



RICHARD III

Background and introduction

Any introduction to the play needs to explain that it is set in an exceptionally complex time in English history. The second half of the fifteenth century was dominated by what came to be known as the Wars of the Roses. These wars were a long series of battles between the House (family) of Lancaster and the House of York for the throne of England. Each 'house' had a different coloured rose as part of the symbol for their family: a red rose for Lancaster and white for York hence the title Wars of the Roses. (If required, further information can be found at: <http://warsoftheroses.com/>)

The story of the wars is complex but, for the purposes of introducing the play, it will suffice to explain that Richard Duke of Gloucester's older brother, Edward, deposed King Henry VI and has become King Edward IV. The play tells the story of Richard's unprincipled and murderous schemes to ensure that he becomes King when his brother Edward dies rather than Edward's sons or indeed his older brother George, Duke of Clarence.

From the very first speech in the play, Richard is presented as a character both deformed in appearance and in spirit. He has the aim of becoming King at all costs and Shakespeare shows him as thoroughly unprincipled and vicious. In historical terms this is now seen as an exaggeration by Shakespeare and it is widely recognised

by modern historians that Richard had many more good points in his favour than Shakespeare presents. The reason for this approach to Richard by Shakespeare and the historians of the time (known as chroniclers), whose work Shakespeare drew upon, is that the play was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Elizabeth was the granddaughter of Henry Tudor the Duke of Richmond who defeats Richard at the end of the play and becomes Henry VII. Both Henry VII and Elizabeth I were part of the Tudor dynasty so it was important for Shakespeare to present Richard as an evil man so as to justify Henry Tudor defeating him and becoming Henry VII. Shakespeare and the chroniclers needed to keep in favour with Queen Elizabeth I and show her Tudor dynasty as much better than Richard III's Plantagenet dynasty.

Considerable attention has been focused on Richard III recently as his remains were discovered in September 2012 buried beneath a car park in Leicester, the city in England near to the site of the battle where he was killed. DNA testing comparing his remains with that of a living descendent has confirmed the identification and, interestingly, the spine appears deformed in the way that the historical record suggested. The discovery of the remains has led to renewed focus on what Richard was really like as a King because the negative portrait presented by Shakespeare has become so powerful.

ACT I, SCENE I

Enter RICHARD, DUKE of GLOUCESTER, alone.

RICHARD

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York,
And all the clouds that loured 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 smoothed 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 stamped, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph.
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, 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.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here Clarence comes.

1 Introduce the opening four lines of Act I, scene 1, which are very famous in Shakespeare. Explain that 'sun' is a play on the word 'son' so that the 'winter' of 'discontent' or war has been replaced by the 'sun' of peace and the 'son' of the house of York, Richard's older brother Edward IV.

2 You could ask students to look at the next 10 lines (lines 5-13) and list in two columns the contrasts between war and peace such as the armour 'our bruised arms' now used as decorations 'hung up for monuments'.

You could discuss the way this description presents a positive picture of life under Edward IV and how it contrasts with Richard's negative description of himself later in the speech.

3 Invite students to look at the rest of the opening soliloquy (lines 13–41) and identify all the negative aspects of his appearance and personality Richard presents to the audience. This could be carried out by labelling an outline drawing of Richard.

Discuss the points identified and show how they all centre on the line: 'I am determined to prove a villain'.

4 Ask students to examine two photographs, one from the current production and one from an earlier, all female, production at the Globe. Students should identify how the actor and the costume shows the audience Richard's deformity and lameness.

Draw out in discussion how the deformed arm is presented in each picture: through costume in the current production and through movement in the earlier production. Consider other ways the deformity could be presented. For instance in a renowned production in the 1980s actor Sir Antony Sher used crutches throughout the play threatening other characters with them and stalking across the stage like a spider.

5 Look at Act I, scene 1, lines 42–75 and ask students to look at the next part of the scene showing the arrival of Richard's older brother George Duke of Clarence. Ask them to identify how Richard has cleverly plotted to have his brother arrested and taken to the Tower of London (where famous prisoners were held).

Draw out in discussion the point that Richard cleverly blames his sister-in-law Elizabeth, Edward IV's wife, for the plot involving the letter 'G' which has led to the Duke of Clarence's arrest. Emphasise the way in which Richard's evil plotting is shown to the audience immediately after his opening soliloquy.

7 Ask students to look at Act I, scene 1, lines 117–120 and notice how Richard gloats to the audience over his actions as he admits he is sending his brother to his death. Next ask students to compare with lines 145–155 where, after hearing the news of his other brother Edward IV's illness, he says he hopes that he will die quickly. He then plans to marry the previous King, Henry VI's daughter-in-law Anne.

Emphasise the way in which the plot has moved rapidly in the space of one scene and shows the audience that Richard is indeed as evil as he says in his opening soliloquy.

ACT I, SCENE 2

Richard seduces Anne

- 1 Ask students to look at the three photographs of Richard bearing his breast to Anne holding the sword and annotate the photos with suggestions of what this scene shows the audience about Richard and Anne's feelings as shown in her face.

In discussion, emphasise the point that he is inviting Anne to kill him and that he is showing audacious bravery while Anne is showing uncertainty and doubt about killing him through the expression on her face.

- 2 Looking at Act 1 scene 2, lines 173–185 ask students to suggest how this scene demonstrates Richard's audacious evil.

Draw out in discussion that in inviting Anne (whose husband and father-in-law he admits he has killed in battle) to slaughter him he shows his evil cunning and he emphasises it by saying that his love for her made him kill. Point out that this scene sums up the fascination that someone as evil as Richard can have for an audience.

- 3 Below is Meredith Macneill's Rehearsal 1 blog on playing Anne in this scene.

Recently, I have been struggling with my first scene as Lady Anne, act I, scene 2. Just reading the scene, I found it very hard to believe that a woman could be wooed in such a way, and with such success, by her husband's murderer and I immediately realised that it could be very hard to convince an audience not to dismiss Anne's agreeing to marry Richard as pretence. You could play Lady Anne as a 'victim' in that scene; her reason for accepting Richard as her husband could simply be her own survival, but for me, this interpretation does not sit well with what Shakespeare has written. Some of the conversations between Anne and Richard remind me a little of those between Beatrice and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*; they are battles of wit:

RICHARD Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
 Of these supposed crimes to give me leave
 By circumstance but to acquit myself

ANNE Vouchsafe, diffused infection of a man,
 Of these known evils but to give me leave
 By circumstance to accuse thy cursed self. (ll. 75-80)

Instantly, Anne subtly changes what Richard has just said and throws it back at him; they are intellectual equals and she obviously feels that, despite her weak social position, she can counter him in this way. The scene suddenly becomes more believable if you consider that Richard and Anne knew each other as children; he isn't merely the murderer of her husband, but someone she has known for years. I am now much happier generally with the scene, and I feel that I can approach it honestly, but I'm still working out how we can present the scene to an audience and make them believe what they are seeing is genuine and true.

Ask students to identify what the actor suggests is difficult about the scene.

Discuss the point that it is hard to convince an audience that Anne can really be seduced by Richard when he has behaved so badly towards her and then the actor's suggestion that it may be that as they grew up together, she feels his equal.

- 4 Read Act I, scene 2, lines 227–229. Explain that these lines show Richard exulting in the audacity of his success in seducing Anne despite being her husband's killer.

Point out that in the first two scenes of the play, Shakespeare shows the audience Richard plotting the murder of his brother, hoping his other brother, the King, will die as soon as possible and succeeding in making Anne love him despite what he has done to her husband and father-in-law.

- 5 Listen to an extract from actor Roger Lloyd-Pack discussing how Richard is able to win over the other characters and an audience despite being so obviously evil.

I was surprised – I know it is funny, particularly the part of Richard III, I was surprised at how much humour Mark [Rylance] has extracted from it. It's a real sign of how easily people are swayed because the way Mark plays it is very charming for a villain so you forget he's actually this ghastly, terrible man, this murdering man.

Discuss with students how evil can be very appealing and the way Richard's actions become blackly humorous.

ACT III, SCENE 7

Richard becomes the Model Christian King

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM, at different doors.

RICHARD

How now, how now, what say the citizens?

BUCKINGHAM

Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum, say not a word.

RICHARD

Touched you the bastardy of Edward's children?

BUCKINGHAM

I did, with his contract with Lady Lucy,
And his contract by deputy in France.
The insatiate greediness of his desire,
And his enforcement of the city wives.
His tyranny for trifles, his own bastardy,
As being got, your father then in France,
His resemblance, being not like the Duke.
Withal, I did infer your lineaments,
Being the right idea of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind.
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility.
Indeed, left nothing fitting for your purpose
Untouched, or slightly handled in discourse.
And when mine oratory grew toward end
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

RICHARD

And did they so?

BUCKINGHAM

No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statues or breathing stones,
Gazed each on other, and looked deadly pale.
Which when I saw, I reprehended them;
And asked the Mayor what meant this wilful silence?
His answer was, the people were not wont
To be spoke to but by the Recorder.
Then he was urged to tell my tale again.
'Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferred',
But nothing spoke in warrant from himself.
When he had done, some followers of mine own,
At the lower end of the hall, hurled up their caps,
And some ten voices cried, 'God save King Richard!'
And thus I took the vantage of those few,
'Thanks, gentle citizens and friends,' quoth I,
'This general applause and cheerful shout

Argues your wisdom, and your love to Richard.
And even here brake off, and came away.

RICHARD

What tongueless blocks were they! Would not they speak?
Will not the mayor then and his brethren come?

BUCKINGHAM

The mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear,
Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit,
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
And stand betwixt two churchmen, good my lord,
For on that ground I'll make a holy descant.
And be not easily won to our requests,
Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.

RICHARD

I go, and if you plead as well for them
As I can say nay to thee for myself,
No doubt we bring it to a happy issue.

BUCKINGHAM

Go, go, up to the leads; the lord mayor knocks.

Exit [RICHARD.]

Enter the LORD MAYOR and Citizens.

Welcome my lord, I dance attendance here.
I think the Duke will not be spoke withal.

Enter CATESBY.

Now, Catesby, What says your lord to my request?

CATESBY

He doth entreat your grace, my noble lord,
To visit him to-morrow or next day.
He is within, with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation,
And no worldly suits would he be moved,
To draw him from his holy exercise.

BUCKINGHAM

Return, good Catesby, to the gracious Duke.
Tell him, myself, the mayor and aldermen,
In deep designs and matters of great moment,
No less importing than our general good,
Are come to have some conference with his grace.

CATESBY

I'll signify so much unto him straight. [Exit.]

BUCKINGHAM

Ah ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward.
He is not lulling on a lewd love-bed,
But on his knees at meditation.
Not dallying with a brace of courtesans,
But meditating with two deep divines.
Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
But praying, to enrich his watchful soul.
Happy were England, would this virtuous prince

Take on grace the sovereignty thereof.
But sure I fear we shall not win him to it.

LORD MAYOR

Marry, God forbid his grace should say us nay.

BUCKINGHAM

I fear he will. Here Catesby comes again.

Enter CATESBY.

Now Catesby, what says his Grace?

CATESBY

He wonders to what end you have assembled
Such troops of citizens to come to him,
His grace not being warned thereof before.
He fears, my lord, you mean no good to him.

BUCKINGHAM

Sorry I am my noble cousin should
Suspect me, that I mean no good to him.
By heaven, we come to him in perfect love,
And so once more return and tell his grace.

Exit CATESBY.

When holy and devout religious men
Are at their beads, 'tis much to draw them thence,
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

Enter RICHARD aloft, between two Bishops. [CATESBY returns.]

LORD MAYOR

See, where his grace stands, 'tween two clergymen.

BUCKINGHAM

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,
To stay him from the fall of vanity.
And see, a book of prayer in his hand,
True ornaments to know a holy man.
[To Richard.] Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,
Lend favourable ears to our requests,
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

RICHARD

My lord, there needs no such apology.
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Deffered the visitation of my friends.
But, leaving this, what is your grace's pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM

Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,
And all good men of this ungoverned isle.

RICHARD

I do suspect I have done some offence
That seems disgracious in the City's eye,
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.

BUCKINGHAM

You have, my lord. Would it might please your grace,
At our entreaties, to amend your fault,

RICHARD

Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

BUCKINGHAM

Know then, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestic,
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune, and your due of birth,
The lineal glory of your royal house,
To the corruption of a blemish'd stock.
Whiles in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,
Which here we waken to our country's good,
This noble isle doth want her proper limbs.
Her face defaced with scars of infamy,
Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,
And almost shouldered in the swallowing gulf
Of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion.
Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land,
Not as protector, steward, substitute,
Or lowly factor for another's gain;
But as successively, from blood to blood,
Your right of birth, your empery, your own.
For this, consorted with the citizens,
Your very worshipful and loving friends,
And by their vehement instigation,
In this just cause come I to move your grace.

RICHARD

I cannot tell if to depart in silence,
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof.
Best fitteth my degree or your condition.
If not to answer, you might haply think
Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded
To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,
Which fondly you would here impose on me.
If to reprove you for this suit of yours,
So seasoned with your faithful love to me,
Then, on the other side, I checked my friends.
Therefore to speak, and to avoid the first,
And then, in speaking not to incur the last,
Definitively thus I answer you.
Your love deserves my thanks, but my desert
Unmeritable, shuns your high request.
First, if all obstacles were cut away,
And that my path were even to the crown,
As my ripe revenue and due by birth,
Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,
So mighty and so many my defects,
As I had rather hide me from my greatness,

Being a bark to brook no mighty sea,
Than in my greatness covet to be hid,
And in the vapour of my glory smothered.
But, God be thanked, there's no need of me,
And much I need to help you, were there need.
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,
Which, mellowed by the stealing hours of time,
Will well become the seat of majesty,
And make (no doubt) us happy by his reign.
On him I lay, that you would lay on me,
The right and fortune of his happy stars,
Which God defend that I should wring from him.

BUCKINGHAM

My lord, this argues conscience in your grace,
But the respects thereof are nice and trivial,
All circumstances well consideréd.
You say that Edward is your brother's son.
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife.
For first he was contract to Lady Lucy
(Your mother lives a witness to his vow)
And afterward by substitute betrothed
To Bona, sister to the King of France.
These both put off, a poor petitioner,
A care-crazed mother to a many sons,
A beauty-waning and distresséd widow,
Even in the afternoon of her best days,
Made prize and purchase of his wanton eye,
Seduced the pitch and height of his degree
To base declension and loathed bigamy.
By her, in his unlawful bed, he got
This Edward, whom our manners call the Prince.
More bitterly could I expostulate,
Save that, for reverence to some alive,
I give a sparing limit to my tongue.
Then, good my lord, take to your royal self
This proffered benefit of dignity.
If not to bless us and the land withal,
Yet to draw forth your noble ancestry
From the corruption of abusing times,
Unto a lineal true-derived course.

LORD MAYOR

Do, good my lord, your citizens entreat you.

BUCKINGHAM

Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffered love.

CATESBY

O make them joyful, grant their lawful suit.

RICHARD

Alas, why would you heap this care on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty.
I do beseech you, take it not amiss,
I cannot, nor I will not, yield to you.

BUCKINGHAM

If you refuse it, as, in love and zeal,
Loath to depose the child, your brother's son.
As well we know your tenderness of heart
And gentle, kind, effeminate remorse,
Which we have noted in you to your kindred,
And equally indeed to all estates.
Yet know, whe'er you accept our suit or no,
Your brother's son shall never reign our king,
But we will plant some other in the throne
To the disgrace and downfall of your house.
And in this resolution here we leave you.
[To the citizens.] Come, citizens, we will entreat no more.

[Exit BUCKINGHAM with some Citizens.]

CATESBY

Call him again, sweet prince, accept their suit.
If you deny them, all the land will rue it.

RICHARD

Will you enforce me to a world of cares?
Call them again. [Exit Catesby.]
I am not made of stone,
But penetrable to your kind entreaties,
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

Enter BUCKINGHAM and the rest.

Cousin of Buckingham, and sage grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burthen, whe'er I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load.
But if black scandal or foul-faced reproach
Attend the sequel of your imposition,
Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me
From all the impure blots and stains thereof.
For God doth know, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire of this.

LORD MAYOR

God bless your grace, we see it, and will say it.

RICHARD

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

BUCKINGHAM

Then I salute you with this kingly title,
Long live King Richard, England's worthy king!

ALL

Amen.

BUCKINGHAM

Tomorrow may it please you to be crowned?

RICHARD

Even when you please, for you will have it so.

BUCKINGHAM

Tomorrow then we will attend your grace,
And so most joyfully we take our leave.

RICHARD

Come, let us to our holy work again.
Farewell my cousins, farewell gentle friends.

Exit all.

Summary

By Act 3 in the play, Richard has arranged his brother George, Duke of Clarence's murder, his older brother King Edward IV becomes ill and dies and Edward's young son is expected to be crowned King. Richard locks the son (who is a young boy) and his brother in the Tower of London 'for their safety' and suggests that Edward's son was illegitimate and therefore cannot become King.

- 1 Ask students to look at the photographs from the current and an earlier production showing Richard as a Model Christian King. Students could annotate the photographs to answer the question: 'From what you know of Richard already what in these photographs surprises you?'

Draw out in discussion that in contrast to the earlier photographs, the costume is a plain monk's habit and Richard is holding a bible. The other figures are also dressed in monks' habits and in one of the photographs they hold crosses. Emphasise the contrast with Richard's earlier regal appearance and draw out the point that this is another of his evil schemes.

- 2 Read Act III, scene 5, lines 71–74 and lines 79–93. Explain that this scheme begins with Richard asking Buckingham to tell the Mayor and the citizens disparaging lies about his dead brother Edward IV. Ask students to look at the extracts and identify the three main lies that Richard wants the Mayor and the people to believe.

Discuss the answers and then list the three main lies:

- that Edward's sons are illegitimate;
- that he was a sexual libertine
- that Edward was illegitimate himself.

All these lies are aimed at making it impossible for Edward's son to become King.

- 3 Read Act III, scene 6, lines 10–14. Explain that this short scene shows a scrivener (a secretary) who is horrified that he has been asked to write out the indictment of Lord Hastings. Ask students to think about why the scrivener is horrified.

Draw out in discussion that it is the fact that it is a 'palpable device' (a lie) to condemn Hastings to death. The short scene shows the audience that honest citizens like the scrivener are upset at the way Richard is behaving.

- 4 Read Act III, scene 7, lines 20–24. Ask students to identify the problem that Richard now faces which is made clear in these lines.

Draw out the point that the ordinary people could not be persuaded to shout in praise of Richard showing that, like the scrivener, they are suspicious of him.

- 5 Ask students to listen to Roger Lloyd-Pack – Playing Buckingham

What I've noticed about the character of Buckingham is it's become apparent to me how Machiavellian – he's described as "the deep, revolving, witty Buckingham", so that's a clue to his character. It's him who comes up with this plan to persuade the mayor what a religious person Richard III is and therefore he should be king. He's a very good orator, he's a very good speaker and he uses words in a very expansive and colourful way.

Reinforce with students how Buckingham uses a Machiavellian device in his idea of presenting the evil Richard as a religious and pious man.

- 6 Read Act III, scene 7, lines 44–50 and 57–63. Ask students to identify all the religious references they can find in these lines.

Discuss the way Buckingham is now presenting Richard as a holy religious man in contrast to the lies they have told about Edward IV being a libertine.

- 7 Read Act III, scene 7, lines 200—46. Explain that, having convinced the people that Richard is a holy man, the final part of the scheme is to make them believe he is reluctant to become King. Ask students to identify all the words in these lines that suggest Richard is reluctant.

Draw out examples such as 'burden' and 'heap this care on me'. Emphasise in discussion that the audacious lie that Richard is holy and only accepts becoming King reluctantly is the centre of the play. Make links with the world of today where celebrities sometimes attempt to change the way the public sees them.

ACT IV, SCENE 4

Richard and Queen Elizabeth join forces

Summary

Richard has now been crowned King but he is uneasy because Edward IV's young son who is the rightful King is still alive. Richard arranges for both the boy and his brother to be murdered. Anne, Richard's wife has been taken ill and died so Richard decides that he wants to marry his dead brother Edward IV's daughter.

- 1 Ask students to look at the photographs from the current and earlier production showing Richard and Queen Elizabeth kissing. Students should decide what the photographs suggest about the relationship between the two.

Discuss and draw out that they look like lovers and yet this is far from the case as Richard actually wants to marry Queen Elizabeth's daughter.

- 2 Read Act IV, scene 4, lines 397–409. Ask students to identify and summarise the argument Richard uses with Queen Elizabeth to show he loves and wants to marry her daughter.

Draw out in discussion that he promises to repent and that he invites all the bad luck in the world to affect him if he is not truly in love with her daughter.

- 3 Read Act IV, scene 4, lines 418–431. Ask students to work out exactly how Richard is trying to persuade Queen Elizabeth to convince her daughter to marry him.

Draw out in discussion that he wants her to think he is tempting her to do good, to forget her anger towards him in the past and that by marrying her daughter Richard will produce children to comfort Elizabeth for the loss of her own sons even though she knows that Richard killed them.

Emphasise again the audacity of Richard's schemes. His comment after he has kissed Elizabeth and she has left reveals the depths of his cynicism: 'Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!'

4. Ask students to read the below extract from actor Yolanda Vazquez on playing Queen Elizabeth

At the Globe it's actually quite humorous a lot of the time. The audience go over to Richard's side because he seems like a fun king, and Buckingham and Richard are so naughty and creative that in a sense it becomes a bit like 'Ooh look, what are they going to do next?' for the audience as they follow their journey. And yet what they're doing are really, really awful things. The women then come on and say to the audience 'Yes, you've had a good time but this is the depth and the reality of what's just happened'. And it's a difficult task to get the audience to realise they have been involved in the events. When the three mourning queens come on, the audience need to be shown that they have been complicit in putting the princes in the tower and making Richard King. The audience do become the citizens in the play and their attitude is almost "Long live Richard, England's rightful king" - they are complicit in bringing him to power. And so once he's there they should be made to realise that. It is fantastical that they chant that line in every performance knowing full well that he's killed all these other people beforehand and knowing that he's just been horrible to the princes and sent them to the tower.

It is the job of the female characters to come in and say 'Yes, this is what you've helped to do as citizens and this is the reality of it'; we have to really bring it down and say 'This is not funny. This is real. There have been murders committed and you have allowed the murder of children'. And then as an actor you feel the audience pained at the realization of it all. It's fascinating listening to the audience's reaction during my last scene with Richard as Queen Elizabeth – Act 4, Scene 4. The type of laughter that we get is a very different one by that point: it's like the audience are ahead slightly and you think 'Now they understand'.

Discuss with students the importance of the women in the play. They demonstrate the true evil of Richard's behaviour because it is they who have had children and husbands killed by Richard. The women show the audience that despite the laughter he creates at his audacious evil actions, they have to recognise that Richard is an evil and ruthless man only interested in gaining power.

ACT V, SCENE 3

Richard prepares for war

Summary

Buckingham, Richard's former ally, has now raised an army with Richmond (the future King Henry VII) against Richard because Buckingham feels he hasn't been rewarded for his loyalty. Bad weather affects the army and Buckingham is captured and executed. Richmond re-gathers his army and marches towards Leicester. Richard tells his ally Stanley, Lord Derby to join him with troops but Stanley is wary so Richard imprisons his son to make sure Stanley remains true to Richard.

- 1 Ask students to look at the photographs from the current and earlier productions showing Richard putting on his armour and compare the way he looks in the photographs. Discuss how particularly in the current production he appears anxious. Ask students to examine the following extracts and list four reasons why Richard feels anxious on the morning of the battle:
 - a) Act V, scene 3, lines 200–220
 - b) Act V, scene 3, lines 283–284
 - c) Act V, scene 3, lines 309–312
 - d) Act V, scene 3, lines 343–347

Take feedback from students and list the reasons for Richard feeling anxious on the morning of the battle.

- e) Richard realises that he is unloved and he has dreamt that the souls of all his victims have accused him of his crimes which has made him fearful.
 - f) The lack of sunshine seems to Richard like a bad omen.
 - g) Richard denies the power of his conscience.
 - h) Stanley, Lord Derby has refused to bring his army to support Richard.
- 2 Ask students to compare the speech by Richmond (the future Henry VII) to his army with that by Richard to his army. Read Act 5, scene 3, lines 240–271 and Act 5, scene 3, lines 313–339. Ask students to compare the language and imagery used by Richmond in his speech with that of Richard in his.

Discuss the findings noting how Richmond's speech uses religious imagery to describe their cause in a positive way and imagery of blood and deception to describe his enemy Richard. Richard's speech is negative and filled with images of decay and poverty to make Richmond's army appear as criminals.