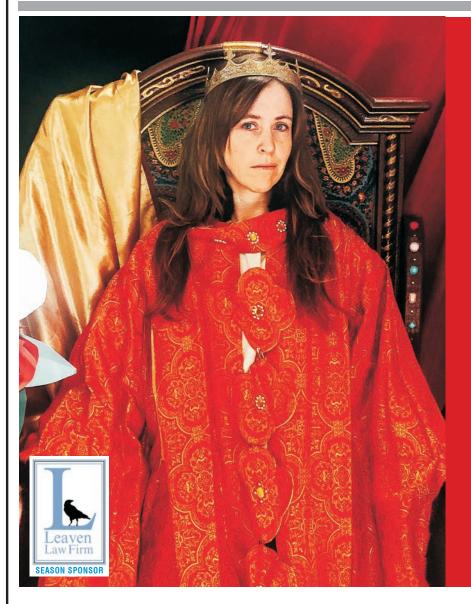
Players 52nd Season





MUSE OF FIRE: SHAKESPEARE'S WARS OF THE ROSES PART TWO RICHARD II

May 31-June 23, Friday-Sunday at 7:30pm, Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre, 92 Gay Street, Asheville, NC





















This project receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Dept of Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, through ArtsAVL.

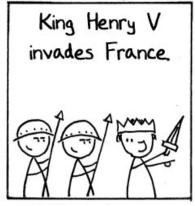
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THE MONTFORD PARK PLAYERS PRESENTS

Muse of Fire: Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses

Part Two – Richard II

Written By
William Shakespeare

Directed by Jason Williams Dana Gillihan, Stage Manager

2024 Season Sponsored by The Leaven Law Firm



CAST

King Richard II - Emilie Soffe

Duke of York - Scott Bean

John of Gaunt/Gardener's Man/Sir Piers of Exton - Darren Marshall

Henry Bolingbroke/Henry IV - Eric Vik

Duke of Aumerle - Katie Alexander

Earl of Northumberland - Kevin Norris

Thomas Mowbray/Lord Willoughby/Lord Fitzwater - Josh Kerber

Richard's Queen/Welsh Captain/Servingman - Danielle Allen

Lord Marshal/Earl of Salisbury/Abbot, Random Lords - David Broshar

Lord Ross/Bishop of Carlisle/Random Lords - David Mycoff

Sir John Bushy/Duke of Surrey/Random Lords - Gina McDaniel

Sir William Bagot/Queen's Lady/Exton's Servingman - Naimah Coleman

Sir Henry Green/Attendant - Holly Oakley

Harry Percy/2nd Herald/Attendant - Lucien Hinton

Duchess of Gloucester/Gardener - Lauren Powers

Duchess of York - Mandy Bean

1st Herald/Sir Stephen Scroop/Keeper/Guard - Maxwell Faust

Lord Berkeley/Exton's 2nd Servingman/Attendant - Jason Williams

PRODUCTION STAFF

Jason Williams - Director

Dana Gillihan - Stage Manager

Kristi Deville - Choreographer

Emily Drake - Costume Designer

Victoria Smith - Season Costume Supervisor

Jenny Luttrell - Property Mistress

Gina Purri - Set Designer/Builder

TO OUR PATRONS

- Thank you for joining us this evening. We hope you enjoy our **once-in-a-generation** production of *Muse of Fire: Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses* as presented by The Montford Park Players, North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare Festival.
- There will be one twenty-minute intermission. Concessions will be available at the entrance to the amphitheatre. Many thanks to **The Matt & Molly Team** for sponsoring Shakespeare's Tavern, where you will find a delightful selection of wines and local beers on tap.
- We are pleased to accept all major credit/debit cards, cash, checks, Venmo and PayPal for your donations and concessions. One of our actors will be in the audience each night with a credit card reader for your convenience.
- Please turn the volume off on all cell phones and pagers to avoid distracting your fellow audience members.
- Flash photography is not permitted in the theatre.
- Canine companions will be given a treat at the concession stand.
- Unattended children will be given a double espresso, an energy drink and a free puppy.
- The Montford Park Players is going GREEN! Please help us conserve the environment by depositing your empty cans in the marked recycle bins.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments by phone at (828) 254-5146, email at info@montfordparkplayers.org, or snail mail at Montford Park Players, PO Box 2663, Asheville NC 28802-2663. You can also follow us on Facebook (Montford Park Players) or on Twitter (@MontfordPlayers) or on Instagram (@montfordparkplayers).

WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the board of directors and the members of The Montford Park Players, I want to personally welcome YOU to our **52nd season of free theatre**, sponsored by **The Leaven Law Firm!**

We're pleased to tell you that ALL our shows are free-of-charge – all season long! We at MPP envision a world in which everyone can experience exceptional live theatre, regardless of the ability to pay. Therefore, all of our shows are donation only. "Pay what we're worth." "Pay what you can." Some may even call it crazy. Call it what you will – and enjoy the show!

Here's our summer 2024 schedule:

• **Edward III**: May 10 – 26

• **Richard II**: May 31 – June 23

• **Henry IV**: June 28 – July 21

• **Henry V**: July 26 – Aug 25

• **Henry VI**: Aug. 30 – Sept. 22

• **Richard III**: Sept. 27 – Oct. 27

• **The Montford Moppets**, our youth theatre in residence, will be presenting two productions this summer:

The Winter's Tale July 5 – 7 and 12 – 14 at 5:00 pm, July 10 at 11:00 am

King Lear: August 2-4 and 9-11 at $5{:}00$ pm, August 7 at $11{:}00$ am

This will be a 25 week season with 75 scheduled performances, plus 14 performances by The Montford Moppets.

Making the most of your visit:

We want you to fully enjoy your experience with us. Feel free to bring a picnic and your favorite beverage, or purchase wine, sodas, local beers and snacks at our concession cart. Four-legged friends are always welcome! (There are treats for them at the concession stand, too!)

We are so grateful to our current donors, sponsors, and advertisers and YOU, our faithful audience, without whom we could not exist. Now sit back, relax, and be ready to laugh, cry, and be entertained as the curtain rises on another great production by the Montford Park Players.

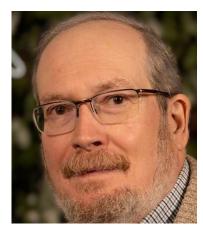
John Russell
Executive Director





then, he has appeared in at least fifty-seven MPP productions, most recently earlier this season as Lord Audley in *Edward III*. David has also acted with a number of other Asheville-area theater companies, including Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective, Magnetic Theatre, Asheville Community Theatre, Hendersonville Theatre, Attic Salt Theatre Company, and Warren Wilson Theatre.

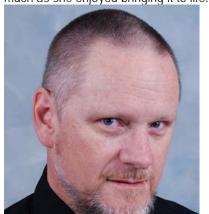
David Broshar (Marshal, Earl of Salisbury) - Welcome to the Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre, home of one of Asheville's loveliest traditions: free Shakespeare with the Montford Park Players. You may have seen David in past Montford productions: Shakespeare in Love, Henry VIII, Troilus and Cressida, Julius Caesar, Richard II, Henry V, Peter Pan, Robin Hood, Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged), A Midsummer Night's Dream, Living Dead in Denmark, Wendy and Peter and numerous versions of A Christmas Carol, Also as Crumpet the Elf in Santaland Diaries at BMCAT. He hopes you enjoy the show! Contribute generously!



David Mycoff (Lord Ross, Bishop of Carlisle) - David first performed with the Montford Park Players as the Archbishop of York and Justice Silence in a 2004 production of *Henry IV, Part One*. Since



Danielle Allen (Richard's Queen, Welsh Captain) - A local actor and costumer, Danielle is delighted to be a part of bringing Shakespeare's histories to the stage this season. Her stage credits include Ariel in *The Tempest*, Phoebe in *As You Like It*, Titania in *Living Dead in Denmark*, Witch in *Macbeth*, and Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*. She hopes you enjoy seeing this rarely-staged show as much as she enjoyed bringing it to life!



Kevin Norris (Earl of Northumberland) -Kevin could not be more thrilled about "Muse of Fire 2024"! You may have

seen him last summer as King Alonso in The Tempest. He has also portrayed The Player King in Hamlet, Rochefort in Three Musketeers, and King Duncan, the Porter, Helicanus in our repertory production of Macbeth / Pericles. His favorite roles were Scrooge and Old Joe in A Christmas Carol, Henslowe in Shakespeare in Love and Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream...until this summer. Certainly, the Earl of Northumberland will join those roles as a favorite. His lovely and patient wife of thirty-eight years, Kathy, and all of YOU, make this possible through your support of live theatre! Thank you!



Scott Bean (Duke of York) - Scott has been acting and designing sound in the Asheville area for over 14 years with many of the companies in the area. He most recently did sound for Montford's recent production of Alice's Adventures in Murderland. His most recent acting roles include Frank in The Magnetic Theatre's production of *Beautiful Cages*. With the Montford Park Players he has been seen as Queen Elizabeth in Dark Lady of the Sonnets, lago in Othello, Shepherd in 16 Years Tried. He has played Dr Chasuble, Jack, and Lane in three different productions of The Importance of Being Earnest with Montford as well. Scott is pleased to help his friends bring this show to light! He hopes you have a wonderful evening and that you enjoy the show! ps. Pistolfish loves

Sparklefish, Wigglefish, and Jumpyfish. The end.



Darren Marshall (John of Gaunt, Gardener's Man, Sir Piers of Exton) - Darren showed up to audition for The Tempest in 2006. The director was so intimidated by Darren's booming presence that he was cast out of fear. He's still here. No one is really certain where he came from, but rumor has it there is a lot of corn there. He is definitely not a cookie, but he may just be a Muppet wearing a human suit.



Katie Alexander (Aumerle) - Katie is thrilled to be a part of her first season with Montford. She is new to the theater world, and has been in *Comfort Sasquatch* and the One Act Festival with Magnetic Theatre, The Interstellar Song Contest, which premiered at the Fringe Festival, and she has performed in several improv troupes..





Mandy Bean (Duchess of York) - A lifelong resident of the Asheville area, Mandy first became part of the Montford Park Players back in 2007. Recent(ish) directing credits include Edward III, As You Like it, Comedy of Errors, and Romeo & Juliet for MPP; The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley for Multiverse Theatre Collective, and Beautiful Cages for The Magnetic Theatre. Thanks to Scott for being onstage and still getting the kids home and to bed (mostly) on time, Jason for helping get them to and from Little League practice, and this zany cast and crew for rolling with the punches! Sparklefish loves Pistolfish, Wigglefish, and Gigglefish.



Lucien Hinton (Harry Percy) - Lucien is excited to be returning to the Montford Park Players. He is fresh off of the stage performing in *Matilda* at Asheville Community Theatre. Previous local performances include Hal in Magnetic Theatre's New Queers Eve, Lewis in *Pippin* at ACT, Antonio in Montford Park Player's *Twelfth Night*, and a standing position in the *Rocky Horror Music Show* as Rocky. Outside of theatre Lucien is a devoted dad to his human child as well as his menagerie of cats, dog, snakes, and plants. Lucien would like to thank his partners and daughter for always being so incredibly sup-

portive of him, cheering him on, and encouraging him to be true to himself at every step



Maxwell Faust (they/them) (2nd Herald, Keeper) - Faust is on the MPP stage for the second time now, and beyond delighted by it! Favorite past roles include Oberon in A Midsummer's Night Dream and The Caterpillar in Wonderland Legacies: Alice's Adventures in Murderland. They can usually be found writing, performing drag, or generally running around dressed like a vampire. They would like to thank their family, their partner, and everyone who supports the performing arts!



Lauren Powers (Duchess of Gloucester, Gardener) - Lauren is happily enjoying a second childhood in WNC! Her latest project, which she co-wrote and appeared in, is titled *Debatable Love Songs: An Opinionated Musical Cabaret.* Her other recent shows include Young Frankenstein: The Musical at the Hendersonville Theatre, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* at Attic Salt Theatre, and *Treasure Island* and *The Three Musketeers* with the Montford Park Players. All this fun is made even better when she gets to perform with her husband, Eric Vik.



Eric Vik (Bolingbroke/King Henry IV). Eric is stoked to be joining MPP for a third season. In previous seasons some of his credits include Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*. He is also happy to share the stage with his lovely wife Lauren.



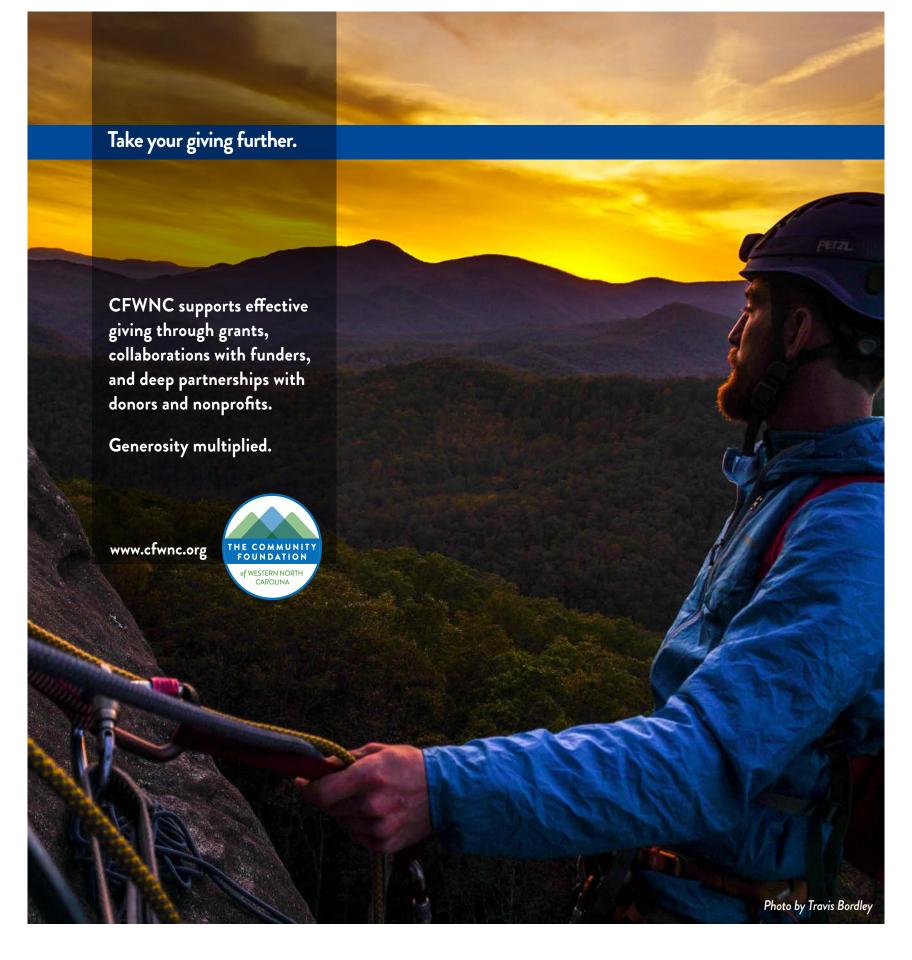
Naimah Coleman (they/them) (Sir William Bagot, Queen's Lady) - Naimah is thrilled to return to the MPP Stage for Richard II. Previous productions with MPP include Alice's Adventure's in Murderland (Red Queen) and Twelfth Night (Stage Manager). You may recognize them from ACT productions Pippin (Leading Player), Elf (Deb/Ensemble), and Bright Star (Florence). Other works include Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks, & Curls (Different Strokes), Chicago (Matron Mama Morton), & Anything Goes (Erma). Naimah loves being out in nature, teaching/spending time with kiddos, dancing, and sharing laughs with friends and loved ones. They hope everyone enjoys the show, and if you want to see more of them, you can find them in their next show Songs For A New World with Asheville Musical Theatre!



Emilie Soffe (King Richard). Emilie is an Asheville-based actor and director with a focus in devised and experimental work. As a core member of live arts collective Piehole. Emilie has acted in and co-authored original works for theaters, galleries, and digital spaces, including collaborations with the LA-based Tender Claws in AR and VR: Tendar and The Under Presents Christmas Mountain, a multimedia window-installation advent calendar that went up in the windows of the WNYC Greene Space. She's thrilled to be back on a stage again as part of this awesome, ambitious season with the iconic Montford Park Players and this very special group of humans!



Gina McDaniel (Sir John Bushy, Duke of Surrey) - Gina is excited to be back at Montford for her second season! Last year she achieved her dream of becoming a pirate in both Wendy & Peter and Treasure Island. Gina is currently Gigi in Skysail Theatre's Interstellar Song Contest and has also worked with The Magnetic Theatre, Hendersonville Theatre, and HART. When not on stage, Gina is a competitive West Coast Swing dancer, co-host of Hendersonville Westies and is involved with social dance groups locally and in Greenville, SC t





Holly Oakley (Sir Henry Green) - Delighted to make her first return to the stage in eight years, Holly is beyond ecstatic to join Montford Park Players for *Richard II* and is grateful to work alongside such talented and passionate individuals that have truly reignited her passion for live performance.



Josh Kerber (Thomas Mowbray, Lord Willoughby, Lord Fitzwater) - Josh is an awesome human being, a funny guy and a joy to be around. MPP welcomes you back to Asheville with open arms!





Jason Williams (Director, Lord Berkeley) - Jason is not only the Artistic Director for the Montford Park Players' 2024 Muse of Fire season, but also the director of Richard II. He was last seen as King John in this season's Edward III. Jason keeps returning to MPP because he respects their mission of providing free Shakespeare to the community. He would like to thank you for supporting The Montford Park Players. He sees Theater as a valuable life experience and an important part of the cultural fabric. If you enjoyed the show and the work that MPP does, he encourages you to show your support with a monetary donation, or simply by seeking out future MPP productions.



Dana Gillihan (Stage Manager) - Dana is a stage manager and actor in the Asheville area. She is delight-

ed to stage manage Richard II with these gifted, multitalented thespians. Dana has previously stage managed with Asheville's Multiverse Theater Collective, Nemesis Theatre Company, and Raleigh's Burning Coal Theater. She has performed locally with Multiverse, Parkway Playhouse, and Mountain Art Theater, and in Raleigh with Burning Coal Theater and Raleigh Ensemble Players. When not at the theater, Dana dedicates her time to the noble cause of aiding Asheville's cat rescue FurEver Friends. She shares her home with her personal forever friends, her valiant husband Chris and the feline dynamic duo Xander and Rosie.



Jenny Luttrell (Property Mistress) - After several seasons of enthusiastically playing the role of audience member and Montford patron, Jenny is thrilled to step into the role of Props Mistress for this historic season with the Montford Park Players! With an eye towards historical accuracy, she created a Regency kitchen for *The Wickhams* (Multiverse Theatre Collective), and has served as Visual Designer for several independent boutiques and Design Director for fundraising galas benefitting a non-profit foundation. She hopes you en-

joy the show!



Gina Purri (Set Designer/Builder) - Gina is so pleased to be joining the Montford family this season to make a cool castle for everyone to play in. You can find her acting, singing, trapeze-ing while singing, composing, writing, painting, building, and/ or stage managing at various Asheville venues. She is deeply grateful to Jason and John for offering her this wonderful creative opportunity.





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Kristi DeVille (Choreographer) - A native of southern Louisiana, Kristi has been working in theatre for the past 30 years as a director, dance choreographer, and an actor. She is the Resident Dance Choreographer and the Marketing Director for Montford Park Players. Locally, Kristi is the Director of Movement for Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective, the Director of First Stage Youth Theatre, an Artistic Associate for The Sublime Theatre and Press, and a company member of The Cardboard Sea. Up next, Kristi is directing *Richard III* (MPP) and *The Play That Goes Wrong* (ACT).

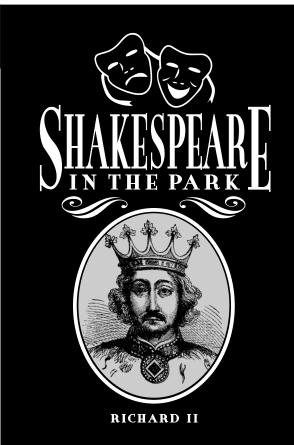


Emily Dake (Costume Designer)is a vocalist, actor, and craftswoman based in Asheville, NC. She has performed as a soprano with the Choral Society of Durham and Asheville Choral Society. Favorite theater roles have included Millie Dillmount in Thoroughly Modern Millie, Mer-

edith Parker in *Bat Boy*, Rosa Bud in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and Mina Harker in *Dracula* (Dietz) and Marian Paroo in *The Music Man*. She has costumed *Into the Woods*, *Big Fish the Musical, Cinderella, The Vagina Monologues*, and originated the character design for *Hilloween's Haunted School House*.

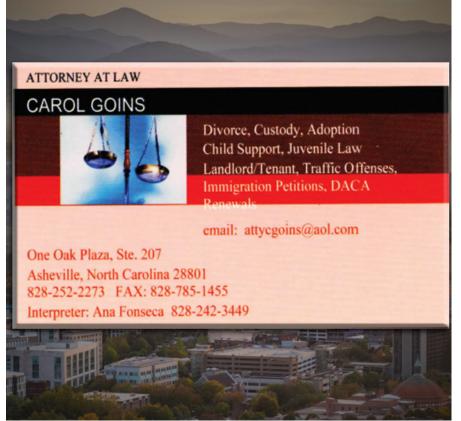


Victoria Smith (Season Costume Supervisor). Victoria has worked with Montford Park Players for over two decades. Many of her favorites have been here in the Amphitheatre: Twelfth Night, Tempest, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and Coriolanus to name a few. She is also quick to tell you that she is quite thankful and proud of her family and their support and, when requested, assistance. It is wonderful to watch Montford Park Players grow over the years and this season is no exception! Thanks to all those who have assisted in all the preparations. Now please sit back and enjoy the play!VI.



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SCENE SYNOPSIS

- **Act 1, Scene 1:** At the English court, King Richard II plays judge between two squabbling nobles, Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray. Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of being a no-good, rotten traitor. They insult each other and demand a duel, but Richard, hoping to avoid a mess, schedules a later fight.
- Act 1, Scene 2: John of Gaunt consoles the Duchess of Gloucester, who is convinced foul play caused her husband's death. Gaunt advises patience, implying karma will eventually catch up—because in Shakespeare's world, it always does.
- **Act 1, Scene 3:** At the duel, Richard dramatically halts the fight like a referee in a wrestling match. Instead, he banishes Bolingbroke for ten years (then feels bad and changes it to six) and Mowbray for life. Both men grumble but leave.
- Act 1, Scene 4: To fund a war with the Irish, a war encouraged by his bad advisors Bushy, Bagot and Green, Richard plans to lease crown lands for cash, tax the nobles and plots to grab Gaunt's fortune.
- Act 2, Scene 1: On his deathbed, Gaunt gives Richard a stern talking-to about his poor kingship. Richard, ever the opportunist, confiscates Gaunt's wealth before the body is cold. This prompts nobles including the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Ross, and Lord Willoughby to rebel in support of Henry Bolingbroke's return.
- Act 2, Scene 2: The Queen's got a baaaad feeling about this. As Richard heads to Ireland for the war, his Queen learns Bolingbroke is back and causing a ruckus. Richard left his uncle the Duke of York in charge to manage the crisis, along with York's son Aumerle.
- Act 2, Scene 3: Bolingbroke gains supporters and meets York, who helps him despite misgivings. Bolingbroke claims he just wants his inheritance back, not the crown. We'll see....
- Act 2, Scene 4: Richard's soldiers that he is counting on, waiting for him on the Welsh coast. Assuming he must be dead, they decide to bail once they realize Bolingbroke is winning, leaving Richard's cause in jeopardy. So much for loyalty!
- **Act 3, Scene 1:** Bolingbroke wastes no time executing Bushy and Green, Richard's friends and allies. He then marches on to confront Richard.
- Act 3, Scene 2: Returning from the war in Ireland, Richard initially is confident but quickly spirals into despair as he learns about Bolingbroke's popularity and his own dwindling support.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

- Act 3, Scene 3: Richard meets Bolingbroke at Flint Castle. After some passive-aggressive banter, Richard realizes he's outmatched and agrees to go back to London to discuss terms, effectively surrendering his power.
- **Act 3, Scene 4:** The Queen, overhearing gardeners chat about the kingdom's mess, laments her husband's downfall. Even the flora know Richard's reign is wilting.
- **Act 4, Scene 1:** In Parliament, Bolingbroke accuses York's son Aumerle of treason and demands Richard abdicate. The Bishop of Carlisle predicts future civil war if Bolingbroke is crowned. Richard dramatically surrenders the crown to Bolingbroke, who becomes King Henry IV. Richard's surrender is marked by public humiliation.
- Act 5, Scene 1: Richard and the Queen share a tearful farewell as he's carted off to be imprisoned in the rough Pomfret Castle instead of the cushy Tower of London as he was originally told. She's sent to France and Richard's off to a not-so-glamorous retirement.
- **Act 5, Scene 2:** York discovers his son Aumerle's part in a conspiracy against Henry IV. Cue the frantic parental intervention as York and his wife plan to plead for their son's life, leading to a showdown with the new king.
- **Act 5, Scene 3:** Henry IV shows mercy to Aumerle with a pardon, but orders a crackdown on other conspirators to keep his shiny new crown safe. Parenting win for the Yorks!
- Act 5, Scene 4: Sir Pierce of Exton, thinking he's doing Henry a favor, decides to apply for employee of the month by taking out Richard.
- Act 5, Scene 5: Richard, imprisoned in Pomfret Castle, poetically muses on his fate, finding his humanity. Exton and his men arrive and murder him. Exton admires Richard's courage and valor, declaring that he sort of regrets killing the former king.
- Act 5, Scene 6: Northumberland and Fitzwater each tell King Henry IV they've had several of his rebel enemies beheaded. Instead of beheading the Bishop of Carlisle, Henry IV places him under house arrest. Exton proudly presents Richard's body and is confused by King Henry's negative response. To make up for the mess, Henry IV plans a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, ending the play on a note of somber reflection—and maybe a hint of "What did I just get myself into?" Tune in to Henry IV, Part 1 to find out!

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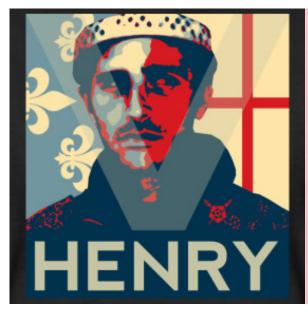
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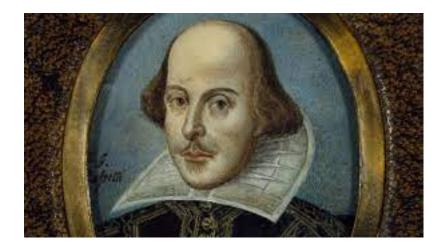


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