.

1478: Edward IV's brother George of Clarence imprisoned and executed at the Tower.

1482: Henry VI's Queen Margaret dies in France.

1483: April 9: King Edward IV dies.

April 20: Edward IV is laid to rest at Windsor.

April 30: Edward V's relatives Rivers and Grey arrested by Richard of Gloucester.

May 1: Edward IV's Queen Elizabeth and her children take sanctuary.

May 4: Edward V, 12, to London with Gloucester and Buckingham.

June 10: Richard of Gloucester orders his armies to London.

June 13: Rivers and Grey executed; Hastings arrested and executed.

June 16: Edward V's brother Richard removed from sanctuary to join him at the Tower.

June 22: public sermon on the illegitimacy of Edward IV's children.

June 25: Edward IV's marriage declared invalid, crown offered to Richard.

July 6: Richard of Gloucester crowned Richard III.

July 20: Richard III and Queen Anne set out on a royal progress through the kingdom.

Autumn: Princes Edward and Richard disappear, presumably killed at the Tower.

September 7: Richard III's son Edward declared Prince of Wales and heir to the throne.

October 18: Buckingham rebels, leading his Welsh army to England.

November 2: Buckingham executed.

November 25: Richard III returns to London from his royal progress.

1484: January: France accuses Richard III of killing his nephews.

January 23: Parliament's only session under Richard III begins.

February 20: Parliament session concludes, having enacted several liberal laws.

March: Richard sets up military headquarters at Nottingham Castle.

April: Richard III's son Edward, age 8, dies.

September 11: Richard negotiates a truce with Scottish ambassadors.

1485: March 1: Edward IV's Queen Elizabeth and daughters leave sanctuary.

March 16: Richard III's Queen Anne dies.

April 11: Richard disavows any intention to marry his niece Elizabeth.

June 22: Richard III puts his military commissioners on special alert.

August 7: Henry Tudor (later Henry VII) lands in Wales.

August 20: Henry Tudor meets secretly with

stepfather Lord Stanley.

August 22: Richard and Henry Tudor clash in the Battle of Bosworth.

1486: Henry VII marries Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth.

1491: Henry VIII is born.

1593: William Shakespeare writes *Richard III*.

1674: skeletons of two children discovered under a staircase at the Tower.

1933: medical examination of skeletons sets children's ages at 10 and 12.

ENGLISH KINGS AND THE WAR OF THE ROSES

The House of Plantagenet came to the English throne with Henry II in 1154. Henry II's descendant Edward III reigned from 1327 to 1377, but his grandson and successor Richard II was deposed in 1399 by his first cousin Henry IV, son of John of Gaunt, Edward III's third son. John of Gaunt's descendants are known as the House of Lancaster (represented by a red rose).

In 1461, Henry IV's grandson Henry VI was deposed by Edward IV, whose father Richard, Duke of York, was descended on one side from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, Edward III's second son, and on the other side from Edmond of Langley, Duke of York, Edward III's fourth son.

Descendants of Edmond, Duke of York, are considered the House of York (represented by a white rose). The Houses of Lancaster and York's battles for the throne are called the War of the Roses (1455-1485).

Edward IV's brother Richard III was killed in 1485 by Henry VII, descended matrilineally from John of Gaunt's illegitimate son John Beaufort (Beaufort's descendants are the House of Tudor). Henry VII was Lancastrian and married Yorkist Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth, thus uniting the Houses of Lancaster and York and bringing the War of the Roses to an end.

Henry VII was the first Tudor king, and his granddaughter Elizabeth I was queen when Shakespeare wrote *Richard III*.

Plantagenet:

Edward III (1327-1377)

Richard II (1377-1399)

Lancaster:

Henry IV (1399-1413)

Henry V (1413-1422)

Henry VI (1422-1461)

York:

Edward IV (1461-1470)

Lancaster:

Henry VI (restored, 1470-1471)

York:

Edward IV (restored, 1471-1483)

Edward V (1483)

Richard III (1483-1485)

Tudor:

Henry VII (1485-1509)

Henry VIII (1509-1547)

Edward VI (1547-1553)

Mary I (1553-1558)

Elizabeth I (1558-1603)

RICHARD AND THE AUDIENCE

Richard III is a delightful villain, taking the audience into his confidence through his soliloquies, in which he describes his deformed body, his callous disregard for those between him and the throne, his devilish plans to rid himself of any opposition, and his glee in doing so. Richard III, as portrayed by Shakespeare, is a horrible person to be feared, but he charms his audiences and draws them into his machinations. In *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, Harold Bloom expounds on Richard III's relationship with his audience: "That is the secret of his outrageous charm; his great power over the audience and other figures in his drama is a compound of charm and terror, hardly to be distinguished in his sadomasochistic seduction of the Lady Anne, whose husband and father-in-law alike he has slaughtered."

Bloom further praises Shakespeare's creation: "Shakespeare's greatest originality in *Richard III* is not so much Richard himself as it is the hero-villain's startlingly intimate relationship with the audience. We are on unnervingly confidential terms with him; Buckingham is our surrogate, and when Buckingham falls out into exile and execution, we shudder at Richard's potential order directed at any one of us: 'So much for the audience! Off with its head!' We deserve our possible beheading, because we have been unable to resist Richard's outrageous charm, which has made Machiavels of us all. Richard makes us all into the Lady Anne, playing upon the profound sadomasochism that any audience creates merely by assembling. We are there to be entertained by the suffering of others. Richard co-opts us as fellow torturers, sharing guilty pleasures with the added *frisson* that we may join the victims, if the dominant hunchback detects any failure in our complicity." Richard III charms all those he may, and disposes of any who are immune to his charisma.

RICHARD'S DEFORMITY

*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,
Deform'd, 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.*
– Richard

Throughout the century following Richard III's death, historians vilified him in their portrayals of a bloody tyrant, deformed in body and mind. Part of the reason for this was that to show him in a good light would incriminate the Tudor dynasty that challenged Richard III's claim to the throne, killed him and remained on England's throne until Elizabeth I's death in 1603. To question the current monarch's right to the throne or method of achieving the crown would have been treasonous. Henry VII's title to

the throne was so dubious that he needed all the justification for his accession that he could find: the blacker his predecessor's character appeared, the easier it was to vindicate his overthrow.

Shakespeare's plays consistently describe Richard's horrid deformities, yet these are fictitious. A man with a hunchback, a withered arm and a clubfoot could not fight like a demon in battle and in hand-to-hand combat, as we know from history Richard III did; even Shakespeare shows him a valiant and skilled fighter. Searching history for the reality behind the Tudor propaganda demonizing Richard III, even facts of his physical appearance are elusive. His portraits show him with a careworn expression, thin lips, brown eyes, a strong jaw and delicate fingers. Historian Sir Thomas More, who commented favorably on the good looks of Richard's brothers Edward IV and George, declared Richard "little of stature, ill featured of limbs, crook backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right." This mention of

disparity of Richard's shoulders may be the sole foundation for the later myth of the ugly, hunchbacked cripple. The Elizabethan antiquarian John Stow specifically discounts the myth on the evidence of "ancient men" who testified that Richard was quite handsome, although a little below average height. One anecdote claims that the Countess of Desmond, after dancing with Richard, declared him to be the handsomest man in the room excepting his brother Edward IV. There is

even disagreement about Richard III's height. The Scottish orator of 1484 made reference to Richard's shortness in his speech of address, yet the German diplomat Nicolas von Poppelau, who spent more than a week with the King at Middleham in May 1484, recorded that Richard was "three fingers taller than himself, but a little slimmer, less thick set, and much more lean as well; he had delicate arms and legs, also a great heart."

EDWARD IV'S WOODVILLE MARRIAGE

In 1464 Lady Elizabeth Grey (née Woodville), widow of a Lancastrian knight, applied to King Edward IV to return to her the lands confiscated from her husband upon his death. The amorous Edward IV was much taken by the beautiful Elizabeth and undoubtedly would have liked to make love to her in return for granting her request. Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part III* has a richly comic scene in which Edward tried to get Elizabeth to agree to go to bed with him while Elizabeth slips and slides in an attempt to avoid doing so without losing her suit, while Edward's brothers George and Richard make dryly ribald comments on the sidelines. In the end, somehow, Elizabeth actually persuaded Edward IV to marry her, and the marriage took place on May 1, 1464. Edward IV kept the marriage secret for six months, even to the incredible point of not telling Warwick about it when the latter went to France to arrange for a royal bride for his king. At a Great Council convened at Reading in the autumn of 1464, Edward IV confronted a stunned assembly with the *fait accompli* of his secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville.

By any standards it was an amazingly tactless union. The unprecedented marriage of a king to one of his subjects, one of non-royal blood, was extremely impolitic. Furthermore, she was five years older than Edward (27 to his 22) and was a widow with two children the same age as Edward IV's brothers. Far more important was the fact that Edward IV's marriage scotched the delicate negotiations for a marriage alliance with King Louis XI of France.

Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth brought her Woodville family to power in his court, and they quickly played the marriage game to deepen their connections. (A contemporary chronicler recorded that "Catherine, Duchess of Norfolk, a slip of a girl of about 80 years old, was married to John Woodville, the Queen's brother, aged 20 years: a diabolical marriage.") Many aristocrats resented the Woodvilles' elevation, and those with anti-Woodville sentiments supported Richard III's bid for the crown over Elizabeth's son Edward V. A carefully staged sermon at Paul's Cross in London on July 22, 1483, implied the illegality of Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville and thus the illegitimacy of their children. Edward IV was said to have had a previous marriage contract with Lady Eleanor Butler, or with Lady Elizabeth Lucy (versions of the story named different recipients of Edward IV's first marriage vows). The story of Edward's previous engagement may in fact be true: Edward could never resist a pretty face and a troth plight was a common device for coaxing reluctant virgins into bed.

The possible illegitimacy of a king would be a frightening thing at that time. An illegitimate king would not be king by the grace of God, and to make him a king would ensure evil for the kingdom. Thus, the suspicions of Edward IV's marriage strengthened public support for Richard III's assumption of the crown.

GEORGE, DUKE OF CLARENCE

*Clarence is come, false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury.
Seize on him, Furies, take him unto torment!*
– Ghost of Henry VI's son Edward

In Shakespeare's play, George of Clarence is an almost saintly figure, loyal to his older brother Edward IV, but wrongly imprisoned and executed by the machinations of his younger brother, the future Richard III. However, throughout his life, the historical George was ambitious and unfaithful. He deserted Edward IV and sided with Warwick in 1470, and returned his allegiance to his Yorkist family only because Warwick was going to lose and he himself would gain more by a second double cross. Edward had forgiven the twice-faithless George, but George continued scheming. During all this, Richard remained utterly faithful to Edward IV in the hard times when Warwick had temporarily hurled him from the throne. He fought with bravery and distinction at the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury. Richard was as much the loyal brother as George was the faithless one.

George married Warwick's elder daughter Isabella and did his best to keep his hands on the whole enormous Warwick estate. The younger daughter Anne had been married to Henry VI's son Edward, killed at Tewkesbury in 1471. George was determined to keep Anne a widow, lest some new husband insist on a half share in the Warwick estate. Richard apparently penetrated his brother's estate in secret and found the Lady Anne disguised as a maid. He spirited her off and married her in 1474, three years after her first husband died in the Battle of Tewkesbury. George insisted that Richard should renounce any share in the Warwick estate; he did not release the estate and Richard did not get his half until the question was brought before Parliament.

In 1477, Charles the Bold of Burgundy died, leaving his 20-year-old daughter Mary as his only heir. For more than 50 years, Burgundy had been the wealthiest nation in Europe, and Charles had almost defeated France and made an independent kingdom of his land. Now, with only a girl to rule Burgundy, its days seemed numbered—unless some strong independent prince quickly married Mary and carried on where Charles the Bold had left off.

George of Clarence was a widower and decided he should marry Mary and become the new Duke of Burgundy. However, Edward IV thoroughly disapproved of this scheme. If his ambitious, faithless brother became Duke of Burgundy, he would have the money and resources to finance plots against Edward and scheme at a double throne. Edward therefore forbade the marriage and he and George became open enemies.

George was arrested for plotting the death of King Edward IV and committed to the Tower on January 16, 1478. He was later tried before a jury of English peers. Edward himself was prosecutor and demanded his brother's condemnation; the Duke of Buckingham pronounced the death sentence. Later legend says that Edward IV offered George the choice of his death, and George chose death by drowning in a vat of wine. Richard had nothing to do with George's imprisonment or death, except that he defended his brother George and protested the whole procedure.

MARGARET OF ANJOU, QUEEN OF HENRY VI

*Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why then give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
. . . O but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say poor Margaret was a prophetess.*
– Queen Margaret

Margaret was the daughter of René, Duke of Anjou, and niece of the France's King Charles VII. In 1445 she married England's King Henry VI as part of a truce designed to end the Hundred Years War (1338-1453) between England and France. She was a powerful woman who dominated her feckless husband. Her remorseless vendetta with Richard, Duke of York, was a principal cause of England's War of the Roses (1455-1485).

In the 1460 Act of Accord, Henry VI named Richard, Duke of York, as his successor to the throne, thus disinheriting his and Margaret's son Edward. In response, Margaret raised an army in the north of England, defeated and killed the Duke of York at Wakefield, and marched on London to reestablish her control over her husband Henry VI and to reinstate her son Edward as heir to the throne.

Three months later, in March 1461, Edward IV decisively defeated her army at Towton and obliged her to seek refuge in France. In 1470 Margaret signed

the Treaty of Angers with Warwick and the Duke of Clarence (Edward IV's traitorous brother), by which she consented to her son's marriage to Anne Neville, and accepted plans to restore Henry VI. Her hopes, however, were dashed in May 1471 with the deaths of her husband and son and the defeat of her army at Tewkesbury.

Queen Margaret appears twice in Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, although in both instances her presence is for dramatic purposes only and not based in history. First, she enters in Edward IV's court at the time of his brother George of Clarence's imprisonment in 1478. She eavesdrops on the arguments between Richard's faction and that of the queen's family, then she bursts forth to curse them all.

Actually, Queen Margaret was in France at that time, having been ransomed by Louis XI as part of the general settlement after Edward IV's abortive invasion of France in 1475. Thereafter she lived in poverty in France and never returned to England. She died in 1482, a year before Richard III came to the throne. Thus, her second scene in Shakespeare's play is quite miraculous, as she appears again in England early in Richard III's reign, gloating over the manner in which the Yorkists are destroying each other. Shakespeare endowed her with excellent foresight, and all of her earlier curses come true in the course of the play.

RICHARD'S ADVISORS

*The Rat, the Cat, and Lovell our Dog
Rule all England under the Hog.*

Some of Richard III's loyal advisors came not from the aristocracy but from lower on the social scale. Sir Richard Ratcliffe supervised the executions of Anthony Earl Rivers, Lord Richard Grey and Sir Thomas Vaughan at Pontefract Castle. Francis Lovell was a boyhood friend of Richard III's and served as an advisor to Richard III throughout his life. Ratcliffe and Lovell had been members of Richard's Council in the North when he controlled the North of England during Edward IV's reign. In the only session of Parliament during Richard III's reign, the House of Commons paid their king the compliment of choosing

his personal confidant William Catesby as Speaker.

Richard III's apparent preference for men of middle rank did not pass without comment. Lowborn advisors are often the target of vilification by the aristocracy and are blamed for all that goes wrong by a populace reluctant to grumble against the King himself. Thus, a defamatory couplet ascribed to William Collingbourne proclaimed: "The Rat, the Cat, and Lovell our Dog / Rule all England under the Hog." The Rat is Ratcliffe, the Cat is Catesby, and the Hog is Richard with his boar standard. This couplet was nailed to the door of Saint Paul's in July 1484; it captured the public imagination and circulated about the land to Richard's considerable propagandistic disadvantage.

THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

On the morning of August 22, 1483, the forces of Richard III fought those of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, on a plain south of the town Bosworth Market. Tudor historian Polydore Vergil recorded of Richard III and the Battle of Bosworth: “Knowing certainly that that day would either yield him a peaceable and quiet realm from thenceforth or else perpetually bereave him of the same, he came to the field with the crown upon his head, that thereby he might either make a beginning or end of his reign.”

The first forces to engage in battle were those of the Duke of Norfolk for Richard III against those of the Earl of Oxford for Henry Tudor. Initially giving ground to Norfolk, the professional French soldiers under Oxford’s command regrouped and counter-attacked. Then Richard III saw Henry Tudor across the field exposed and vulnerable, and Richard III advanced to challenge him.

Vergil wrote, “While the battle continued thus hot on both sides between the vanguards, king Richard understood first by espials where earl Henry was a far off with small force of soldiers about him; then after drawing nearer he knew it perfectly by evident signs and tokens that it was Henry; wherefore, all inflamed with ire, he struck his horse with the spurs, and runneth out of the one side without the vanguard against him.”

The forces of Sir William Stanley, Earl of Derby, pledged to fight for Richard III but, treacherously turning to fight for Stanley’s stepson Henry Tudor instead, came in behind Richard III and his men, trapping them between the Henry Tudor’s men and Stanley’s.

Tudor historian John Rous wrote of Richard III’s end: “If I may speak the truth to his honor, although small of body and weak in strength, he most valiantly defended himself as a noble knight to his last breath, often exclaiming as he was betrayed, and saying – Treason! Treason! Treason!”

Richard III should have won the battle: Henry Tudor was inexperienced in warfare and outnumbered by Richard III’s forces. Had Stanley’s forces not betrayed him or had the forces of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, engaged in battle on Richard III’s side, they would probably have won.

There was later suspicion that Northumberland had been in communication with Henry Tudor before the battle and purposely betrayed Richard III by not coming to his aid in battle. Northumberland was himself murdered four years later in a tax revolt in the North, where Richard was beloved; those responsible may have been acting in vengeance for Northumberland’s inaction at Bosworth. On the other hand, Vergil’s report indicates Richard III acted rashly in charging Henry Tudor’s men; perhaps in Richard III’s haste, Northumberland did not have time to react.

After the battle Richard III’s body was recovered from the corpses piled around Henry VII’s fallen banner and stripped. With a halter around the neck, the naked corpse was strung across the back of a pack horse and taken to Leicester. Here it lay exposed for two days as proof of Henry VII’s triumph before it was buried without ceremony in the chapel of the Grey Friars. The tomb was destroyed at the dissolution of the monasteries, and Richard III’s bones were thrown into the River Soar.

SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS

In order of composition:

Three parts of *Henry VI* (reigned 1422-1461)

Richard III (1483-1485)

King John (1199-1216)

Edward III (1327-1377)

Richard II (1377-1399)

Two parts of *Henry IV* (1399-1413)

Henry V (1413-1422)

Henry VIII (1509-1547)

The first collection of Shakespeare's works, the First Folio in 1623, organizes his plays into three categories: histories, tragedies, comedies. Characters in history plays may resemble tragic heroes; and the endings of history plays are often celebratory, as in the comedies. But the history play is a separate genre characterized by specific themes, dramatic structures and political implications.

Shakespeare put England's past onstage as high drama, filled with patriotism and treason, love and death, triumph and bloodshed.

In the years following Sir Francis Drake's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, Elizabethans swelled with national pride, and playwrights wrote shows about England's glorious past to feed the people's excited patriotism. Each of Shakespeare's history plays is named after a historical king whose reign is explored in the play.

Instead of following a single heroic character or a specific story line, the plays treat a sequence of events related to the unification of England.

Upon assuming the crown in 1485, King Henry VII shrewdly called for chroniclers to recount England's history from the new, Tudor viewpoint.

He commissioned the Italian humanist Polydore Vergil to write *Historia Anglica*, which then served as the basis for Edward Hall's 1548 *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* and Raphael Holinshed's 1578 *The Chronicles of England, Ireland and Scotland*. Armed with these chronicles and other sources of inspiration, Shakespeare centered some of his earliest plays on the reigns of the War of the Roses. His first tetralogy includes the three parts of *Henry VI* and culminates in *Richard III*.

Even in the history plays, Shakespeare is less interested in historical accuracy than in compelling drama. Henry VII's granddaughter Queen Elizabeth I reigned during the early part of Shakespeare's career; and his history plays, steeped in the Tudor version of English history, are not flattering to the Yorkist kings whom Henry Tudor defeated when he became King Henry VII. Shakespeare took immense liberties and the plays abound in historical errors: chronologies are freely compressed and sometimes wildly altered, locations are changed, anachronisms inserted, motivations fabricated and characterizations invented. Shakespeare's concern was not to represent historical events with accuracy, but to create great theatre. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's influence on perceptions of English history is so far-reaching that even today Richard III is often thought of as a wicked plotter and Henry V as a national savior.

The history plays are proof that literature can overwhelm history.

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY'S HISTORY CYCLE

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) performed Shakespeare's entire history cycle in 2000-2001. Irish actor Aidan McArdle portrayed Richard III in the *Henry VI* plays and in *Richard III*. He later married actress Aislin McGuckin, who played Lady Anne to his Richard III. (Of note to DCTC patrons: in 2002, after completing the history cycle with the RSC, McArdle created the title role in Simon Bent's new adaptation of *A Prayer for Owen Meany* for the Royal National Theatre.)

The following is from an early-2001 interview by Vanessa Thorpe with the actor about the RSC's history cycle: "I do think Richard is utterly lost as a man, but he knows that he is. He has made a kind of Faustian pact and, to a certain extent, he is getting his own back and shaking his fist at the world. It is a decision Richard takes to be evil and

to do as much damage as possible. He hides behind the idea of retribution. He is the third brother and the runty one and when you see *Henry VI* first, you can see just how far away he is from power at the beginning.

"After the regicide, Richard is capable of doing anything. He goes from wondering: 'Will I really do all that I think I could?' to being quite sure that he is damned. Richard is dealing with a problem and establishing for himself a whole bridge. He believes that everyone is utilitarian. So, actually, he is quite shaken when he is forgiven at the end of *Henry VI Part III*, because that kind of forgiveness does not fit into his worldview.

"These histories are about character and plot, not time, so it doesn't matter when they are set. Our director has made a virtue of the repeated themes and roles within the play."

THE TOWER OF LONDON

Historic Royal Palaces: www.hrp.org.uk

The history of the Tower of London begins with William the Conqueror (1066-87).

In 1066, England's King Edward the Confessor died childless, leaving several claimants vying for the throne. William, Duke of Normandy, a distant blood relative, invaded and defeated the English at the Battle of Hastings. William sent an advance guard to London to construct a fortress and prepare for his triumphal entry into the city. After his coronation in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066, several strongholds were made ready in the City.

Archaeological evidence suggests one of these strongholds was built in the south-east corner of the Roman city walls, on the site of the future Tower of London. These early defenses were replaced with a great stone tower (the White Tower) proclaiming the physical power and prowess of the new Norman monarch. Construction was certainly underway in the 1070s; Norman masons were employed and some of the building stone was specially imported

from William's native Normandy. Englishmen provided the labor, and by 1100 the White Tower was complete. Nothing quite like it had ever been seen in England before. The building was immense, and the Tower dominated the skyline for miles around.

Although many later kings and queens stayed at the Tower, it was never intended as the main royal residence. Equally, the Tower was not the first line of defense against invading armies, though it could rise to this challenge. The Tower's primary function was as a fortress-stronghold, a role that remained unchanged right up until the late 19th century.

As a powerbase in peacetime and refuge in times of crisis, the Tower's fortifications were updated and expanded by medieval kings. By about 1350, the Tower was transformed into the formidable fortress we see today. These building works started in the reign of Richard I the Lionheart (1189-1199), who, on gaining the throne, left England almost immediately on crusade. He left the Tower in the hands of his Chancellor, William Longchamp,

Bishop of Ely, who doubled the fortress in size with new defenses. In the King's absence his brother John seized the opportunity to challenge the Chancellor's authority and mount an attack. He besieged the Tower and its new defenses held out, until lack of supplies forced Longchamp to surrender. On his return in 1194 Richard regained control; John begged for forgiveness and was later named as Richard's successor.

As king, John (1199-1216) often stayed at the Tower and was probably the first king to keep lions and other exotic animals there. His reign was characterized by political unrest: John made concessions to the barons by issuing the Magna Carta in June 1215, but went back on his word as soon as he could.

At the age of nine, John's son Henry III (1216-1272) inherited the kingdom. When rebellious barons caused Henry III to seek refuge at the Tower in 1238, the nervous King soon noticed the weakness of the castle's defenses. That very year, he embarked on the building of a massive curtain wall on the north, east and western sides, reinforced by nine new towers and surrounded by a moat.

King Edward I Longshanks (1272-1307) was a more confident and aggressive leader who managed his country's rebels, but he was determined to complete the defensive works his father had begun at the Tower. Between 1275 and 1285 he spent more than £21,000 on transforming the Tower into England's largest and strongest concentric castle (with one ring of defenses inside another).

In spite of all this work and building comfortable royal lodgings, he seldom stayed at the Tower. However, Edward I's reign saw the Tower put to uses other than military or residential. It was already in regular use as a prison (the first prisoner

being Ranulf Flambard in 1100), and Edward I used the castle as a secure place for storing official papers and valuables. A major branch of the Royal Mint was established, an institution that was to play a significant part in the castle's history until the 19th century.

Edward I's less warrior-like son, Edward II (1307-27), lacking in either military skill or statesmanship, soon put the efficiency of the Tower's new defenses to the test, as he was often forced to seek refuge there.

Unlike his father, Edward III (1327-77) was a successful warrior and the captured kings of France and Scotland were held at the Tower. He carried out minor building works at the fortress and extended the wharf, before Richard II (1377-99) shepherded in another period of intense domestic strife.

In 1399 Richard II, accused of tyranny by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke, was forced to renounce his crown while he was held in the Tower. Henry IV (1399-1413) was declared king the next day. His reign and that of his successor Henry V (1413-22) were quiet ones for the Tower, but instability soon returned with Henry VI (1422-61 and 1470-1) and the War of the Roses.

During this struggle between the royal houses of Lancaster and York, the Tower of London was of key importance, and for the victorious it became a place of celebration. Henry VI held tournaments at the Tower; it saw splendid coronation celebrations for Edward IV (1461-70 and 1471-83) and victory parties for Henry VII (1485-1509), who entertained his supporters in grand style. However, for the defeated, the Tower was a place of murder and execution; victims included Henry VI himself in 1471 and the young Edward V and his brother in 1483.

WHAT IF?

What if Richard had allowed Edward V to rule?

If Richard, Duke of Gloucester, had allowed his nephew Edward V to rule, the boy king would have been controlled in large part by the Woodville family who raised him. Richard would likely have been considered a threat to Edward V's security, and attacked some dark night and killed. With Edward IV's son as king, Henry Tudor's tenuous claim on the throne would have seemed nonthreatening; he might have been ignored or, to be on the safe side, killed. There would be no Henry VII, and thus no Henry VIII. With no Henry VIII in need of a divorce, England might not have broken from the Catholic Church. Edward V would have been succeeded by a son, if he had one, or by his brother Richard, Duke of York, who would rule as Richard III.

Plans to marry an English king to a French or Spanish princess, which had failed with Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, might succeed, thus creating an alliance between England and another powerful country in Western Europe. If the major Western European countries had all remained Catholic, religious wars in the 17th century may have turned out very differently and Protestantism might not have taken hold. Similarly, the American Revolution might not have succeeded had England had closer ties with its continental neighbors, who could have helped England oppose the colonies' secession. Without a successful American Revolution as an example, there might have been no French Revolution.

Bertram Fields, author of *Royal Blood: Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes* carries such speculation into the 20th century, hypothesizing that England, France, Spain and eventually American and Germany might have formed a Euro-Empire with a single currency and empire-wide free trade. Economic success might have kept National Socialists at the fringe of German society, and have influenced Russia's tsar to create a more democratic, parliamentary society, thus preventing popular support of Marxism. Japan might have discarded a radical plan to attack Pearl Harbor, for fear of facing the Euro-Empire's combined might.

Fields concludes, "Of course, it might not have happened like that at all. But whether the changes were these or others, our lives would in all probability have been profoundly changed if, on that one April morning, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, had awakened peacefully, breakfasted with his friend Lord Rivers and ridden with him to Stony Stratford to extend loyal greetings to his nephew, King Edward V."

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RICHARD III

QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think is the motivation behind Richard III's quest for the crown of England? What techniques does he employ to manipulate others?
- 2) How does Shakespeare portray the three generations of women in this play?
- 3) Why did Shakespeare use dramatic license to make Richard III even more horrible than he really was?
- 4) How does Richard justify his climb to the throne?
- 5) Why does Richard woo Lady Anne? Is it political or personal? How does Richard treat her? What happens to Lady Anne?
- 6) What is the purpose of Queen Margaret's curse? What does she say; does it happen and what becomes of her?
- 7) Would you consider Richard the hero of the play? Would you consider him the villain? Explain your answer.
- 8) What is the difference in the dreams that Richard and Richmond have at Bosworth Field before the battle?
- 9) Why are there ghosts in the play? How are they used? Are there any other places in the play that have supernatural elements?
- 10) Why do you think Richard III is one of Shakespeare's most performed and popular plays?

ACTIVITIES

IDENTITY MAP

This activity looks at the internal and external characteristics of a certain character. Start with a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. As there will be writing inside and outside the circle, be careful to leave space. At the top of the page, either place a generic title such as "Hero," "Villain," etc. or the name of a character from the play. If this activity is played before seeing the production, start with the generic titles.

Inside the circle, write descriptive words, phrases or draw pictures that describe the characters' perceptions of themselves. These descriptions are traits that we know and are the essential characteristics and also those that cannot be changed. For example, Richard is male, has a deformity and is affluent.

Outside the circle, write descriptive words to describe how the figures are perceived by the other characters. These would be immediate qualities that are obvious or those traits that characterize the character.

After seeing the production or reading the text, create another circle for a specific character. For example, if the character is Richard, in the circle, write quotes that Richard uses to describe himself. On the outside of the circle, write quotes that the other characters use to describe him.

Colorado Model Content Standards

Reading and Writing 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Reading and Writing 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

JUSTIFYING ACTIONS

Shakespeare's Richard is portrayed as a blood-thirsty tyrant who stops at nothing to become King of England. Using the text or the performance, list some of the actions that he takes to ensure his acquisition of the crown. What are his justifications for these actions? How do these actions affect the other characters? Are there contemporary equivalents of a leader abusing their power to get what he or she wants? List some of the actions taken and justifications of these leaders.

Discuss why or why not "the ends justify the means."

Colorado Model Content Standards

History 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.

Reading and Writing 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.

PERSPECTIVE WRITING

The other characters in *Richard III* only have a partial view of what is happening during the play. The members of the audience are the only ones who see all the facets of the story. Write a short narrative from the perspective of a chosen character. For example, Lady Anne is wooed by Richard in the first act. Write a short narrative explaining why she allows Richard to woo her even when she loathes him.

Write a narrative from each character's point of view about the same encounter. For example, Buckingham is promised an earldom by Richard for his allegiance, but Richard does not grant the promise. Write a short narrative from Buckingham's perspective.

Colorado Model Content Standards

Reading and Writing 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Reading and Writing 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

COLUMBIAN HYPNOSIS

1. Students are to pair up and stand two feet from each other. Student A places the palm of his/her hand six to eight inches from Student B's face. THE STUDENTS ARE NOT TO TOUCH AT ANY TIME and the exercise should be performed in total silence. The students are to pretend that a string runs from the palm of Student A to the nose of Student B.
2. Student A explores the space with his/her palm by moving it back and forth or up and down and around and B must follow so that imaginary string will not break. Start by having students mirror each other but then encourage movement in the space without collisions. Have a Student A manipulate Student B into grotesque shapes and images.
3. After the initial exploration, switch positions. Student B now leads Student A.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How did it make you feel when you were the person leading or the person following? What do you think would happen if you add another person and had to follow and lead at the same time?

Colorado Model Content Standards

Civics 2.2 Students know how power, authority, and responsibility are distributed, shared, and limited.

History 5.3 Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used and/or lost throughout history.