

Shakespeare free essay



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Shakespeare's sonnets are a collection of 154 sonnets, dealing with themes such as the passage of time, love, beauty and mortality, first published in a 1609 quarto entitled SHAKESPEARES SONNETS. : Never before imprinted. (although sonnets 138 and 144 had previously been published in the 1599 miscellany *The Passionate Pilgrim*). The quarto ends with "A Lover's Complaint", a narrative poem of 47 seven-line stanzas written in rhyme royal.

The first 17 poems, traditionally called the procreation sonnets, are addressed to a young man urging him to marry and have children in order to immortalize his beauty by passing it to the next generation. [1] Other sonnets express the speaker's love for a young man; brood upon loneliness, death, and the transience of life; seem to criticise the young man for preferring a rival poet; express ambiguous feelings for the speaker's mistress; and pun on the poet's name. The final two sonnets are allegorical treatments of Greek epigrams referring to the "little love-god" Cupid. The publisher, Thomas Thorpe, entered the book in the Stationers' Register on 20 May 1609: Tho. Thorpe. Entred for his copie under the handes of master Wilson and master Lownes Wardenes a booke called Shakespeares sonnettes vjd.

Whether Thorpe used an authorised manuscript from Shakespeare or an unauthorised copy is unknown. George Eld printed the quarto, and the run was divided between the booksellers William Aspley and John Wright.

----- Structure [edit]The sonnets are almost all constructed from three four-line stanzas (called quatrains) and a final couplet composed in iambic pentameter. [18] This is also

the meter used extensively in Shakespeare's plays. The rhyme scheme is abab cdcd efef gg. Sonnets using this scheme are known as Shakespearean sonnets.

Often, the beginning of the third quatrain marks the volta ("turn"), or the line in which the mood of the poem shifts, and the poet expresses a revelation or epiphany. There are a few exceptions: Sonnets 99, 126, and 145. Number 99 has fifteen lines. Number 126 consists of six couplets, and two blank lines marked with italic brackets; 145 is in iambic tetrameters, not pentameters.

There one another variation on the standard structure, found for example in sonnet 29. The normal rhyme scheme is changed by repeating the b of quatrain one in quatrain three, where the f should be.

----- Characters [edit] When analysed as characters, the subjects of the sonnets are usually referred to as the Fair Youth, the Rival Poet, and the Dark Lady. The speaker expresses admiration for the Fair Youth's beauty, and later has an affair with the Dark Lady. It is not known whether the poems and their characters are fiction or autobiographical; scholars who find the sonnets to be autobiographical, notably A. L.

Rowse, have attempted to identify the characters with historical individuals.

[19] Fair Youth [edit] Main article: Shakespeare's sexuality Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton at 21. Shakespeare's patron, and one candidate for the Fair Youth of the sonnets. The "Fair Youth" is the unnamed young man to whom sonnets 1-126 are addressed.

20] Some commentators, noting the romantic and loving language used in this sequence of sonnets, have suggested a sexual relationship between them; others have read the relationship as platonic love. The earliest poems in the sequence recommend the benefits of marriage and children. With the famous sonnet 18 (" Shall I compare thee to a summer's day") the tone changes dramatically towards romantic intimacy. Sonnet 20 explicitly laments that the young man is not a woman.

Most of the subsequent sonnets describe the ups and downs of the relationship, culminating with an affair between the poet and the Dark Lady. The relationship seems to end when the Fair Youth succumbs to the Lady's charms. [citation needed] There have been many attempts to identify the young man. Shakespeare's one-time patron, Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton is commonly suggested, although Shakespeare's later patron, William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, has recently become popular. [21] Both claims begin with the dedication of the sonnets to ' Mr. W.

H. ', " the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets"; the initials could apply to either earl. However, while Shakespeare's language often seems to imply that the subject is of higher social status than himself, the apparent references to the poet's inferiority may simply be part of the rhetoric of romantic submission. [citation needed] An alternative theory, most famously espoused by Oscar Wilde's short story ' The Portrait of Mr. W.

H. ' notes a series of puns that may suggest the sonnets are written to a boy actor called William Hughes; however, Wilde's story acknowledges that there is no evidence for such a person's existence. Samuel Butler believed that the

friend was a seaman. Joseph Pequigney argued in his book *Such Is My Love* that the Fair Youth was an unknown commoner.

The Dark Lady [edit] “ The Dark Lady” redirects here. For other uses, see Dark Lady. The Dark Lady sequence (sonnets 127–152), distinguishes itself from the Fair Youth sequence by being overtly sexual in its passion. Among these, Sonnet 151 has been characterised as “ bawdy” and is used to illustrate the difference between the spiritual love for the Fair Youth and the sexual love for the Dark Lady.

[22] The distinction is commonly made in the introduction to modern editions of the sonnets. [22] The Dark Lady is so called because the poems make it clear that she has black hair and dusky skin. As with the Fair Youth, there have been many attempts to identify her with a real historical individual. Mary Fitton, Emilia Lanier and others have been suggested. The Rival Poet [edit] Main article: Rival Poet The Rival Poet’s identity has always remained a mystery; among the varied candidates are Christopher Marlowe, George Chapman, or, an amalgamation of several contemporaries. [23] However, there is no hard evidence that the character had a real-life counterpart.

The speaker sees the Rival as competition for fame, coin and patronage. The sonnets most commonly identified as the Rival Poet group exist within the Fair Youth sequence in sonnets 78–86. [23] -----

Themes [edit] One interpretation is that Shakespeare’s sonnets are in part a pastiche or parody of the three-centuries-old tradition of Petrarchan love sonnets; Shakespeare consciously inverts conventional gender roles as

delineated in Petrarchan sonnets to create a more complex and potentially troubling depiction of human love. 24] He also violated many sonnet rules, which had been strictly obeyed by his fellow poets: he plays with gender roles (20), he speaks on human evils that do not have to do with love (66), he comments on political events (124), he makes fun of love (128), he speaks openly about sex (129), he parodies beauty (130), and even introduces witty pornography (151).

<http://www.bardweb.net/poetry.html> contents * The Sonnets * Venus and Adonis * The Rape of Lucrece * Other Poetry In the summer of 1592, an episodic outbreak of the plague swept through London. Theatres were among the public gathering places to be shut down. William Shakespeare decided to stay in London rather than follow a theatrical company on tour.

Shakespeare needed a way to earn a wage until the theatres reopened. He also desired to be taken seriously as a writer. Playwrights of the era were considered little more than populist hacks, writing largely disposable entertainment. Shakespeare instead found a way to earn both money and acclaim through the patronage of the third Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley.

Poetry was the art of nobles and gentlemen, and Shakespeare—a rustic interloper without the usual college-educated wit—lucratively introduced himself between 1593 and 1594. *Venus and Adonis* would become Shakespeare's most widely printed work during his lifetime. The following year, Shakespeare published *The Rape of Lucrece*. Both were poems calculated to bolster Shakespeare's reputation and wallet.

On the opposite end of that spectrum is the body of poetry that comprises Shakespeare's more mysterious and controversial work. If *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* represent Shakespeare's quest for immortality, his sonnets of the early 1590s represent the passion and introspection behind it. The Sonnets At some point in the early 1590s, Shakespeare began writing a compilation of sonnets. The first edition of these appeared in print in 1609. However, Frances Meres mentions Shakespeare sharing at least some of them among friends as early as 1598, and two (138 and 144) appear as early versions in the 1599 folio *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

Shakespeare's seeming ambivalence toward having the sonnets published stands in remarkable contrast to the poetic mastery they demonstrate. Why sonnets? The sonnet was arguably the most popular bound verse form in England when Shakespeare began writing. Imported from Italy (as the Petrarchan or Italian sonnet), the form took on a distinctive English style of three distinctively rhymed quatrains capped by a rhymed couplet comprising 14 total lines of verse. This allowed the author to build a rising pattern of complication in a three-act movement, followed by the terse denouement of the final two lines.

Conventional subject matter of the Elizabethan sonnet concerned love, beauty, and faith. Shakespeare as a poet could hardly have ignored the sonnet as a verse form. He appears to have written a sequence of them, dedicated to a " Master W. H.

,” and the sequence as a whole appears to follow a loose narrative structure. Of the 154 sonnets, there are three broad divisions: * Sonnets 1-126, which deal with a young, unnamed lord, the “ fair youth” of the sonnets * Sonnets 127-152, which deal with the poet’s relationship to a mysterious mistress, the “ dark lady” of the sonnets * Sonnets 153-154, which seem to be poetic exercises dedicated to Cupid The sonnets are poignant musings upon love, beauty, mortality, and the effects of time. They also defy many expected conventions of the traditional sonnet by addressing praises of beauty and worth to the fair youth, or by using the third quatrain as part of the resolution of the poem. The first edition of 1609 could very well have been an unauthorized printing.

The dedication is enigmatic, and the sonnet by that time had waned in popularity. Whether or not Thorpe published the 1609 quarto with Shakespeare’s blessing, the sonnets as they are printed comprise the foundation for all later versions. Points of debate have ensued ever since as to: * The order of the arrangement Whether or not the sonnets are autobiographical * Whether or not Shakespeare actually intended them to be published * The identities of W. H.

, the fair youth, and the dark lady, among others * The exact nature of the poet’s relationship with those he addresses in the sonnets Venus and Adonis Shakespeare dedicates Venus and Adonis as “ the first heir of my invention. ” In doing so, Shakespeare acknowledges that even he considered his plays as literary works inferior to poetry. The poem, a brief epic, evokes comparisons to Marlowe’s Hero and Leander, to which Venus and Adonis owes at least some debt. Equal parts comic and erotic, the poem is

Shakespeare's take on a story told by Ovid in which Venus falls for the handsome youth Adonis. Shakespeare, however, makes one crucial twist to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's Venus is an irresistible, tragic goddess whose love Adonis returns.

Venus and Adonis portrays the goddess as a comically frustrated seductress who can't seem to distract Adonis from his love of hunting. Shakespeare also includes elements from *Metamorphoses* from the tales of Narcissus and Hermaphroditus. *Venus and Adonis* is a microcosm of Shakespeare's writing: taking a classical source and infusing it with both heightened formality and a playful humanity. Of course, the poem's comic overtones and animal sensuality caused it to lapse into critical disfavor. *The Rape of Lucrece* *The Rape of Lucrece* was published the year after *Venus and Adonis*.

Because of their proximity and Shakespeare's dedication of both works to Southampton, the two poems are often thought of as companion pieces. In fact, it's believed that *Lucrece* is the "graver labour" to which Shakespeare refers in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis*. Written in rhyme royal stanzas, *The Rape of Lucrece* also borrows from Ovid. While Shakespeare sticks fairly closely to the narrative of Ovid, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, he expands significantly on the action through the characterization of both Tarquin and Lucrece. Shakespeare creates as a result a tense drama with both moral and political overtones. The verses are thick with rhetorical flourishes and wordplay.

Like its predecessor, *The Rape of Lucrece* sparked much critical debate over the years, mostly regarding how Lucrece's language often works against her

emotion. OtherThe 1599 volume *The Passionate Pilgrim* was a collection of twenty poems that the publisher attributed entirely to Shakespeare. Only five works can be traced to Shakespeare: versions of sonnets 138 and 144, and three poems presumably taken from a quarto edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Thomas Heywood actually complained about a later reprinting of the work in which his poetry was published but still credited to Shakespeare.

Heywood also noted that Shakespeare was unhappy with the publisher, William Jaggard, who "presumed to make so bold with his name." It seems apparent that Jaggard's printing was an unauthorized enterprise. *A Lover's Complaint* was printed with Thorpe's 1609 edition of Shakespeare's sonnets. Like *The Rape of Lucrece*, *A Lover's Complaint* is written in rhyme royale stanzas but is much shorter, at just over 300 lines.

The poem tells the story of a woman seduced by a womanizing young man. In 1601, an untitled poem by Shakespeare appeared in a collection entitled *Love's Martyr*. Scholars have given it the title *The Phoenix and the Turtle* based on the thematic subject of the collection. Based on computer-aided analysis, a 1612 poem published by Thomas Thorpe as *A Funeral Elegy* and signed "W.

S." was thought to be attributable to Shakespeare. Further study has pointed toward Jacobean dramatist John Ford, rather than Shakespeare, as the poem's author. Sir John Falstaff is in financial difficulties. On top of that, Justice Shallow and his youthful cousin, Slender, have come to Windsor because he has conned them out of money. Falstaff decides to woo the

wives of two of Windsor's leading merchants, Page, and Ford, to get money out of them.

He sends his page, Robin, to each of the wives with a letter. The wives compare the letters and find that they are identical. They decide to teach him a lesson and devise a plan. They invite him to Mistress Ford's house at a time when Ford will be out bird shooting. Falstaff's companions, Pistol and Nym, tell Ford about Falstaff's intentions and Ford, a naturally jealous man, resolves to catch his wife out. He disguises himself as a shy man, Master Brook, with a passion for Mistress Ford, and goes to Falstaff and offers him money to woo her on his behalf.

Falstaff tells him that a meeting has already been arranged and agrees to Master Brook's request. Slender has made friends with a local clergyman, Parson Evans. Slender has fallen for Page's daughter, Anne, who is already secretly meeting a young courtier, Fenton, of whom Page disapproves. Anne's mother, Mistress Page, is determined that she will marry the French doctor, Caius. When Caius hears about Slender's suit he challenges Parson Evans to a duel. The landlord of the Garter Inn confuses matters by setting different places for the duel, which results in the antagonists making up their differences.

Falstaff arrives at Mistress Ford's house but his wooing is interrupted by Mistress Page's announcement that the men are returning. They hide Falstaff in a large laundry basket and he is carried out. Ford searches the house. Falstaff is tipped out on a muddy river bank. The wives, amused by the incident, decide to repeat the incident and invite Falstaff to come again. He

is reluctant but Master Brook persuades hnbim to accept and his visit is again interrupted by Ford's return.

Ford searches the laundry basket but this time Falstaff is disguised as the elderly aunt of one of the servants. When Ford finds nothing in the laundry basket he loses his temper and angrily beats the 'aunt' out of the house. The wives laughingly tell their husbands about the trick and Page suggests that they should publicly humiliate Falstaff to stop him from preying on honest wives. Mistress Ford invites Falstaff to meet her at night in Windsor Park, disguised as Hearne the Hunter. Parson Evans organises Anne and some children to dress as fairies. Anne plans to elope with Fenton, while her parents are plotting her kidnapping by Caius and a secret marriage to him.

They all meet in the park and Falstaff is pinched and taunted by the fairies. Anne escapes and returns as Fenton's wife, while Caius and Slender both find that they have eloped with boys. The play ends with the Pages giving their blessing to Anne's marriage and everyone laughing at the evening's antics and the humiliation of Falstaff. - Henry-1 Henry Bolingbroke has usurped his cousin, Richard II, to become King of England. News comes of a rebellion in Wales, where his cousin, Edmund Mortimer, has been taken prisoner by Owen Glendower, and in the North, where Harry Hotspur, the young son of the Earl of Northumberland, is fighting the Earl of Douglas.

The king's problems mount up and he is forced to postpone his proposed participation in a crusade. Moreover, his heir, Henry, known as Hal, shows no interest in princely matters and spends all his time in the London taverns with disreputable companions, particularly one dissolute old knight, Sir John

Falstaff. Falstaff will do anything to finance his eating and drinking. He carries out a robbery with two of his friends but Hal and Poins rob them in turn. Hal protects Falstaff from the law and returns the money to the victims. Although Hotspur has been forced to agree to support the king he joins a plot with his father and his uncle, Worcester, to support Glendower, Mortimer, and Douglas against the king.

Hal returns to the court, makes his peace with his father, and is given a command in the army that is preparing to meet Hotspur. Falstaff has also been given a command but he has taken bribes and filled his ranks with beggars instead of recruiting able men. The King offers to pardon Hotspur if he will withdraw his opposition. Glendower's troops and those of Northumberland have been unable to contact Hotspur and Worcester withholds the King's offer from Hotspur and the battle of Shrewsbury begins. Falstaff's conduct in the war is disreputable and behaves in a cowardly way, while Hal saves his father's life in combat with the Scotsman, Douglas. He encounters Hotspur, who is killed.

Falstaff, having feigned death to avoid injury, claims to have fought and killed Hotspur. The King's army triumphs over the rebels and Worcester is condemned to death. Hal frees Douglas while Henry takes his troops to continue the war against Mortimer and the Welsh, and the remnants of the Northumberland forces. Henry-2 King Henry IV has been victorious at the battle of Shrewsbury but the Earl of Northumberland hears rumours that his son, Harry Hotspur, has been the victor.

Northumberland and the Archbishop of York decide to oppose the king's forces, led by Prince John. The news of Hotspur's death finally comes, however, and Hotspur's widow and Lady Northumberland urge them not to continue with their rebellion. The Lord Chief Justice criticises Sir John Falstaff for his behaviour during the wars but gives his blessing to him in his intention to join Prince John's forces. Before Falstaff can leave he is arrested for his debt to Mistress Quickly, the landlady of the Boar's Head tavern. They both land up in court where Falstaff persuades her to patch up their differences.

Prince Hal and his friend Poins, arrive at the tavern, disguised as servants. Acquaintances between Hal and Falstaff and his companions are renewed. Pistol arrives and tells Falstaff that he should have departed for the wars by now. Hal and his friends remain, still dressed as servants, although the king is sick, and worried about the succession. Falstaff recruits men, conforming to his usual corrupt methods. York, Mowbray and Hastings prepare for battle.

The Earl of Westmorland arrives from Prince John to hear their grievances and they come to a peace arrangement. However, as soon as the rebel armies disperse, Westmorland arrests the three leaders for treason. The king is very ill. Hal arrives from London.

He thinks the sleeping king is dead and he lifts the crown and tries it on. The king wakes up and is angered by that. They make up and are reconciled before the king prepares himself for death. When Falstaff hears of the king's death and Hal's succession he sets out to attend the coronation, expecting

to be given high office, but the king denies knowing him and banishes him, commanding him to come no nearer than ten miles of his court.

The play ends with Falstaff left hurt and hoping that the king will change his mind, while the King Henry plans a war against France. Henry-5 Henry V's father Bolingbroke (Henry IV) was never able to rule comfortably because he had usurped Richard II. On his succession King Henry V is determined to prove his right to rule, including over France. An ambassador arrives from the French Dauphin with a provocative gift of tennis balls. Henry responds by preparing to invade France. Three of the king's friends, Scroop, Cambridge and Grey, are discovered to be plotting against him and he condemns them to death.

Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph, the companions of Henry's dissolute days in London, join the king's forces and set off for the wars. The news comes of Sir John Falstaff's death. The English take the town of Harfleur and the king moves on towards Calais. The two armies prepare for battle near Agincourt. The night before the battle the king visits his troops in disguise. The French numbers are superior but Henry inspires his troops with a powerful patriotic speech.

The battle begins and the French are defeated, with heavy losses, whereas the English losses are light. Henry returns to London in triumph before making peace with the French king. Henry woos the French Princess Katherine and their marriage links England and France. HEney-6-The play opens in the aftermath of the death of King Henry V. News reaches England of military setbacks in France, and the scene shifts to Orleans, where ' La

Pucelle' (Joan of Arc) is encouraging the Dauphin to resist. She defeats an English army led by Talbot.

In England, Richard, Duke of York, quarrels with John Beaufort, 1st Duke of Somerset about his claim on the throne. The lords select red or white roses, depending on whether they favour the House of Lancaster or that of York. Edmund Mortimer, a leading claimant to the throne, is a prisoner in the Tower of London and declares Richard his heir. The young Henry VI honours both Richard and Talbot. Talbot dies bravely in his next battle against the French.

In the meantime, King Henry is married off to a young French princess, Margaret of Anjou. Suffolk intends to control the king through Margaret. Ill feeling between him and the Duke of Gloucester continues to grow. This play ends without a resolution, and is Henry-6-21 This play begins with the marriage of King Henry VI to the young Margaret of Anjou. William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, aims to influence the king through her.

The major obstacle to this plan is the regent of the crown, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who is very popular with the people. Queen Margaret vies with his wife, Eleanor, for precedence at court. Eleanor is lured by an agent of Suffolk into dabbling in necromancy, and then arrested, to the embarrassment of her husband, Gloucester. Nevertheless, the demon she has summoned delivers some accurate prophecies concerning the fates of several characters in the play.

Gloucester is then accused of treason and imprisoned, and afterwards assassinated by agents of Suffolk and the Queen. Meanwhile, Richard, Duke

of York, who has a tenuous claim to the throne, schemes to make himself king. The Earl of Suffolk is banished for his role in Gloucester's death and killed by Walter the pirate, leaving Margaret without her mentor. Meanwhile, Richard of York has managed to become commander of an army to suppress a revolt in Ireland. York enlists a former officer, Jack Cade, to lead a rebellion that threatens the whole kingdom, so that he can bring his army from Ireland into England and seize the throne. As Cade's rebels are routed, York, who has brought his army over on the pretext of protecting the King from Somerset, declares open war on the king, supported by his sons, Edward (the future King Edward IV) and Richard (the future King Richard II).

The English nobility now take sides, and the Battle of St Albans ensues. The Duke of Somerset is killed by the future Richard III. Young Lord Clifford, whose father has been killed by the Duke of York, vows revenge on the Yorkists, and allies himself with King Henry's other supporters. Henry-6-3 The Earl of Warwick (Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick) is presiding over a dispute between Richard, Duke of York and the reigning King Henry, in the course of which Henry agrees to make York his heir.

The Queen, Margaret, makes it clear that she will not agree to this, and declares war on the Yorkists, with the assistance of the young Lord Clifford and other supporters, including her son, Edward, Prince of Wales. The Yorkists are defeated at the Battle of Wakefield. Clifford murders York's young son, the Earl of Rutland. Margaret and Clifford taunt the duke of York before killing him.

The Earl of Warwick now takes York's eldest son, Edward (King Edward IV of England) under his wing. At the Battle of Tewkesbury, they take revenge on Margaret's army, and Clifford is killed. Following the battle, Edward is proclaimed king, and his two brothers, George and Richard, are created Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester respectively. Warwick turns against Edward when he marries Lady Grey, and he changes sides, joining Queen Margaret and allowing his daughter to marry her son, the Prince of Wales. The Duke of Clarence goes over to Warwick, marrying his other daughter, and Edward IV is taken prisoner. He is rescued by his brother Richard and the faithful Lord Hastings.

King Henry VI has been restored to the throne, and the young Earl of Richmond (the future King Henry VII) goes into exile in France to escape the Yorkists. Edward defeats and kills Warwick at the Battle of Barnet. In a subsequent battle, he kills the Prince of Wales and captures Queen Margaret. Richard of Gloucester begins his campaign to remove all obstacles in his path to the throne by murdering King Henry VI who is a captive in the Tower of London. Henry prophesies Richard's career of villainy and his future notoriety.

However, King Edward's wife has just given birth to a son, the future King, Edward V of England, and the play ends here. Henry VIII's Cardinal Wolsey, a close advisor to Henry VIII's father, Henry VII, has framed the Duke of Buckingham for treason, who is executed. The Queen, Katherine, hates Wolsey and he is also hated by the people because of the plot against Buckingham and the harsh, unfair taxes he is imposing in the King's name. The King goes to a party hosted by Wolsey and falls in love with Anne

Bullen, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Henry, married to Katherine for twenty years, decides that the marriage is not legal because she is the widow of his brother, and it is therefore incest.

He asks Wolsey for his advice. Because of that Wolsey becomes even more hated, both by Katherine and the people so he can't agree to Henry's solution of a divorce, but he agrees to put it the Pope, who will send someone to investigate and make a ruling. Katherine regards the marriage as sacred but she has to submit to the proceedings. Wolsey's enemies are active and, the situation compounded by some bad luck, he begins to lose the confidence of Henry.

Also, Henry sees him as a stumbling block to the divorce. Wolsey knows that Henry is determined to marry Anne Bullen so he advises the Pope to postpone a decision. With Wolsey in disgrace Henry goes ahead with the divorce and the remarriage with out any regard to the Pope's opinion. Wolsey then dies, followed soon after by Katherine. The new Archbishop of Canterbury has a plot hatched against him by Wolsey's secretary, Gardiner, who is tried and executed for treason. Henry has a daughter, Elizabeth, by Anne Bullen.

Cranmer christens her and makes a speech foretelling a noble rule for Elizabeth and a glorious period of history during her reign. King John settlement with the French King. John is, in the meantime, having a problem with the Pope. The Pope has excommunicated him, and his envoy, Pandulph, orders the French King to resume hostilities with John.

During one of the battles John captures his nephew, Arthur. He gives orders for his execution but his chamberlain, Hubert, disobeys the order. While trying to escape, Arthur falls to his death. The nobles accuse John of murder and defect to the French side. John is forced to hand over his crown to Pandulph, although receives it back, but his kingdom is now under the Pope's control. Pandulph now tries to stop the conflict but the French won't cooperate and the armies meet at Edmunsbury.

The nobles don't trust the French King and they return to John. The French King comes to terms with John through Pandulph but John is not there to see that as he is poisoned by a monk while he is staying at Swinstead Abbey. He is succeeded by his son, King Henry III. Richard-3 Richard, the Yorkist Duke of Gloucester, has not stopped plotting since the defeat of Henry VI. He conspires to play his brothers, Edward (now King Edward IV) and George, Duke of Clarence, against each other in an attempt to gain the crown for himself.

By insinuating charges of treason against George, Richard has him arrested. He also brazenly woos Anne, widow of the murdered Prince of Wales, in the midst of her husband's funeral procession. In the course of events, Edward IV, who is deathly ill at the beginning of the play, dies; Richard has already arranged for George to be murdered while imprisoned, and so it stands that Richard will serve as regent while Edward's son (also named Edward) can come of age. In order to "protect" the Prince of Wales and his younger brother, Richard has them stay in the Tower of London.

He then moves against Edward's loyalist lords; Vaughan, Rivers, Hastings, and Grey are first imprisoned, then executed. Then, with the aid of Buckingham, Richard declares that Edward IV's offspring are technically illegitimate. In an arranged public display, Buckingham offers the throne of England to Richard, who is presumably reluctant to accept. By this time, Richard has alienated even his own mother, who curses him as a bloody tyrant. By now, Richard needs to bolster his claims to the crown; the young princes locked away in the Tower of London must be disposed of.

Buckingham, until now Richard's staunchest ally, balks at this deed. Richard gets a murderer to do the deed, but turns on Buckingham for his insubordination. Now Richard—conveniently a widower after the suspicious demise of Anne—makes a ploy to marry the late King Edward's daughter, his niece. Elizabeth, Edward's widow, makes Richard believe that she agrees to the match; however, Elizabeth has arranged for a match with the Earl of Richmond.

Richmond, at this point in the action, is bringing over an army from France to war against Richard. Buckingham, finding himself out of favor with the king, gives his allegiance to Richmond. However, Buckingham is captured when his army is thrown into disarray by floods, and Richard has him executed immediately. Richmond, who has undergone his own troubles crossing the English Channel, finally lands his army and marches for London. The armies of Richard and Richmond encamp near Bosworth Field; the night before the battle, Richard is visited by the sundry ghosts of the people he has slain, all of whom foretell his doom.

At Bosworth, Richard is unhorsed in the combat. Richmond finds him, and the two of them clash with swords. Richmond prevails and slays Richard, to be crowned as King Henry VII there on the field of battle. This is the founding of the Tudor line of kings and the end of the War of the Roses. Richard-2 The play opens with the accusation of Henry Bolingbroke that Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is responsible for the murder of Richard's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester.

Richard decrees that the two shall settle the matter in trial by combat, but revokes this option as Norfolk and Bolingbroke are readying to attack each other. His new decision is that both men are to be banished. Within a short time, Bolingbroke's father, the Duke of Lancaster dies; Richard seizes the late duke's estates in order to raise capital for a campaign against Ireland. In the meantime, Bolingbroke has returned to find grumbling amidst Richard's nobles—most notably the Earl of Northumberland, who joins with other disaffected nobles against the Duke of York, Richard's regent while the King is in Ireland.

Upon Richard's return, he learns that Bolingbroke has not only returned to reclaim the lands he should have inherited upon his father's death, but that he has dispersed Richard's army and executed a pair of Richard's favorites. Richard flees to Flint Castle for his own protection. Bolingbroke meets him there and takes him back to London as a prisoner. There, in a session of Parliament, Richard is made to confess crimes against the state, the end result of which he must forfeit his crown to Bolingbroke (who becomes King Henry IV). Intrigue develops as the Duke of York's son, Aumerle, conspires

against the new King Henry in response to Richard's loss of the throne.

Aumerle is granted clemency, but Richard is imprisoned in Pomfreet Castle.

While there, Sir Pierce of Exton murders him (believing this to be the wish of the king). Henry disavows the deed when he hears of it, however, and promises a Crusade to atone for Richard's death.