



# KING CHARLES III

BY MIKE BARTLETT



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KING CHARLES III was first presented by The Almeida Theatre Company (Rupert Goold, Artistic Director; Julia Potts, Executive Director) in London, England, on April 3, 2014. It was directed by Rupert Goold; the scenic and costume designs were by Tom Scutt; the music was by Jocelyn Pook; the lighting design was by Jon Clark; the sound design was by Paul Arditti; casting was by Joyce Nettles; the assistant director was Whitney Mosery; the musical director was Belinda Sykes; the voice and text coach was Alison Bomber; the movement director was Anna Morrissey; the assistant designer was Cai Dyfan; the production manager was James Crout; and the company stage manager was Ben Delfont. The cast was as follows:

KING CHARLES III .....	Tim Pigott-Smith
CAMILLA .....	Margot Leicester
WILLIAM .....	Oliver Chris
CATHERINE .....	Lydia Wilson
PRINCE HARRY .....	Richard Goulding
JAMES REISS .....	Nick Sampson
TRISTAN EVANS .....	Adam James
MARK STEVENS .....	Nicholas Rowe
SARAH/GHOST/TV PRODUCER .....	Katie Brayben
SPENCER/NICK/SIR GORDON .....	Nyasha Hatendi
COOTSEY/SPEAKER/SIR MICHAEL .....	Tom Robertson
JESS .....	Taffine Steen

The Almeida Theatre production of KING CHARLES III transferred to the West End and opened at Wyndham's Theatre on September 2, 2014, with the same creative team. The production manager was Patrick Molony; and the company stage manager was Nicholas Bromley. The cast was as follows:

KING CHARLES III .....	Tim Pigott-Smith
CAMILLA .....	Margot Leicester
WILLIAM .....	Rory Fleck Byrne
CATHERINE .....	Lydia Wilson
PRINCE HARRY .....	Richard Goulding
JAMES REISS .....	Miles Richardson
TRISTAN EVANS .....	Barnaby Kay
MARK STEVENS .....	Nicholas Rowe
SARAH/GHOST/TV PRODUCER .....	Sally Scott
SPENCER/NICK/SIR GORDON .....	Nyasha Hatendi
COOTSEY/SPEAKER/SIR MICHAEL .....	Tom Robertson
JESS .....	Taffine Steen

KING CHARLES III was originally produced on Broadway at the Music Box Theatre by Stuart Thompson and Sonia Friedman Productions, along with the Almeida Theatre, Robert G. Bartner, Norman Tulchin, Lee Dean & Charles Diamond, Scott M. Delman, Ruth Hendel, Stephanie P. McClelland, Jon B. Platt, Scott Rudin, Richard Winkler, Zeilinger Productions, and the Shubert Organization. The associate producers were 1001 Nights, Kevin Emrick, and Rupert Gavin. The play opened on November 1, 2015, with the same creative team from the West End. The cast was as follows:

KING CHARLES III ..... Tim Pigott-Smith  
 CAMILLA ..... Margot Leicester  
 WILLIAM ..... Oliver Chris  
 CATHERINE ..... Lydia Wilson  
 PRINCE HARRY ..... Richard Goulding  
 JAMES REISS ..... Miles Richardson  
 TRISTAN EVANS ..... Adam James  
 MARK STEVENS ..... Anthony Calf  
 SARAH/GHOST/TV PRODUCER ..... Sally Scott  
 SPENCER/NICK/SIR GORDON ..... Nyasha Hatendi  
 COOTSEY/SPEAKER/SIR MICHAEL ..... Tom Robertson  
 JESS ..... Taffine Steen  
 PROTESTER ..... Peter Bradbury  
 PROTESTER/ATTENDANT ..... Lucas Hall  
 PROTESTER/ATTENDANT ..... Rachel Spencer Hewitt  
 PROTESTER ..... Gordana Rashovich  
 PROTESTER ..... Harry Smith

## **CHARACTERS**

KING CHARLES III

CAMILLA, Duchess of Cornwall

WILLIAM, Duke of Cambridge

CATHERINE, Duchess of Cambridge

PRINCE HARRY

JAMES REISS, Press Secretary to King Charles III

TRISTAN EVANS, Prime Minister

MARK STEVENS, Leader of the Opposition

GHOST

SPENCER

COOTSEY

JESS

SARAH

NICK

SPEAKER

TERRY, Royal Security

FREE NEWSPAPER WOMAN

SIR GORDON, Chief of Defence

SIR MICHAEL, Head of the Metropolitan Police

BUTLER

PAUL, kebab vendor

TV PRODUCER

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

# KING CHARLES III

## PROLOGUE

*A choir sings.*

*The funeral procession of Queen Elizabeth II goes past.*

## ACT ONE

### 1.1

*Enter Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, and King Charles III.*

CAMILLA.

My wond'rous Charles you looked composed throughout  
You did her proud, for as she would have liked  
You never showed your pain, but stood instead  
A virtuous man of dignity and grace.  
Immovable, inscrutable as stone.

CHARLES.

Please don't. It's simply what I had to do.  
We'll find no dignity in cov'ring up  
The way we feel. What son should, standing  
Waiting at his mother's grave, stop his tears?

CAMILLA.

Are you alright?

CHARLES.

My whole existence has like most of us

Been built upon the ones who gave me birth.  
And now they're gone. That's it. First Dad. Now Mum.  
The only truth: I am alone.

CAMILLA.

Except for me.

CHARLES.

It's not the same, Camilla. The love, with us,  
It's all my life, but never can replace  
Parental word, a mother's hand to hold.  
But here — the others — back to statue —  
It's Catherine, and William.

*Enter William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.*

Hello! You're radiant, despite the grave  
Restrictions of the mourning dress. It is  
Your gift my dear, it's what you've brought to us.  
A sense of fashion, better hair as well.

KATE.

I never thought I'd see her pass away

CHARLES.

I felt the same.

WILLIAM.

How are you Dad?

CHARLES. ...

WILLIAM.

It must be hard to deal with loss combined  
With gain. For soon, at last, you will be king

CAMILLA.

Not soon.

WILLIAM.

Three months —

CAMILLA.

Your father rules today.

KATE.

I thought the coronation marked the change

CHARLES.

You're right, officially that is the case —

CAMILLA.

But England, Scotland, Northern Ireland



They cannot stand without a king or queen  
For all the months it takes to organize  
A coronation —

WILLIAM.

Wales.

CAMILLA.

Wales what?

WILLIAM.

Wales too.

You missed it out.

CAMILLA.

Then Wales. As well. And Wales!

KATE.

But surely constitutionally speaking —

CAMILLA.

Oh sweet my dear we have no constitution  
Instead Tradition holds us to account.

KATE.

Tradition then.

It still —

CAMILLA.

Tradition holds that on the death of kings  
Or Queens, the next is monarch straight away.  
He needs no proclamation, needs no man  
To shout the queen is dead long live the king.  
Your father ruled the moment granny passed.

KATE.

So coronation day itself is just  
The ancient costumes worn, and lines to learn,  
A slice of theatre, that's played for fun?

CHARLES.

Not fun I think, for me, I hate those things.

*Harry enters.*

CAMILLA.

Harry! It's such a joy to have you home.  
Even in such morbid circumstance as this.

HARRY. I might head off. If that's okay? I know there's this thing,  
but I'm tired.

CHARLES.

You want to go? Of course, we'll say you're ill, if that's —  
HARRY. Yeah right, that's it, I don't feel well. Yeah.

CAMILLA.

Why? What's the matter?

HARRY. Er ... Headache? But that was all good wasn't it? It went okay, from what I could see?

KATE.

Do you really have to go?

HARRY. It's not ... I mean ... the whole ... — I've only been home a few days, can't deal with all the chat. The people.

CHARLES.

It's important Harry.

HARRY. Yeah but the headache though.

*They look at each other for a moment.*

*Then he goes.*

WILLIAM.

We should leave, and mingle with the crowds.

A single round should be sufficient, then

We're at the palace, yes?

CAMILLA.

That's right.

CHARLES.

Where're the children?

KATE.

Taken now to Kensington.

They needed sleep.

CHARLES.

George didn't cry.

WILLIAM.

He — what?

CHARLES.

I thought he would. A child like that.

But something in him understood and so

He watched and listened, and like all of us

He kept his real emotions to himself.

In public William, you were the same,

For as a babe so silent in the cot  
We worried you might quietly have died.  
WILLIAM.

The same with George, it's parent's paranoia.  
CHARLES.

Of course, that's true. The ever-constant fear  
That one might somehow lose one's son.

*Enter James Reiss, his Press Secretary, who waits.*

WILLIAM.

But Dad, you're shaken up.  
Perhaps we should take time to talk?

CHARLES.

I'm sorry. It must wait. James wants us now —

CAMILLA.

Charles — James will happily do whatever you  
Command. You can spend time with William —

CHARLES.

We'll see you later on.

*A pause.*

WILLIAM.

Alright.

*They go.*

JAMES.

Just Mr Evans, waiting now, to speak.  
Before you walk together from the door.  
I am afraid the press are kettled up  
And staying all this time, expect their shot.

CHARLES.

A moment please, alone, before it starts.

*James goes.*

Camilla you as well, I'm sorry but ...  
You understand?

CAMILLA.

I do.

*She kisses him, and goes.*

# KING CHARLES III

by Mike Bartlett

16M, 7W (doubling)

The Queen is dead: After a lifetime of waiting, the Prince ascends the throne. A future of power. But how to rule? Mike Bartlett's controversial play explores the people beneath the crowns, the unwritten rules of our democracy, and the conscience of Britain's most famous family.

*"Mike Bartlett's flat-out brilliant portrait of a monarchy in crisis ... [is] an intellectually and emotionally gripping study of the strangely enduring anachronism that is the British monarchy and of the contemporary, star-struck world that can still find room for its royals. ... Mr. Bartlett has the hubris to venture not only into the future but also into the minds of public figures who are notorious for never revealing their thoughts ... but had he thought smaller, he would never have made us the invaluable gift of this splendid, high-reaching and utterly unexpected play."*  
—The New York Times

*"KING CHARLES III isn't just an up-to-the-minute political drama, as timely and relevant as the daily headlines. ... It is a gripping evening of theater, a rare contemporary play with real tragic vision, and easily the sharpest, most sophisticated political drama I have ever seen on stage."*  
—TIME Magazine

*"It is the most spectacular, gripping and wickedly entertaining piece of lèse-majesté that British theatre has ever seen."*  
—The Telegraph (UK)

*"Bartlett offers a fiendishly clever and yet serious questioning of the role of royalty in the 21st century. And lest anyone fear that this is all too English for American tastes, a concluding note about the 'pretty plastic picture' of a monarchy with no meaning would seem eminently relatable to a culture that's content to anoint Kanye and Kim as its king and queen. The play makes savvy points about the supreme power of column inches and the value placed on the rule of popularity above all else."*  
—The Hollywood Reporter

Also by Mike Bartlett

BULL  
COCK

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