

# The use of humor in richard iii by shakespeare assignment

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In all of his brilliance, Shakespeare manages to toy with the idea of humor in this very morose play. As a matter of fact, he does this in many, if not all of his tragedies. However, few may match the juxtaposition of humor with the macabre in Richard III. After a reading of this play, one may ask, "how does Shakespeare use humor in this play?" The answer to that would be: in a few different ways. However, no matter which way he uses humor; the end result will be a perfectly balanced dialogue that is witty and snappy.

First, the reader is introduced to the play's protagonist, Richard. His peevish lines are incredibly captivating, but they come to an abrupt halt when his brother Clarence approaches. Already, the audience is let in on Richard's "dirty little secret" that tells us he wants to become king, and will kill anyone who stands in his way. Unfortunately for Clarence, he is in the way. However, the reader would be keen to notice that Richard is a manipulative satirist. He constantly uses humor and ridicule to expose the stupidity or even naivety of others around him.

In the very first scene, Clarence is being led up to the tower by guards, which is all part of Richard's master plan. When Richard asks about the situation, he is sympathetic and angry. At this point, the reader gains some insight to what kind of person Richard is, and may even see a slight hint of humor in the situation. Indirectly, the audience is almost spoken to in an aside type of manner. Readers of the play know full well what is going on, and the gullible nature of the unsuspecting murdered-to-be is funny. Again, in Act I, scene ii, the reader sees Richard interact with Anne.

It is pointed out that he has killed her husband, and as the story unfolds, the reader can tell that she is not too happy about this. However, an argument ensues, and Richard manages to woo Anne. The exchange is full of colorful language and snappy wit, the kind Shakespeare is so good at. However, the best part of this exchange of words occurs at the end of the scene, when Richard states, 'Meal ever woman in this humor wooed? ' Was ever woman in this manner won? " (II 234-235) Obviously, the word humor in this sense is not how modern readers would understand it.

However, the way the scene unfolded, and the way that Richard is pleased with himself is humorous, even if it's the, " ha-ha, you think you're hot stuff" kind of humor. In the following scene, members of the nobility are arguing over status. While some readers may find the exchanges between all of them to be funny because they are acting like children, the true humor lies in the false poise of Queen Margaret in her asides. While some of the members argue, she puts her two cents in, and then steps forward.

The dialogue gets snappy and heated, but takes a sharp break when this part of the exchange comes: " Margaret. ' Richard/Ha! /I call thee not! Il cry thee mercy, then, for I did think/ That thou heads called me all those bitter names. [Why, so did I, but looked for no reply. (II 236-241) The reader can imagine this exchange of dialogue taking place on stage, careening back and forth, until a little humor breaks it. However, the dialogue picks up again, and the bitterness continues. After she exits, they all talk to each other, pretty much asking, Ft; vat the heck was that all about? The next scene also has some prime examples of humor in this play. Here, two murderers are

sent to kill Clarence. The text is so rich in indirectly describing the demeanor of these two, and the reader undoubtedly chuckles when reading the dialogue between the two of them. Primarily, the reader sees this in lines 10-15: " I'll go back to the duke Of Gloucester and tell him So. / please, just wait a minute. I'm hoping my holy mood will pass. / It usually only lasts about twenty seconds. / How are you feeling now? / Actually, I'm still feeling some pangs of conscience. Even in modern times, the idea of a conscience coming and going instead of being unwavering is funny. Even funnier is the thief being aware of this, and saying, " hang on, it'll pass", as if his holy conscience were a case of bad gas or something like that. Further on, the two murderers talk about conscience, and how nobody would listen to it even if it flew out of wallet. Of course, no Shakespeare play would be complete without the use of puns. Shakespeare uses this type of humor as a witty way to keep the dialogue fresh and flowing.

The reader gets a taste of these funny little bits as early as the first act and first scene, when Brandenburg starts, " With this, my lord, myself have naught to do. / Naught to do with Mistress Shore? I tell thee, fellow, / He that doth naught with her, excepting one, / Were best he do it secretly, alone. / (II 97-100) The reader sees Richard use a play on the word ' naught'.

Brandenburg seems to use it for a common meaning, " nothing'. However, Richard being as dirty minded and witty as he is, uses the word as ' copulate' or ' naughty.

So, he implies that there should only be one guy having sex with Mrs.. Shore, and that everyone ought to keep their sexual business to themselves.

Shakespeare is using humor for the sake of it right here, but he also allows the reader to see the quick-thinking side of Richard. This really solidifies the image of Richard as an evil, two-faced person. Again, Shakespeare uses puns in the scene with Anne as well: O, cursed be the hand that made these holes; / Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it; / Cursed he blood that let this blood from hence. (II 13-15) And yet again, the reader sees a subtle use of the pun in act I, scene I when Richard says, " Well, your imprisonment shall not be long, / I will deliver you, or else lie for you. / (II 114-1 15) Here, Shakespeare lets the audience in on the little joke that only Richard and those who are reading know. The word lie to Clarence means, " Go to prison" or " stay in prison". However, the reader knows for certain that Richard means lie as in ' deceive'. And deceive he will, as this is his whole purpose in the play. Throughout the play, readers are reminded that this is a resume story about a man and his tragic flaws.

Perhaps this man Richard even fell from grace, but he'd have to have grace to begin with. Shakespeare does a good job of infusing humor in the most fitting ways by characterizing Richard as a satirist and excellently deceiving linguist. Also, Shakespeare uses humor in sharp, brisk dialogue between characters to demonstrate ideas such as lack of conscience and close-mindedness. Again, while there may be humor in other Shakespeare tragedies, none may be able to balance out the storyline as well as it was done in Richard III.