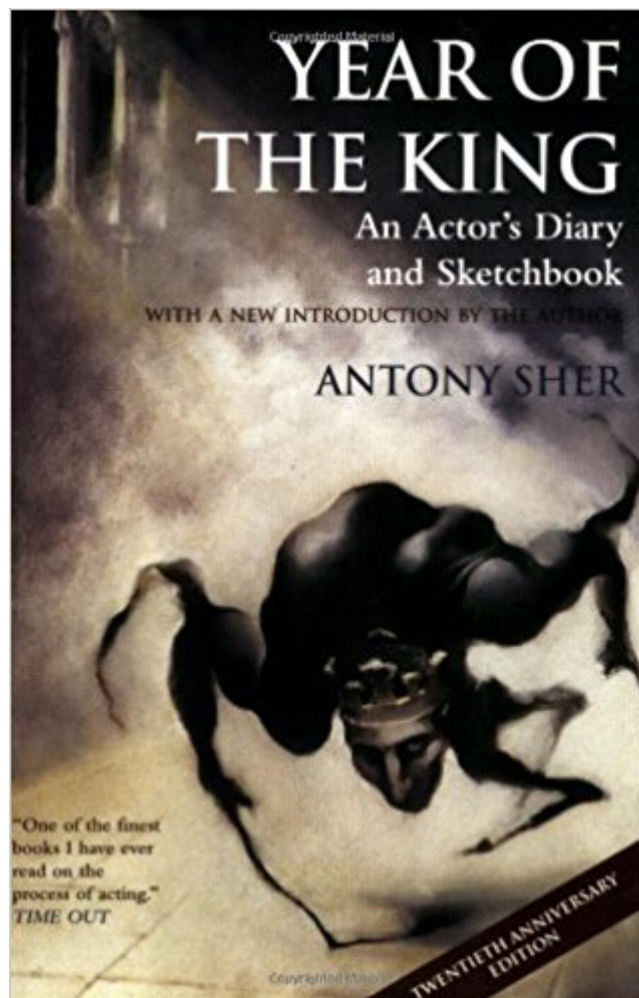




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Year Of The King: An Actor's Diary And Sketchbook - Twentieth Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

(Limelight). In 1984 Antony Sher, hailed as "the most exciting actor of his generation" by the Observer, made his debut on homemade crutches as the infamous Richard III in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of the play. He would go on to win the Laurence Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for best actor. In his own words and sketches, he chronicles his personal and professional journey to this award-winning performance, from the moment he was offered the role to opening night, in the critically acclaimed book *Year of the King*, now available in this special 20th anniversary edition. From his brainstorm to use crutches to bring the king's deformity to life, to his research for the role, which included watching interviews with psychopaths, reading about mass murderers, and speaking with doctors and physically challenged individuals, to his visit to his homeland of South Africa, to his experiences in working with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the reader is given a front-row seat to Sher's physical and mental preparation or rather transformation for his landmark performance as "the bottled spider."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Antony Sher was born in South Africa and shot to fame as an actor for the Richard III that is the subject of this book. Other roles at the RSC include the Fool to Michael Gambon's Lear, Tamburlaine, Cyrano, Macbeth (with Harriet Walter) and, this year, Iago. He has published three novels, a book of his paintings and drawings and an autobiography, *Beside Myself* (Hutchinson 2001). His first play, *I.D.*, premiered at the Almeida in 2003 with Sher in the lead. He was knighted in 2000.

"Year of the King" is a fine opportunity to watch an actor prepare for a role. In this case, the actor, Antony Sher, on the verge of leaving the Royal Shakespeare Company, is offered Richard III, one of Shakespeare's most complex and twisted characters. The book is Sher's journal, filled with a mixture of backstage anecdotes, evocative illustrations by Sher, and moments when the acting process becomes clear, inspired, and thought-provoking. Sher opens his life to the reader, taking us from the initial speculation ("Will they ask me to play Richard?") to the rehearsal processes and character work to the performances. Sher's writing is compelling, honest, and comfortably readable, without even the tiniest bit of ego that so often plagues this kind of journal. It is a glimpse into the process, both artistic and personal, that an actor endures in pursuit of a character. I have used "Year of the King" as a textbook in an acting class, as an example of how one can use a journal, and as a foundation for a course in theatre criticism. I would highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in theatre and classical acting.

I've read this book twice. Mr. Sher is thoroughly engaging and his process is inspiring. Any artist will find this a wonderful read. It is enlightening to realize what it takes to find a character and make it your own as an actor. The journey has many twists and turns, ups and downs. Even a seasoned actor like Mr. Sher has his moments of doubt as well as his epiphanies.

Most inspirational piece of theatre writing I read this year! Truly a wonderful read of an actor's process. Read for entertainment. Read for inspiration.

One of the best books ever written about the acting profession. I gift this book so often because it candidly describes the plight of the actor.

Mr Sher provides a wealth of both personal observations and spot on advice about tackling 'The Crookback Spider', or any Shakespearean role for that matter.

I enjoyed the shit out of this. It's a peek inside an actor's head during the process of creating his character (Richard III). Blunt, brash and honest--even when it makes him look bad. Oh, you should know that while I am highly DRAMATIC (jazz hands)--I am no actor.

A wonderful theater book about building a character.

Brilliant! It feels authentic and is a great inspiration for anybody interested in pursuing a career in acting!

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