

To help you maximise the educational usefulness of '**Hardwick's Lost Princess**' we have pulled together some background information and ideas for follow-up work.

We haven't suggested any specific preparation activities, but young people about to see the play should be made aware that it is a true story set in Tudor England featuring characters who really lived. Some preparation for the style of the performance would also help young people benefit from the experience. '**Hardwick's Lost Princess**' is engaging and entertaining, with moments of humour, but it is a serious play and not a pantomime.

### **Background Information –**

#### **'Hardwick's Lost Princess'**

- The play covers three years from 1600 – 1603.
- These are the last years that Arbella spends at Hardwick with Bess.
- During this time their relationship goes very wrong. Arbella wants to leave and get married. Bess can't let her, because the Queen won't allow it. Arbella is unhappy and blames Bess for how she feels. Bess becomes angrier and more fed up with Arbella.
- During the play, Arbella comes up with various schemes to try and escape from Hardwick Hall, but they all go wrong.
- Arbella is eventually ordered to leave Hardwick Hall by the Queen's men. Arbella and Bess never see each other again.
- As well as Bess and Arbella, the play features three other characters. They are Sir Henry Cavendish, Bess' son and Arbella's uncle; James Starkey, Arbella's tutor; and Sir Henry Brounker, the investigator sent by Queen Elizabeth to Hardwick Hall.
- We never meet Queen Elizabeth I in the play, but in a way she controls the lives of all the characters we meet. Her decisions affect everyone. She had no children, but refused to say who she wanted to be King or Queen after her. James of Scotland and Arbella were the strongest candidates, and no-one except a few powerful politicians knew who would take the throne until after Elizabeth's death (in 1603), when James became King.

## The Characters

### **Bess of Hardwick**

- Elizabeth, known as Bess, was born in Derbyshire in 1527.
- She married four times and outlived all her husbands.
- Each husband was more rich and powerful than the last.
- As well as inheriting land and money, she was a clever businesswoman.
- She ordered and supervised the building of the two halls at Hardwick. The Old Hall was the first. Now a ruin, Bess decided it wasn't big and grand enough so had the New Hall built as well.
- The father of all Bess' children was William Cavendish, her second husband.
- Bess helped arrange for her daughter (also called Elizabeth) to marry Charles Stuart, the Earl of Lennox, without the Queen's permission. This was very serious, because Charles Stuart was a descendant of Henry VII and had 'royal blood'. If you had 'royal blood' and married without the Queen's permission it was treason and you could be punished, even killed.
- Elizabeth and Charles had a daughter, Arbella, but both parents died shortly after Arbella was born.
- Bess brought up Arbella and our play, '**Hardwick's Lost Princess**', tells the story of their last few years together, between 1600 and 1603.
- Bess died in 1608.

### **Arbella Stuart**

- Arbella was the granddaughter of Bess of Hardwick.
- She was born in 1575.
- Arbella's father, Charles Stuart, was a descendant of Henry VII and so Arbella had 'royal blood'.
- Mary Queen of Scots was her aunt and James VI of Scotland her cousin.
- Her father died when she was one and her mother when she was six. She lived with her grandmother, Bess. Our play '**Hardwick's Lost Princess**', tells the story of their last few years together, between 1600 and 1603.
- Arbella left Hardwick in 1603.
- She then lived in London at the court of King James. She was never given permission to marry, but married secretly in 1610. She was

arrested, escaped, was captured again and died in the Tower of London in 1615.

### **Sir Henry Cavendish**

- Henry was Bess' oldest son, but he was a big disappointment to her. She called him "my bad son Henry".
- He was a soldier for a time. He loved music and employed a group of musicians. There were stories that he murdered his first wife.
- He had an unhappy marriage with his second wife, Grace, and they spent a great deal of time apart. They had no children, but Henry was rumoured to be the father of many children with other women.
- Henry was fond of Arbella, and was involved in several plots and schemes around her during her later years at Hardwick Hall.

### **James Starkey**

- James was about the same age as Arbella. He was employed by Arbella's Uncle William and worked as Arbella's tutor.
- James was never paid very much (William was very mean). James was a churchman and William promised him he would one day give him his own parish. This never happened.
- James had done lots of studying, understood languages (including Latin and Greek) and enjoyed reading. Arbella enjoyed these things too and they seem to have got on well together.
- Some people think that James was in love with Arbella.
- James promised to help Arbella escape from Hardwick, but then let her down. When Arbella's escape attempt went wrong he was arrested and questioned by the Queen's men. He later killed himself.

### **Sir Henry Brounker**

- Sir Henry Brounker was a servant of Queen Elizabeth. He was a kind of detective who was sent to find out the truth in difficult situations.
- Henry was a clever man who was very good at questioning people. He was particularly good at dealing with people who were high-ranking nobles. He could be sympathetic and diplomatic, but he was a strong man capable of taking action when needed.

## **Suggested Follow-Up Activities**

'**Hardwick's Lost Princess**' offers plenty of opportunities for follow-up work. It can be used to enhance work around the Tudors, as a stimulus for literacy work and to explore themes in PSHE around relationships and parenting.

### **Discussion Questions –**

- Do you think Arbella wanted to be Queen, or did she just want to be free?
- Do you think Bess was fair to Arbella?
- Do you think Arbella was fair to Bess?
- Was there any way in which both Bess and Arbella could have lived together happily?
- What did Arbella need to be happy?
- What did Bess need to be happy?
- What stopped them from being happy?

### **Activity 1**

Letters feature very heavily in '**The Lost Princess**'. They were, of course, the only way to communicate over long distances in Tudor England.

You could ask young people to imagine and write the letters from -

- James Starkey to Arbella, explaining why he didn't come to help her and take her message to Lord Hertford on Christmas Day;
- Arbella to Henry, describing what life at Hardwick is like and asking for his help to escape;
- Henry Brounker to his family, describing the situation at Hardwick Hall.
- Arbella to Bess, explaining how she feels after leaving Hardwick Hall for the last time;
- Bess to Arbella, describing her life at Hardwick Hall after Arbella has gone.

### **Activity 2**

Elizabethan portraits weren't simply about presenting an accurate image of how a person appeared, they also contained many symbolic elements to show what a person was like. Queen Elizabeth, for instance, is

famously painted in a dress covered in eyes, indicating her power to see and understand everything going on in her kingdom. A portrait of Arbella as a teenager shows her hand touching a book (to indicate how well educated she is) whilst a small dog lies at her feet (the dog represents faithfulness and loyalty).

Ask young people to draw their own picture of Bess and / or Arbella, or use the photograph from the play (below). Add animals and objects to the picture to show what they think the characters are like, things that best represent the character's personality (for example, a lion might show that someone is fierce, a mouse that they are timid or shy, a mirror that they are vain, and so on).

You could also ask young people to create a picture of what they think the character looks like on the 'inside', perhaps revealing the personality that character might want to keep hidden from the world!



## **Feedback**

We'd be very interested to hear any comments you have about the play, your young people's reaction to it, and our visit to your school. Please e-mail us at [office@briefcandle.co.uk](mailto:office@briefcandle.co.uk).