

King Henry the Sixth

Fonte: <http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

Part I

ACT I

SCENE I. Westminster Abbey.

Dead March. Enter the Funeral of KING HENRY the Fifth, attended on by Dukes of BEDFORD, Regent of France; GLOUCESTER, Protector; and EXETER, Earl of WARWICK, the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, Herald, & c

BEDFORD

Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

GLOUCESTER

England ne'er had a king until his time.
Virtue he had, deserving to command:
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams:
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;
His sparking eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
More dazzled and drove back his enemies
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.
What should I say? his deeds exceed all speech:
He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.

EXETER

We mourn in black: why mourn we not in blood?
Henry is dead and never shall revive:
Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
And death's dishonourable victory
We with our stately presence glorify,
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.
What! shall we curse the planets of mishap
That plotted thus our glory's overthrow?
Or shall we think the subtle-witted French
Conjurers and sorcerers, that afraid of him
By magic verses have contrived his end?
BISHOP

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OF WINCHESTER

He was a king bless'd of the King of kings.
Unto the French the dreadful judgement-day
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.
The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought:
The church's prayers made him so prosperous.

GLOUCESTER

The church! where is it? Had not churchmen pray'd,
His thread of life had not so soon decay'd:
None do you like but an effeminate prince,
Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Gloucester, whate'er we like, thou art protector
And lookest to command the prince and realm.
Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe,
More than God or religious churchmen may.

GLOUCESTER

Name not religion, for thou lovest the flesh,
And ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st
Except it be to pray against thy foes.

BEDFORD

Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace:
Let's to the altar: heralds, wait on us:
Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms:
Since arms avail not now that Henry's dead.
Posterity, await for wretched years,
When at their mothers' moist eyes babes shall suck,
Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears,
And none but women left to wail the dead.
Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke:
Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils,
Combat with adverse planets in the heavens!
A far more glorious star thy soul will make
Than Julius Caesar or bright--

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

My honourable lords, health to you all!

Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,
Of loss, of slaughter and discomfiture:
Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans,
Paris, Guysors, Poictiers, are all quite lost.

BEDFORD

What say'st thou, man, before dead Henry's corse?
Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns
Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

GLOUCESTER

Is Paris lost? is Rouen yielded up?
If Henry were recall'd to life again,
These news would cause him once more yield the ghost.

EXETER

How were they lost? what treachery was used?

Messenger

No treachery; but want of men and money.
Amongst the soldiers this is muttered,
That here you maintain several factions,
And whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought,
You are disputing of your generals:
One would have lingering wars with little cost;
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;
A third thinks, without expense at all,
By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.
Awake, awake, English nobility!
Let not sloth dim your horrors new-begot:
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms;
Of England's coat one half is cut away.

EXETER

Were our tears wanting to this funeral,
These tidings would call forth their flowing tides.

BEDFORD

Me they concern; Regent I am of France.
Give me my steeled coat. I'll fight for France.
Away with these disgraceful wailing robes!
Wounds will I lend the French instead of eyes,
To weep their intermissive miseries.

Enter to them another Messenger

Messenger

Lords, view these letters full of bad mischance.
France is revolted from the English quite,
Except some petty towns of no import:
The Dauphin Charles is crowned king of Rheims;
The Bastard of Orleans with him is join'd;
Reignier, Duke of Anjou, doth take his part;
The Duke of Alencon flieth to his side.

EXETER

The Dauphin crowned king! all fly to him!
O, whither shall we fly from this reproach?

GLOUCESTER

We will not fly, but to our enemies' throats.
Bedford, if thou be slack, I'll fight it out.

BEDFORD

Gloucester, why doubt'st thou of my forwardness?
An army have I muster'd in my thoughts,
Wherewith already France is overrun.

Enter another Messenger

Messenger

My gracious lords, to add to your laments,
Wherewith you now bedew King Henry's hearse,
I must inform you of a dismal fight
Betwixt the stout Lord Talbot and the French.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

What! wherein Talbot overcame? is't so?

Messenger

O, no; wherein Lord Talbot was o'erthrown:
The circumstance I'll tell you more at large.
The tenth of August last this dreadful lord,
Retiring from the siege of Orleans,
Having full scarce six thousand in his troop.
By three and twenty thousand of the French

Was round encompassed and set upon.
No leisure had he to enrank his men;
He wanted pikes to set before his archers;
Instead whereof sharp stakes pluck'd out of hedges
They pitched in the ground confusedly,
To keep the horsemen off from breaking in.
More than three hours the fight continued;
Where valiant Talbot above human thought
Enacted wonders with his sword and lance:
Hundreds he sent to hell, and none durst stand him;
Here, there, and every where, enraged he flew:
The French exclaim'd, the devil was in arms;
All the whole army stood agazed on him:
His soldiers spying his undaunted spirit
A Talbot! a Talbot! cried out amain
And rush'd into the bowels of the battle.
Here had the conquest fully been seal'd up,
If Sir John Fastolfe had not play'd the coward:
He, being in the vaward, placed behind
With purpose to relieve and follow them,
Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke.
Hence grew the general wreck and massacre;
Enclosed were they with their enemies:
A base Walloon, to win the Dauphin's grace,
Thrust Talbot with a spear into the back,
Whom all France with their chief assembled strength
Durst not presume to look once in the face.

BEDFORD

Is Talbot slain? then I will slay myself,
For living idly here in pomp and ease,
Whilst such a worthy leader, wanting aid,
Unto his dastard foemen is betray'd.

Messenger

O no, he lives; but is took prisoner,
And Lord Scales with him and Lord Hungerford:
Most of the rest slaughter'd or took likewise.

BEDFORD

His ransom there is none but I shall pay:
I'll hale the Dauphin headlong from his throne:
His crown shall be the ransom of my friend;
Four of their lords I'll change for one of ours.
Farewell, my masters; to my task will I;
Bonfires in France forthwith I am to make,
To keep our great Saint George's feast withal:

Ten thousand soldiers with me I will take,
Whose bloody deeds shall make all Europe quake.

Messenger

So you had need; for Orleans is besieged;
The English army is grown weak and faint:
The Earl of Salisbury craveth supply,
And hardly keeps his men from mutiny,
Since they, so few, watch such a multitude.

EXETER

Remember, lords, your oaths to Henry sworn,
Either to quell the Dauphin utterly,
Or bring him in obedience to your yoke.

BEDFORD

I do remember it; and here take my leave,
To go about my preparation.

Exit

GLOUCESTER

I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can,
To view the artillery and munition;
And then I will proclaim young Henry king.

Exit

EXETER

To Eltham will I, where the young king is,
Being ordain'd his special governor,
And for his safety there I'll best devise.

Exit

BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Each hath his place and function to attend:
I am left out; for me nothing remains.
But long I will not be Jack out of office:
The king from Eltham I intend to steal
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal.

Exeunt

SCENE II. France. Before Orleans.

Sound a flourish. Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, marching with drum and Soldiers

CHARLES

Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens
So in the earth, to this day is not known:
Late did he shine upon the English side;
Now we are victors; upon us he smiles.
What towns of any moment but we have?
At pleasure here we lie near Orleans;
Otherwhiles the famish'd English, like pale ghosts,
Faintly besiege us one hour in a month.

ALENCON

They want their porridge and their fat bull-beeves:
Either they must be dieted like mules
And have their provender tied to their mouths
Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.

REIGNIER

Let's raise the siege: why live we idly here?
Talbot is taken, whom we wont to fear:
Remaineth none but mad-brain'd Salisbury;
And he may well in fretting spend his gall,
Nor men nor money hath he to make war.

CHARLES

Sound, sound alarum! we will rush on them.
Now for the honour of the forlorn French!
Him I forgive my death that killeth me
When he sees me go back one foot or fly.

Exeunt

Here alarum; they are beaten back by the English with great loss. Re-enter CHARLES, ALENCON, and REIGNIER

CHARLES

Who ever saw the like? what men have I!
Dogs! cowards! dastards! I would ne'er have fled,
But that they left me 'midst my enemies.

REIGNIER

Salisbury is a desperate homicide;
He fighteth as one weary of his life.
The other lords, like lions wanting food,
Do rush upon us as their hungry prey.

ALENCON

Froissart, a countryman of ours, records,
England all Olivers and Rowlands bred,
During the time Edward the Third did reign.
More truly now may this be verified;
For none but Samsons and Goliases
It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!
Lean, raw-boned rascals! who would e'er suppose
They had such courage and audacity?

CHARLES

Let's leave this town; for they are hare-brain'd slaves,
And hunger will enforce them to be more eager:
Of old I know them; rather with their teeth
The walls they'll tear down than forsake the siege.

REIGNIER

I think, by some odd gimmors or device
Their arms are set like clocks, stiff to strike on;
Else ne'er could they hold out so as they do.
By my consent, we'll even let them alone.

ALENCON

Be it so.

Enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have news for him.

CHARLES

Bastard of Orleans, thrice welcome to us.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appall'd:
Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?

Be not dismay'd, for succor is at hand:
A holy maid hither with me I bring,
Which by a vision sent to her from heaven
Ordained is to raise this tedious siege
And drive the English forth the bounds of France.
The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,
Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome:
What's past and what's to come she can descry.
Speak, shall I call her in? Believe my words,
For they are certain and unfallible.

CHARLES

Go, call her in.

Exit BASTARD OF ORLEANS

But first, to try her skill,
Reignier, stand thou as Dauphin in my place:
Question her proudly; let thy looks be stern:
By this means shall we sound what skill she hath.

Re-enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, with JOAN LA PUCELLE

REIGNIER

Fair maid, is't thou wilt do these wondrous feats?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Reignier, is't thou that thinkest to beguile me?
Where is the Dauphin? Come, come from behind;
I know thee well, though never seen before.
Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me:
In private will I talk with thee apart.
Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile.

REIGNIER

She takes upon her bravely at first dash.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.
Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased
To shine on my contemptible estate:
Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,
And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,
God's mother deigned to appear to me

And in a vision full of majesty
Will'd me to leave my base vocation
And free my country from calamity:
Her aid she promised and assured success:
In complete glory she reveal'd herself;
And, whereas I was black and swart before,
With those clear rays which she infused on me
That beauty am I bless'd with which you see.
Ask me what question thou canst possible,
And I will answer unpremeditated:
My courage try by combat, if thou darest,
And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.
Resolve on this, thou shalt be fortunate,
If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.

CHARLES

Thou hast astonish'd me with thy high terms:
Only this proof I'll of thy valour make,
In single combat thou shalt buckle with me,
And if thou vanquishest, thy words are true;
Otherwise I renounce all confidence.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

I am prepared: here is my keen-edged sword,
Deck'd with five flower-de-luces on each side;
The which at Touraine, in Saint Katharine's
churchyard,
Out of a great deal of old iron I chose forth.

CHARLES

Then come, o' God's name; I fear no woman.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

And while I live, I'll ne'er fly from a man.

Here they fight, and JOAN LA PUCELLE overcomes

CHARLES

Stay, stay thy hands! thou art an Amazon
And fightest with the sword of Deborah.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Christ's mother helps me, else I were too weak.

CHARLES

Whoe'er helps thee, 'tis thou that must help me:
Impatiently I burn with thy desire;
My heart and hands thou hast at once subdued.
Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,
Let me thy servant and not sovereign be:
'Tis the French Dauphin sueth to thee thus.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

I must not yield to any rites of love,
For my profession's sacred from above:
When I have chased all thy foes from hence,
Then will I think upon a recompense.

CHARLES

Meantime look gracious on thy prostrate thrall.

REIGNIER

My lord, methinks, is very long in talk.

ALENCON

Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock;
Else ne'er could he so long protract his speech.

REIGNIER

Shall we disturb him, since he keeps no mean?

ALENCON

He may mean more than we poor men do know:
These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues.

REIGNIER

My lord, where are you? what devise you on?
Shall we give over Orleans, or no?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Why, no, I say, distrustful recreants!
Fight till the last gasp; I will be your guard.

CHARLES

What she says I'll confirm: we'll fight it out.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Assign'd am I to be the English scourge.
This night the siege assuredly I'll raise:
Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days,
Since I have entered into these wars.
Glory is like a circle in the water,
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.
With Henry's death the English circle ends;
Dispersed are the glories it included.
Now am I like that proud insulting ship
Which Caesar and his fortune bare at once.

CHARLES

Was Mahomet inspired with a dove?
Thou with an eagle art inspired then.
Helen, the mother of great Constantine,
Nor yet Saint Philip's daughters, were like thee.
Bright star of Venus, fall'n down on the earth,
How may I reverently worship thee enough?

ALENCON

Leave off delays, and let us raise the siege.

REIGNIER

Woman, do what thou canst to save our honours;
Drive them from Orleans and be immortalized.

CHARLES

Presently we'll try: come, let's away about it:
No prophet will I trust, if she prove false.

Exeunt

SCENE III. London. Before the Tower.

Enter GLOUCESTER, with his Serving-men in blue coats

GLOUCESTER

I am come to survey the Tower this day:
Since Henry's death, I fear, there is conveyance.
Where be these warders, that they wait not here?

Open the gates; 'tis Gloucester that calls.

First Warder

[Within] Who's there that knocks so imperiously?
First Serving-Man It is the noble Duke of Gloucester.

Second Warder

[Within] Whoe'er he be, you may not be let in.
First Serving-Man Villains, answer you so the lord protector?

First Warder

[Within] The Lord protect him! so we answer him:
We do no otherwise than we are will'd.

GLOUCESTER

Who willed you? or whose will stands but mine?
There's none protector of the realm but I.
Break up the gates, I'll be your warrantize.
Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

Gloucester's men rush at the Tower Gates, and WOODVILE the Lieutenant speaks within

WOODVILE

What noise is this? what traitors have we here?

GLOUCESTER

Lieutenant, is it you whose voice I hear?
Open the gates; here's Gloucester that would enter.

WOODVILE

Have patience, noble duke; I may not open;
The Cardinal of Winchester forbids:
From him I have express commandment
That thou nor none of thine shall be let in.

GLOUCESTER

Faint-hearted Woodvile, prizest him 'fore me?
Arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate,
Whom Henry, our late sovereign, ne'er could brook?
Thou art no friend to God or to the king:
Open the gates, or I'll shut thee out shortly.
Serving-Men Open the gates unto the lord protector,

Or we'll burst them open, if that you come not quickly.

Enter to the Protector at the Tower Gates BISHOP OF WINCHESTER and his men in tawny coats

BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

How now, ambitious Humphry! what means this?

GLOUCESTER

Peel'd priest, dost thou command me to be shut out?
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

I do, thou most usurping proditor,
And not protector, of the king or realm.

GLOUCESTER

Stand back, thou manifest conspirator,
Thou that contrivedst to murder our dead lord;
Thou that givest whores indulgences to sin:
I'll canvass thee in thy broad cardinal's hat,
If thou proceed in this thy insolence.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Nay, stand thou back, I will not budge a foot:
This be Damascus, be thou cursed Cain,
To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.

GLOUCESTER

I will not slay thee, but I'll drive thee back:
Thy scarlet robes as a child's bearing-cloth
I'll use to carry thee out of this place.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Do what thou darest; I beard thee to thy face.

GLOUCESTER

What! am I dared and bearded to my face?

Draw, men, for all this privileged place;
Blue coats to tawny coats. Priest, beware your beard,
I mean to tug it and to cuff you soundly:
Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat:
In spite of pope or dignities of church,
Here by the cheeks I'll drag thee up and down.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Gloucester, thou wilt answer this before the pope.

GLOUCESTER

Winchester goose, I cry, a rope! a rope!
Now beat them hence; why do you let them stay?
Thee I'll chase hence, thou wolf in sheep's array.
Out, tawny coats! out, scarlet hypocrite!

Here GLOUCESTER's men beat out BISHOP OF WINCHESTER's men, and enter in the hurly- burly the Mayor of London and his Officers

Mayor

Fie, lords! that you, being supreme magistrates,
Thus contumeliously should break the peace!

GLOUCESTER

Peace, mayor! thou know'st little of my wrongs:
Here's Beaufort, that regards nor God nor king,
Hath here distrain'd the Tower to his use.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Here's Gloucester, a foe to citizens,
One that still motions war and never peace,
O'ercharging your free purses with large fines,
That seeks to overthrow religion,
Because he is protector of the realm,
And would have armour here out of the Tower,
To crown himself king and suppress the prince.

GLOUCESTER

I will not answer thee with words, but blows.

Here they skirmish again

Mayor

Naught rests for me in this tumultuous strife
But to make open proclamation:
Come, officer; as loud as e'er thou canst,
Cry.

Officer

All manner of men assembled here in arms this day
against God's peace and the king's, we charge and
command you, in his highness' name, to repair to
your several dwelling-places; and not to wear,
handle, or use any sword, weapon, or dagger,
henceforward, upon pain of death.

GLOUCESTER

Cardinal, I'll be no breaker of the law:
But we shall meet, and break our minds at large.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Gloucester, we will meet; to thy cost, be sure:
Thy heart-blood I will have for this day's work.

Mayor

I'll call for clubs, if you will not away.
This cardinal's more haughty than the devil.

GLOUCESTER

Mayor, farewell: thou dost but what thou mayst.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Abominable Gloucester, guard thy head;
For I intend to have it ere long.

Exeunt, severally, GLOUCESTER and BISHOP OF WINCHESTER with their Serving-men

Mayor

See the coast clear'd, and then we will depart.
Good God, these nobles should such stomachs bear!
I myself fight not once in forty year.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Orleans.

Enter, on the walls, a Master Gunner and his Boy

Master-Gunner Sirrah, thou know'st how Orleans is besieged,
And how the English have the suburbs won.

Boy

Father, I know; and oft have shot at them,
Howe'er unfortunate I miss'd my aim.
Master-Gunner But now thou shalt not. Be thou ruled by me:
Chief master-gunner am I of this town;
Something I must do to procure me grace.
The prince's espials have informed me
How the English, in the suburbs close intrench'd,
Wont, through a secret grate of iron bars
In yonder tower, to overpeer the city,
And thence discover how with most advantage
They may vex us with shot, or with assault.
To intercept this inconvenience,
A piece of ordnance 'gainst it I have placed;
And even these three days have I watch'd,
If I could see them.
Now do thou watch, for I can stay no longer.
If thou spy'st any, run and bring me word;
And thou shalt find me at the governor's.

Exit

Boy

Father, I warrant you; take you no care;
I'll never trouble you, if I may spy them.

Exit

Enter, on the turrets, SALISBURY and TALBOT, GLANSDALE, GARGRAVE, and others

SALISBURY

Talbot, my life, my joy, again return'd!
How wert thou handled being prisoner?
Or by what means got'st thou to be released?
Discourse, I prithee, on this turret's top.

TALBOT

The Duke of Bedford had a prisoner

Call'd the brave Lord Ponton de Santrailles;
For him was I exchanged and ransomed.
But with a baser man of arms by far
Once in contempt they would have barter'd me:
Which I, disdain'g, scorn'd; and craved death,
Rather than I would be so vile esteem'd.
In fine, redeem'd I was as I desired.
But, O! the treacherous Fastolfe wounds my heart,
Whom with my bare fists I would execute,
If I now had him brought into my power.

SALISBURY

Yet tell'st thou not how thou wert entertain'd.

TALBOT

With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts.
In open market-place produced they me,
To be a public spectacle to all:
Here, said they, is the terror of the French,
The scarecrow that affrights our children so.
Then broke I from the officers that led me,
And with my nails digg'd stones out of the ground,
To hurl at the beholders of my shame:
My grisly countenance made others fly;
None durst come near for fear of sudden death.
In iron walls they deem'd me not secure;
So great fear of my name 'mongst them was spread,
That they supposed I could rend bars of steel,
And spurn in pieces posts of adamant:
Wherefore a guard of chosen shot I had,
That walked about me every minute-while;
And if I did but stir out of my bed,
Ready they were to shoot me to the heart.

Enter the Boy with a linstock

SALISBURY

I grieve to hear what torments you endured,
But we will be revenged sufficiently
Now it is supper-time in Orleans:
Here, through this grate, I count each one
and view the Frenchmen how they fortify:
Let us look in; the sight will much delight thee.
Sir Thomas Gargrave, and Sir William Glansdale,
Let me have your express opinions
Where is best place to make our battery next.

GARGRAVE

I think, at the north gate; for there stand lords.

GLANSDALE

And I, here, at the bulwark of the bridge.

TALBOT

For aught I see, this city must be famish'd,
Or with light skirmishes enfeebled.

Here they shoot. SALISBURY and GARGRAVE fall

SALISBURY

O Lord, have mercy on us, wretched sinners!

GARGRAVE

O Lord, have mercy on me, woful man!

TALBOT

What chance is this that suddenly hath cross'd us?
Speak, Salisbury; at least, if thou canst speak:
How farest thou, mirror of all martial men?
One of thy eyes and thy cheek's side struck off!
Accursed tower! accursed fatal hand
That hath contrived this woful tragedy!
In thirteen battles Salisbury o'ercame;
Henry the Fifth he first train'd to the wars;
Whilst any trump did sound, or drum struck up,
His sword did ne'er leave striking in the field.
Yet livest thou, Salisbury? though thy speech doth fail,
One eye thou hast, to look to heaven for grace:
The sun with one eye vieweth all the world.
Heaven, be thou gracious to none alive,
If Salisbury wants mercy at thy hands!
Bear hence his body; I will help to bury it.
Sir Thomas Gargrave, hast thou any life?
Speak unto Talbot; nay, look up to him.
Salisbury, cheer thy spirit with this comfort;
Thou shalt not die whiles--
He beckons with his hand and smiles on me.
As who should say 'When I am dead and gone,
Remember to avenge me on the French.'
Plantagenet, I will; and like thee, Nero,
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn:

Wretched shall France be only in my name.

Here an alarum, and it thunders and lightens

What stir is this? what tumult's in the heavens?
Whence cometh this alarum and the noise?

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

My lord, my lord, the French have gathered head:
The Dauphin, with one Joan la Pucelle join'd,
A holy prophetess new risen up,
Is come with a great power to raise the siege.

Here SALISBURY lifteth himself up and groans

TALBOT

Hear, hear how dying Salisbury doth groan!
It irks his heart he cannot be revenged.
Frenchmen, I'll be a Salisbury to you:
Pucelle or puzzel, dolphin or dogfish,
Your hearts I'll stamp out with my horse's heels,
And make a quagmire of your mingled brains.
Convey me Salisbury into his tent,
And then we'll try what these dastard Frenchmen dare.

Alarum. Exeunt

SCENE V. The same.

Here an alarum again: and TALBOT pursueth the DAUPHIN, and driveth him: then enter JOAN LA PUCELLE, driving Englishmen before her, and exit after them then re-enter TALBOT

TALBOT

Where is my strength, my valour, and my force?
Our English troops retire, I cannot stay them:
A woman clad in armour chaseth them.

Re-enter JOAN LA PUCELLE

Here, here she comes. I'll have a bout with thee;
Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee:
Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,
And straightway give thy soul to him thou servest.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Come, come, 'tis only I that must disgrace thee.

Here they fight

TALBOT

Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?
My breast I'll burst with straining of my courage
And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder.
But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet.

They fight again

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Talbot, farewell; thy hour is not yet come:
I must go victual Orleans forthwith.

A short alarum; then enter the town with soldiers

O'ertake me, if thou canst; I scorn thy strength.
Go, go, cheer up thy hungry-starved men;
Help Salisbury to make his testament:
This day is ours, as many more shall be.

Exit

TALBOT

My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel;
I know not where I am, nor what I do;
A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal,
Drives back our troops and conquers as she lists:
So bees with smoke and doves with noisome stench
Are from their hives and houses driven away.
They call'd us for our fierceness English dogs;
Now, like to whelps, we crying run away.

A short alarum

Hark, countrymen! either renew the fight,
Or tear the lions out of England's coat;
Renounce your soil, give sheep in lions' stead:
Sheep run not half so treacherous from the wolf,
Or horse or oxen from the leopard,
As you fly from your oft-subdued slaves.

Alarum. Here another skirmish

It will not be: retire into your trenches:
You all consented unto Salisbury's death,
For none would strike a stroke in his revenge.
Pucelle is enter'd into Orleans,
In spite of us or aught that we could do.
O, would I were to die with Salisbury!
The shame hereof will make me hide my head.

Exit TALBOT. Alarum; retreat; flourish

SCENE VI. The same.

Enter, on the walls, JOAN LA PUCELLE, CHARLES, REIGNIER, ALENCON, and Soldiers

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Advance our waving colours on the walls;
Rescued is Orleans from the English
Thus Joan la Pucelle hath perform'd her word.

CHARLES

Divinest creature, Astraea's daughter,
How shall I honour thee for this success?
Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens
That one day bloom'd and fruitful were the next.
France, triumph in thy glorious prophetess!
Recover'd is the town of Orleans:
More blessed hap did ne'er befall our state.

REIGNIER

Why ring not out the bells aloud throughout the town?
Dauphin, command the citizens make bonfires
And feast and banquet in the open streets,
To celebrate the joy that God hath given us.

ALENCON

All France will be replete with mirth and joy,
When they shall hear how we have play'd the men.

CHARLES

'Tis Joan, not we, by whom the day is won;
For which I will divide my crown with her,
And all the priests and friars in my realm
Shall in procession sing her endless praise.
A statelier pyramis to her I'll rear
Than Rhodope's or Memphis' ever was:
In memory of her when she is dead,

Her ashes, in an urn more precious
Than the rich-jewel'd of Darius,
Transported shall be at high festivals
Before the kings and queens of France.
No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.
Come in, and let us banquet royally,
After this golden day of victory.

Flourish. Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. Before Orleans.

Enter a Sergeant of a band with two Sentinels

Sergeant

Sirs, take your places and be vigilant:
If any noise or soldier you perceive
Near to the walls, by some apparent sign
Let us have knowledge at the court of guard.

First Sentinel

Sergeant, you shall.

Exit Sergeant

Thus are poor servitors,
When others sleep upon their quiet beds,
Constrain'd to watch in darkness, rain and cold.

Enter TALBOT, BEDFORD, BURGUNDY, and Forces, with scaling-ladders, their drums beating a dead march

TALBOT

Lord Regent, and redoubted Burgundy,
By whose approach the regions of Artois,
Wallon and Picardy are friends to us,
This happy night the Frenchmen are secure,
Having all day caroused and banqueted:
Embrace we then this opportunity
As fitting best to quittance their deceit
Contrived by art and baleful sorcery.

BEDFORD

Coward of France! how much he wrongs his fame,
Despairing of his own arm's fortitude,
To join with witches and the help of hell!

BURGUNDY

Traitors have never other company.
But what's that Pucelle whom they term so pure?

TALBOT

A maid, they say.

BEDFORD

A maid! and be so martial!

BURGUNDY

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long,
If underneath the standard of the French
She carry armour as she hath begun.

TALBOT

Well, let them practise and converse with spirits:
God is our fortress, in whose conquering name
Let us resolve to scale their flinty bulwarks.

BEDFORD

Ascend, brave Talbot; we will follow thee.

TALBOT

Not all together: better far, I guess,
That we do make our entrance several ways;
That, if it chance the one of us do fail,
The other yet may rise against their force.

BEDFORD

Agreed: I'll to yond corner.

BURGUNDY

And I to this.

TALBOT

And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave.
Now, Salisbury, for thee, and for the right
Of English Henry, shall this night appear
How much in duty I am bound to both.

Sentinels

Arm! arm! the enemy doth make assault!

Cry: 'St. George,' 'A Talbot.'

The French leap over the walls in their shirts. Enter, several ways, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, half ready, and half unready

ALENCON

How now, my lords! what, all unready so?

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Unready! ay, and glad we 'scaped so well.

REIGNIER

'Twas time, I trow, to wake and leave our beds,
Hearing alarums at our chamber-doors.

ALENCON

Of all exploits since first I follow'd arms,
Ne'er heard I of a warlike enterprise
More venturous or desperate than this.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

I think this Talbot be a fiend of hell.

REIGNIER

If not of hell, the heavens, sure, favour him.

ALENCON

Here cometh Charles: I marvel how he sped.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Tut, holy Joan was his defensive guard.

Enter CHARLES and JOAN LA PUCELLE

CHARLES

Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?
Didst thou at first, to flatter us withal,
Make us partakers of a little gain,
That now our loss might be ten times so much?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Wherefore is Charles impatient with his friend!
At all times will you have my power alike?
Sleeping or waking must I still prevail,
Or will you blame and lay the fault on me?
Improvident soldiers! had your watch been good,
This sudden mischief never could have fall'n.

CHARLES

Duke of Alencon, this was your default,
That, being captain of the watch to-night,
Did look no better to that weighty charge.

ALENCON

Had all your quarters been as safely kept
As that whereof I had the government,
We had not been thus shamefully surprised.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Mine was secure.

REIGNIER

And so was mine, my lord.

CHARLES

And, for myself, most part of all this night,
Within her quarter and mine own precinct
I was employ'd in passing to and fro,
About relieving of the sentinels:
Then how or which way should they first break in?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Question, my lords, no further of the case,
How or which way: 'tis sure they found some place
But weakly guarded, where the breach was made.
And now there rests no other shift but this;

To gather our soldiers, scatter'd and dispersed,
And lay new platforms to endamage them.

Alarum. Enter an English Soldier, crying 'A Talbot! a Talbot!' They fly, leaving their clothes behind

Soldier

I'll be so bold to take what they have left.
The cry of Talbot serves me for a sword;
For I have loaden me with many spoils,
Using no other weapon but his name.

Exit

SCENE II. Orleans. Within the town.

Enter TALBOT, BEDFORD, BURGUNDY, a Captain, and others

BEDFORD

The day begins to break, and night is fled,
Whose pitchy mantle over-veil'd the earth.
Here sound retreat, and cease our hot pursuit.

Retreat sounded

TALBOT

Bring forth the body of old Salisbury,
And here advance it in the market-place,
The middle centre of this cursed town.
Now have I paid my vow unto his soul;
For every drop of blood was drawn from him,
There hath at least five Frenchmen died tonight.
And that hereafter ages may behold
What ruin happen'd in revenge of him,
Within their chieftest temple I'll erect
A tomb, wherein his corpse shall be interr'd:
Upon the which, that every one may read,
Shall be engraved the sack of Orleans,
The treacherous manner of his mournful death
And what a terror he had been to France.
But, lords, in all our bloody massacre,
I muse we met not with the Dauphin's grace,
His new-come champion, virtuous Joan of Arc,
Nor any of his false confederates.

BEDFORD

'Tis thought, Lord Talbot, when the fight began,

Roused on the sudden from their drowsy beds,
They did amongst the troops of armed men
Leap o'er the walls for refuge in the field.

BURGUNDY

Myself, as far as I could well discern
For smoke and dusky vapours of the night,
Am sure I scared the Dauphin and his trull,
When arm in arm they both came swiftly running,
Like to a pair of loving turtle-doves
That could not live asunder day or night.
After that things are set in order here,
We'll follow them with all the power we have.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

All hail, my lords! which of this princely train
Call ye the warlike Talbot, for his acts
So much applauded through the realm of France?

TALBOT

Here is the Talbot: who would speak with him?

Messenger

The virtuous lady, Countess of Auvergne,
With modesty admiring thy renown,
By me entreats, great lord, thou wouldst vouchsafe
To visit her poor castle where she lies,
That she may boast she hath beheld the man
Whose glory fills the world with loud report.

BURGUNDY

Is it even so? Nay, then, I see our wars
Will turn unto a peaceful comic sport,
When ladies crave to be encounter'd with.
You may not, my lord, despise her gentle suit.

TALBOT

Ne'er trust me then; for when a world of men
Could not prevail with all their oratory,
Yet hath a woman's kindness over-ruled:
And therefore tell her I return great thanks,
And in submission will attend on her.

Will not your honours bear me company?

BEDFORD

No, truly; it is more than manners will:
And I have heard it said, unbidden guests
Are often welcomest when they are gone.

TALBOT

Well then, alone, since there's no remedy,
I mean to prove this lady's courtesy.
Come hither, captain.

Whispers

You perceive my mind?

Captain

I do, my lord, and mean accordingly.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Auvergne. The COUNTESS's castle.

Enter the COUNTESS and her Porter

COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Porter, remember what I gave in charge;
And when you have done so, bring the keys to me.

Porter

Madam, I will.

Exit

COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

The plot is laid: if all things fall out right,
I shall as famous be by this exploit
As Scythian Tomyris by Cyrus' death.
Great is the rumor of this dreadful knight,
And his achievements of no less account:

Fain would mine eyes be witness with mine ears,
To give their censure of these rare reports.

Enter Messenger and TALBOT

Messenger

Madam,
According as your ladyship desired,
By message craved, so is Lord Talbot come.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

And he is welcome. What! is this the man?

Messenger

Madam, it is.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Is this the scourge of France?
Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad
That with his name the mothers still their babes?
I see report is fabulous and false:
I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
A second Hector, for his grim aspect,
And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.
Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf!
It cannot be this weak and writhled shrimp
Should strike such terror to his enemies.

TALBOT

Madam, I have been bold to trouble you;
But since your ladyship is not at leisure,
I'll sort some other time to visit you.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

What means he now? Go ask him whither he goes.

Messenger

Stay, my Lord Talbot; for my lady craves
To know the cause of your abrupt departure.

TALBOT

Marry, for that she's in a wrong belief,
I go to certify her Talbot's here.

Re-enter Porter with keys

COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

If thou be he, then art thou prisoner.

TALBOT

Prisoner! to whom?
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

To me, blood-thirsty lord;
And for that cause I trained thee to my house.
Long time thy shadow hath been thrall to me,
For in my gallery thy picture hangs:
But now the substance shall endure the like,
And I will chain these legs and arms of thine,
That hast by tyranny these many years
Wasted our country, slain our citizens
And sent our sons and husbands captive.

TALBOT

Ha, ha, ha!
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Laughest thou, wretch? thy mirth shall turn to moan.

TALBOT

I laugh to see your ladyship so fond
To think that you have aught but Talbot's shadow
Whereon to practise your severity.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Why, art not thou the man?

TALBOT

I am indeed.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Then have I substance too.

TALBOT

No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
You are deceived, my substance is not here;
For what you see is but the smallest part
And least proportion of humanity:
I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,
It is of such a spacious lofty pitch,
Your roof were not sufficient to contain't.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

This is a riddling merchant for the nonce;
He will be here, and yet he is not here:
How can these contrarieties agree?

TALBOT

That will I show you presently.

Winds his horn. Drums strike up: a peal of ordnance. Enter soldiers

How say you, madam? are you now persuaded
That Talbot is but shadow of himself?
These are his substance, sinews, arms and strength,
With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,
Razeth your cities and subverts your towns
And in a moment makes them desolate.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

Victorious Talbot! pardon my abuse:
I find thou art no less than fame hath bruited
And more than may be gather'd by thy shape.
Let my presumption not provoke thy wrath;
For I am sorry that with reverence
I did not entertain thee as thou art.

TALBOT

Be not dismay'd, fair lady; nor misconstrue
The mind of Talbot, as you did mistake
The outward composition of his body.
What you have done hath not offended me;
Nor other satisfaction do I crave,
But only, with your patience, that we may
Taste of your wine and see what cates you have;
For soldiers' stomachs always serve them well.
COUNTESS

OF AUVERGNE

With all my heart, and think me honoured
To feast so great a warrior in my house.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The Temple-garden.

Enter the Earls of SOMERSET, SUFFOLK, and WARWICK; RICHARD PLANTAGENET, VERNON, and another Lawyer

RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence?
Dare no man answer in a case of truth?

SUFFOLK

Within the Temple-hall we were too loud;
The garden here is more convenient.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Then say at once if I maintain'd the truth;
Or else was wrangling Somerset in the error?

SUFFOLK

Faith, I have been a truant in the law,
And never yet could frame my will to it;
And therefore frame the law unto my will.

SOMERSET

Judge you, my Lord of Warwick, then, between us.

WARWICK

Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch;
Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth;
Between two blades, which bears the better temper:
Between two horses, which doth bear him best;
Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye;
I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgement;
But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Tut, tut, here is a mannerly forbearance:
The truth appears so naked on my side
That any purblind eye may find it out.

SOMERSET

And on my side it is so well apparell'd,
So clear, so shining and so evident
That it will glimmer through a blind man's eye.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to speak,
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts:
Let him that is a true-born gentleman
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this brier pluck a white rose with me.

SOMERSET

Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

WARWICK

I love no colours, and without all colour
Of base insinuating flattery
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.

SUFFOLK

I pluck this red rose with young Somerset
And say withal I think he held the right.

VERNON

Stay, lords and gentlemen, and pluck no more,
Till you conclude that he upon whose side
The fewest roses are cropp'd from the tree
Shall yield the other in the right opinion.

SOMERSET

Good Master Vernon, it is well objected:
If I have fewest, I subscribe in silence.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

And I.

VERNON

Then for the truth and plainness of the case.
I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here,
Giving my verdict on the white rose side.

SOMERSET

Prick not your finger as you pluck it off,
Lest bleeding you do paint the white rose red
And fall on my side so, against your will.

VERNON

If I my lord, for my opinion bleed,
Opinion shall be surgeon to my hurt
And keep me on the side where still I am.

SOMERSET

Well, well, come on: who else?

Lawyer

Unless my study and my books be false,
The argument you held was wrong in you:

To SOMERSET

In sign whereof I pluck a white rose too.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Now, Somerset, where is your argument?

SOMERSET

Here in my scabbard, meditating that
Shall dye your white rose in a bloody red.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Meantime your cheeks do counterfeit our roses;
For pale they look with fear, as witnessing
The truth on our side.

SOMERSET

No, Plantagenet,
'Tis not for fear but anger that thy cheeks
Blush for pure shame to counterfeit our roses,
And yet thy tongue will not confess thy error.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Hath not thy rose a canker, Somerset?

SOMERSET

Hath not thy rose a thorn, Plantagenet?
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Ay, sharp and piercing, to maintain his truth;
Whiles thy consuming canker eats his falsehood.

SOMERSET

Well, I'll find friends to wear my bleeding roses,
That shall maintain what I have said is true,
Where false Plantagenet dare not be seen.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Now, by this maiden blossom in my hand,
I scorn thee and thy fashion, peevish boy.

SUFFOLK

Turn not thy scorns this way, Plantagenet.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Proud Pole, I will, and scorn both him and thee.

SUFFOLK

I'll turn my part thereof into thy throat.

SOMERSET

Away, away, good William de la Pole!
We grace the yeoman by conversing with him.

WARWICK

Now, by God's will, thou wrong'st him, Somerset;
His grandfather was Lionel Duke of Clarence,
Third son to the third Edward King of England:
Spring crestless yeomen from so deep a root?
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

He bears him on the place's privilege,
Or durst not, for his craven heart, say thus.

SOMERSET

By him that made me, I'll maintain my words
On any plot of ground in Christendom.
Was not thy father, Richard Earl of Cambridge,
For treason executed in our late king's days?
And, by his treason, stand'st not thou attainted,
Corrupted, and exempt from ancient gentry?
His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood;
And, till thou be restored, thou art a yeoman.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

My father was attached, not attainted,
Condemn'd to die for treason, but no traitor;
And that I'll prove on better men than Somerset,
Were growing time once ripen'd to my will.
For your partaker Pole and you yourself,
I'll note you in my book of memory,
To scourge you for this apprehension:

Look to it well and say you are well warn'd.

SOMERSET

Ah, thou shalt find us ready for thee still;
And know us by these colours for thy foes,
For these my friends in spite of thee shall wear.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

And, by my soul, this pale and angry rose,
As cognizance of my blood-drinking hate,
Will I for ever and my faction wear,
Until it wither with me to my grave
Or flourish to the height of my degree.

SUFFOLK

Go forward and be choked with thy ambition!
And so farewell until I meet thee next.

Exit

SOMERSET

Have with thee, Pole. Farewell, ambitious Richard.

Exit

RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

How I am braved and must perforce endure it!

WARWICK

This blot that they object against your house
Shall be wiped out in the next parliament
Call'd for the truce of Winchester and Gloucester;
And if thou be not then created York,
I will not live to be accounted Warwick.
Meantime, in signal of my love to thee,
Against proud Somerset and William Pole,
Will I upon thy party wear this rose:
And here I prophesy: this brawl to-day,
Grown to this faction in the Temple-garden,
Shall send between the red rose and the white
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Good Master Vernon, I am bound to you,
That you on my behalf would pluck a flower.

VERNON

In your behalf still will I wear the same.

Lawyer

And so will I.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Thanks, gentle sir.
Come, let us four to dinner: I dare say
This quarrel will drink blood another day.

Exeunt

SCENE V. The Tower of London.

Enter MORTIMER, brought in a chair, and Gaolers

MORTIMER

Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,
Let dying Mortimer here rest himself.
Even like a man new haled from the rack,
So fare my limbs with long imprisonment.
And these grey locks, the pursuivants of death,
Nestor-like aged in an age of care,
Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.
These eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent,
Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent;
Weak shoulders, overborne with burthening grief,
And pithless arms, like to a wither'd vine
That droops his sapless branches to the ground;
Yet are these feet, whose strengthless stay is numb,
Unable to support this lump of clay,
Swift-winged with desire to get a grave,
As witting I no other comfort have.
But tell me, keeper, will my nephew come?

First Gaoler

Richard Plantagenet, my lord, will come:
We sent unto the Temple, unto his chamber;
And answer was return'd that he will come.

MORTIMER

Enough: my soul shall then be satisfied.
Poor gentleman! his wrong doth equal mine.
Since Henry Monmouth first began to reign,
Before whose glory I was great in arms,
This loathsome sequestration have I had:
And even since then hath Richard been obscured,
Deprived of honour and inheritance.
But now the arbitrator of despairs,
Just death, kind umpire of men's miseries,
With sweet enlargement doth dismiss me hence:
I would his troubles likewise were expired,
That so he might recover what was lost.

Enter RICHARD PLANTAGENET

First Gaoler

My lord, your loving nephew now is come.

MORTIMER

Richard Plantagenet, my friend, is he come?
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Ay, noble uncle, thus ignobly used,
Your nephew, late despised Richard, comes.

MORTIMER

Direct mine arms I may embrace his neck,
And in his bosom spend my latter gasp:
O, tell me when my lips do touch his cheeks,
That I may kindly give one fainting kiss.
And now declare, sweet stem from York's great stock,
Why didst thou say, of late thou wert despised?
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

First, lean thine aged back against mine arm;
And, in that ease, I'll tell thee my disease.
This day, in argument upon a case,

Some words there grew 'twixt Somerset and me;
Among which terms he used his lavish tongue
And did upbraid me with my father's death:
Which obloquy set bars before my tongue,
Else with the like I had requited him.
Therefore, good uncle, for my father's sake,
In honour of a true Plantagenet
And for alliance sake, declare the cause
My father, Earl of Cambridge, lost his head.

MORTIMER

That cause, fair nephew, that imprison'd me
And hath detain'd me all my flowering youth
Within a loathsome dungeon, there to pine,
Was cursed instrument of his decease.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Discover more at large what cause that was,
For I am ignorant and cannot guess.

MORTIMER

I will, if that my fading breath permit
And death approach not ere my tale be done.
Henry the Fourth, grandfather to this king,
Deposed his nephew Richard, Edward's son,
The first-begotten and the lawful heir,
Of Edward king, the third of that descent:
During whose reign the Percies of the north,
Finding his usurpation most unjust,
Endeavor'd my advancement to the throne:
The reason moved these warlike lords to this
Was, for that--young King Richard thus removed,
Leaving no heir begotten of his body--
I was the next by birth and parentage;
For by my mother I derived am
From Lionel Duke of Clarence, the third son
To King Edward the Third; whereas he
From John of Gaunt doth bring his pedigree,
Being but fourth of that heroic line.
But mark: as in this haughty attempt
They laboured to plant the rightful heir,
I lost my liberty and they their lives.
Long after this, when Henry the Fifth,
Succeeding his father Bolingbroke, did reign,
Thy father, Earl of Cambridge, then derived
From famous Edmund Langley, Duke of York,

Marrying my sister that thy mother was,
Again in pity of my hard distress
Levied an army, weening to redeem
And have install'd me in the diadem:
But, as the rest, so fell that noble earl
And was beheaded. Thus the Mortimers,
In whom the tide rested, were suppress'd.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Of which, my lord, your honour is the last.

MORTIMER

True; and thou seest that I no issue have
And that my fainting words do warrant death;
Thou art my heir; the rest I wish thee gather:
But yet be wary in thy studious care.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Thy grave admonishments prevail with me:
But yet, methinks, my father's execution
Was nothing less than bloody tyranny.

MORTIMER

With silence, nephew, be thou politic:
Strong-fixed is the house of Lancaster,
And like a mountain, not to be removed.
But now thy uncle is removing hence:
As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd
With long continuance in a settled place.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

O, uncle, would some part of my young years
Might but redeem the passage of your age!

MORTIMER

Thou dost then wrong me, as that slaughterer doth
Which giveth many wounds when one will kill.
Mourn not, except thou sorrow for my good;
Only give order for my funeral:
And so farewell, and fair be all thy hopes
And prosperous be thy life in peace and war!

Dies

RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

And peace, no war, befall thy parting soul!
In prison hast thou spent a pilgrimage
And like a hermit overpass'd thy days.
Well, I will lock his counsel in my breast;
And what I do imagine let that rest.
Keepers, convey him hence, and I myself
Will see his burial better than his life.

Exeunt Gaolers, bearing out the body of MORTIMER

Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer,
Choked with ambition of the meaner sort:
And for those wrongs, those bitter injuries,
Which Somerset hath offer'd to my house:
I doubt not but with honour to redress;
And therefore haste I to the parliament,
Either to be restored to my blood,
Or make my ill the advantage of my good.

Exit

ACT III

SCENE I. London. The Parliament-house.

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, EXETER, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, SOMERSET, and SUFFOLK; the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, RICHARD PLANTAGENET, and others.
GLOUCESTER offers to put up a bill; BISHOP OF WINCHESTER snatches it, and tears it

BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Comest thou with deep premeditated lines,
With written pamphlets studiously devised,
Humphrey of Gloucester? If thou canst accuse,
Or aught intend'st to lay unto my charge,
Do it without invention, suddenly;
As I with sudden and extemporal speech
Purpose to answer what thou canst object.

GLOUCESTER

Presumptuous priest! this place commands my patience,
Or thou shouldst find thou hast dishonour'd me.

Think not, although in writing I preferr'd
The manner of thy vile outrageous crimes,
That therefore I have forged, or am not able
Verbatim to rehearse the method of my pen:
No, prelate; such is thy audacious wickedness,
Thy lewd, pestiferous and dissentious pranks,
As very infants prattle of thy pride.
Thou art a most pernicious usurer,
Forward by nature, enemy to peace;
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems
A man of thy profession and degree;
And for thy treachery, what's more manifest?
In that thou laid'st a trap to take my life,
As well at London bridge as at the Tower.
Beside, I fear me, if thy thoughts were sifted,
The king, thy sovereign, is not quite exempt
From envious malice of thy swelling heart.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Gloucester, I do defy thee. Lords, vouchsafe
To give me hearing what I shall reply.
If I were covetous, ambitious or perverse,
As he will have me, how am I so poor?
Or how haps it I seek not to advance
Or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?
And for dissension, who preferreth peace
More than I do?--except I be provoked.
No, my good lords, it is not that offends;
It is not that that hath incensed the duke:
It is, because no one should sway but he;
No one but he should be about the king;
And that engenders thunder in his breast
And makes him roar these accusations forth.
But he shall know I am as good--

GLOUCESTER

As good!
Thou bastard of my grandfather!
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Ay, lordly sir; for what are you, I pray,
But one imperious in another's throne?

GLOUCESTER

Am I not protector, saucy priest?
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

And am not I a prelate of the church?

GLOUCESTER

Yes, as an outlaw in a castle keeps
And useth it to patronage his theft.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Unreverent Gloster!

GLOUCESTER

Thou art reverent
Touching thy spiritual function, not thy life.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Rome shall remedy this.

WARWICK

Roam thither, then.

SOMERSET

My lord, it were your duty to forbear.

WARWICK

Ay, see the bishop be not overborne.

SOMERSET

Methinks my lord should be religious
And know the office that belongs to such.

WARWICK

Methinks his lordship should be humbler;
it fitteth not a prelate so to plead.

SOMERSET

Yes, when his holy state is touch'd so near.

WARWICK

State holy or unhallow'd, what of that?
Is not his grace protector to the king?
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

[Aside] Plantagenet, I see, must hold his tongue,
Lest it be said 'Speak, sirrah, when you should;
Must your bold verdict enter talk with lords?'
Else would I have a fling at Winchester.

KING HENRY VI

Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
The special watchmen of our English weal,
I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
To join your hearts in love and amity.
O, what a scandal is it to our crown,
That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell
Civil dissension is a viperous worm
That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.

A noise within, 'Down with the tawny-coats!'

What tumult's this?

WARWICK

An uproar, I dare warrant,
Begun through malice of the bishop's men.

A noise again, 'Stones! stones!' Enter Mayor

Mayor

O, my good lords, and virtuous Henry,
Pity the city of London, pity us!
The bishop and the Duke of Gloucester's men,
Forbidden late to carry any weapon,
Have fill'd their pockets full of pebble stones
And banding themselves in contrary parts
Do pelt so fast at one another's pate
That many have their giddy brains knock'd out:
Our windows are broke down in every street
And we for fear compell'd to shut our shops.

Enter Serving-men, in skirmish, with bloody pates

KING HENRY VI

We charge you, on allegiance to ourself,
To hold your slaughtering hands and keep the peace.
Pray, uncle Gloucester, mitigate this strife.
First Serving-man Nay, if we be forbidden stones,
We'll fall to it with our teeth.
Second Serving-man Do what ye dare, we are as resolute.

Skirmish again

GLOUCESTER

You of my household, leave this peevish broil
And set this unaccustom'd fight aside.
Third Serving-man My lord, we know your grace to be a man
Just and upright; and, for your royal birth,
Inferior to none but to his majesty:
And ere that we will suffer such a prince,
So kind a father of the commonweal,
To be disgraced by an inkhorn mate,
We and our wives and children all will fight
And have our bodies slaughtered by thy foes.
First Serving-man Ay, and the very parings of our nails
Shall pitch a field when we are dead.

Begin again

GLOUCESTER

Stay, stay, I say!
And if you love me, as you say you do,
Let me persuade you to forbear awhile.

KING HENRY VI

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul!
Can you, my Lord of Winchester, behold
My sighs and tears and will not once relent?
Who should be pitiful, if you be not?
Or who should study to prefer a peace.
If holy churchmen take delight in broils?

WARWICK

Yield, my lord protector; yield, Winchester;
Except you mean with obstinate repulse
To slay your sovereign and destroy the realm.

You see what mischief and what murder too
Hath been enacted through your enmity;
Then be at peace except ye thirst for blood.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

He shall submit, or I will never yield.

GLOUCESTER

Compassion on the king commands me stoop;
Or I would see his heart out, ere the priest
Should ever get that privilege of me.

WARWICK

Behold, my Lord of Winchester, the duke
Hath banish'd moody discontented fury,
As by his smoothed brows it doth appear:
Why look you still so stern and tragical?

GLOUCESTER

Here, Winchester, I offer thee my hand.

KING HENRY VI

Fie, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach
That malice was a great and grievous sin;
And will not you maintain the thing you teach,
But prove a chief offender in the same?

WARWICK

Sweet king! the bishop hath a kindly gird.
For shame, my lord of Winchester, relent!
What, shall a child instruct you what to do?
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

Well, Duke of Gloucester, I will yield to thee;
Love for thy love and hand for hand I give.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] Ay, but, I fear me, with a hollow heart.--
See here, my friends and loving countrymen,
This token serveth for a flag of truce

Betwixt ourselves and all our followers:
So help me God, as I dissemble not!
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

[Aside] So help me God, as I intend it not!

KING HENRY VI

O, loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester,
How joyful am I made by this contract!
Away, my masters! trouble us no more;
But join in friendship, as your lords have done.
First Serving-man Content: I'll to the surgeon's.
Second Serving-man And so will I.
Third Serving-man And I will see what physic the tavern affords.

Exeunt Serving-men, Mayor, & c

WARWICK

Accept this scroll, most gracious sovereign,
Which in the right of Richard Plantagenet
We do exhibit to your majesty.

GLOUCESTER

Well urged, my Lord of Warwick: or sweet prince,
And if your grace mark every circumstance,
You have great reason to do Richard right;
Especially for those occasions
At Eltham Place I told your majesty.

KING HENRY VI

And those occasions, uncle, were of force:
Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is
That Richard be restored to his blood.

WARWICK

Let Richard be restored to his blood;
So shall his father's wrongs be recompensed.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

As will the rest, so willeth Winchester.

KING HENRY VI

If Richard will be true, not that alone
But all the whole inheritance I give
That doth belong unto the house of York,
From whence you spring by lineal descent.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Thy humble servant vows obedience
And humble service till the point of death.

KING HENRY VI

Stoop then and set your knee against my foot;
And, in requerdon of that duty done,
I gird thee with the valiant sword of York:
Rise Richard, like a true Plantagenet,
And rise created princely Duke of York.
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

And so thrive Richard as thy foes may fall!
And as my duty springs, so perish they
That grudge one thought against your majesty!

ALL

Welcome, high prince, the mighty Duke of York!

SOMERSET

[Aside] Perish, base prince, ignoble Duke of York!

GLOUCESTER

Now will it best avail your majesty
To cross the seas and to be crown'd in France:
The presence of a king engenders love
Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends,
As it disanimates his enemies.

KING HENRY VI

When Gloucester says the word, King Henry goes;
For friendly counsel cuts off many foes.

GLOUCESTER

Your ships already are in readiness.

Sennet. Flourish. Exeunt all but EXETER

EXETER

Ay, we may march in England or in France,
Not seeing what is likely to ensue.
This late dissension grown betwixt the peers
Burns under feigned ashes of forged love
And will at last break out into a flame:
As fester'd members rot but by degree,
Till bones and flesh and sinews fall away,
So will this base and envious discord breed.
And now I fear that fatal prophecy
Which in the time of Henry named the Fifth
Was in the mouth of every sucking babe;
That Henry born at Monmouth should win all
And Henry born at Windsor lose all:
Which is so plain that Exeter doth wish
His days may finish ere that hapless time.

Exit

SCENE II. France. Before Rouen.

Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE disguised, with four Soldiers with sacks upon their backs

JOAN LA PUCELLE

These are the city gates, the gates of Rouen,
Through which our policy must make a breach:
Take heed, be wary how you place your words;
Talk like the vulgar sort of market men
That come to gather money for their corn.
If we have entrance, as I hope we shall,
And that we find the slothful watch but weak,
I'll by a sign give notice to our friends,
That Charles the Dauphin may encounter them.

First Soldier

Our sacks shall be a mean to sack the city,
And we be lords and rulers over Rouen;
Therefore we'll knock.

Knocks

Watch

[Within] Qui est la?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Paysans, pauvres gens de France;
Poor market folks that come to sell their corn.

Watch

Enter, go in; the market bell is rung.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Now, Rouen, I'll shake thy bulwarks to the ground.

Exeunt

Enter CHARLES, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, REIGNIER, and forces

CHARLES

Saint Denis bless this happy stratagem!
And once again we'll sleep secure in Rouen.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Here enter'd Pucelle and her practisants;
Now she is there, how will she specify
Where is the best and safest passage in?

REIGNIER

By thrusting out a torch from yonder tower;
Which, once discern'd, shows that her meaning is,
No way to that, for weakness, which she enter'd.

Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE on the top, thrusting out a torch burning

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Behold, this is the happy wedding torch
That joineth Rouen unto her countrymen,
But burning fatal to the Talbotites!

Exit

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

See, noble Charles, the beacon of our friend;
The burning torch in yonder turret stands.

CHARLES

Now shine it like a comet of revenge,
A prophet to the fall of all our foes!

REIGNIER

Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends;
Enter, and cry 'The Dauphin!' presently,
And then do execution on the watch.

Alarum. Exeunt

An alarum. Enter TALBOT in an excursion

TALBOT

France, thou shalt rue this treason with thy tears,
If Talbot but survive thy treachery.
Pucelle, that witch, that damned sorceress,
Hath wrought this hellish mischief unawares,
That hardly we escaped the pride of France.

Exit

An alarum: excursions. BEDFORD, brought in sick in a chair. Enter TALBOT and BURGUNDY without: within JOAN LA PUCELLE, CHARLES, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, on the walls

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Good morrow, gallants! want ye corn for bread?
I think the Duke of Burgundy will fast
Before he'll buy again at such a rate:
'Twas full of danel; do you like the taste?

BURGUNDY

Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtezan!
I trust ere long to choke thee with thine own
And make thee curse the harvest of that corn.

CHARLES

Your grace may starve perhaps before that time.

BEDFORD

O, let no words, but deeds, revenge this treason!

JOAN LA PUCELLE

What will you do, good grey-beard? break a lance,
And run a tilt at death within a chair?

TALBOT

Foul fiend of France, and hag of all despite,
Encompass'd with thy lustful paramours!
Becomes it thee to taunt his valiant age
And twit with cowardice a man half dead?
Damsel, I'll have a bout with you again,
Or else let Talbot perish with this shame.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Are ye so hot, sir? yet, Pucelle, hold thy peace;
If Talbot do but thunder, rain will follow.

The English whisper together in council

God speed the parliament! who shall be the speaker?

TALBOT

Dare ye come forth and meet us in the field?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Belike your lordship takes us then for fools,
To try if that our own be ours or no.

TALBOT

I speak not to that railing Hecate,
But unto thee, Alencon, and the rest;
Will ye, like soldiers, come and fight it out?

ALENCON

Signior, no.

TALBOT

Signior, hang! base muleters of France!
Like peasant foot-boys do they keep the walls
And dare not take up arms like gentlemen.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Away, captains! let's get us from the walls;
For Talbot means no goodness by his looks.

God be wi' you, my lord! we came but to tell you
That we are here.

Exeunt from the walls

TALBOT

And there will we be too, ere it be long,
Or else reproach be Talbot's greatest fame!
Vow, Burgundy, by honour of thy house,
Prick'd on by public wrongs sustain'd in France,
Either to get the town again or die:
And I, as sure as English Henry lives
And as his father here was conqueror,
As sure as in this late-betrayed town
Great Coeur-de-lion's heart was buried,
So sure I swear to get the town or die.

BURGUNDY

My vows are equal partners with thy vows.

TALBOT

But, ere we go, regard this dying prince,
The valiant Duke of Bedford. Come, my lord,
We will bestow you in some better place,
Fitter for sickness and for crazy age.

BEDFORD

Lord Talbot, do not so dishonour me:
Here will I sit before the walls of Rouen
And will be partner of your weal or woe.

BURGUNDY

Courageous Bedford, let us now persuade you.

BEDFORD

Not to be gone from hence; for once I read
That stout Pendragon in his litter sick
Came to the field and vanquished his foes:
Methinks I should revive the soldiers' hearts,
Because I ever found them as myself.

TALBOT

Undaunted spirit in a dying breast!

Then be it so: heavens keep old Bedford safe!
And now no more ado, brave Burgundy,
But gather we our forces out of hand
And set upon our boasting enemy.

Exeunt all but BEDFORD and Attendants

An alarum: excursions. Enter FASTOLFE and a Captain

Captain

Whither away, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?

FASTOLFE

Whither away! to save myself by flight:
We are like to have the overthrow again.

Captain

What! will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?

FASTOLFE

Ay,
All the Talbots in the world, to save my life!

Exit

Captain

Cowardly knight! ill fortune follow thee!

Exit

Retreat: excursions. JOAN LA PUCELLE, ALENCON, and CHARLES fly

BEDFORD

Now, quiet soul, depart when heaven please,
For I have seen our enemies' overthrow.
What is the trust or strength of foolish man?
They that of late were daring with their scoffs
Are glad and fain by flight to save themselves.

BEDFORD dies, and is carried in by two in his chair

An alarum. Re-enter TALBOT, BURGUNDY, and the rest

TALBOT

Lost, and recover'd in a day again!
This is a double honour, Burgundy:
Yet heavens have glory for this victory!

BURGUNDY

Warlike and martial Talbot, Burgundy
Enshrines thee in his heart and there erects
Thy noble deeds as valour's monuments.

TALBOT

Thanks, gentle duke. But where is Pucelle now?
I think her old familiar is asleep:
Now where's the Bastard's braves, and Charles his gleeks?
What, all amort? Rouen hangs her head for grief
That such a valiant company are fled.
Now will we take some order in the town,
Placing therein some expert officers,
And then depart to Paris to the king,
For there young Henry with his nobles lie.

BURGUNDY

What wills Lord Talbot pleaseth Burgundy.

TALBOT

But yet, before we go, let's not forget
The noble Duke of Bedford late deceased,
But see his exequies fulfill'd in Rouen:
A braver soldier never couched lance,
A gentler heart did never sway in court;
But kings and mightiest potentates must die,
For that's the end of human misery.

Exeunt

SCENE III. The plains near Rouen.

Enter CHARLES, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, JOAN LA PUCELLE, and forces

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Dismay not, princes, at this accident,
Nor grieve that Rouen is so recovered:
Care is no cure, but rather corrosive,
For things that are not to be remedied.
Let frantic Talbot triumph for a while
And like a peacock sweep along his tail;
We'll pull his plumes and take away his train,

If Dauphin and the rest will be but ruled.

CHARLES

We have been guided by thee hitherto,
And of thy cunning had no diffidence:
One sudden foil shall never breed distrust.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Search out thy wit for secret policies,
And we will make thee famous through the world.

ALENCON

We'll set thy statue in some holy place,
And have thee revered like a blessed saint:
Employ thee then, sweet virgin, for our good.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Then thus it must be; this doth Joan devise:
By fair persuasions mix'd with sugar'd words
We will entice the Duke of Burgundy
To leave the Talbot and to follow us.

CHARLES

Ay, marry, sweeting, if we could do that,
France were no place for Henry's warriors;
Nor should that nation boast it so with us,
But be extirped from our provinces.

ALENCON

For ever should they be expelled from France
And not have title of an earldom here.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Your honours shall perceive how I will work
To bring this matter to the wished end.

Drum sounds afar off

Hark! by the sound of drum you may perceive
Their powers are marching unto Paris-ward.

Here sound an English march. Enter, and pass over at a distance, TALBOT and his forces

There goes the Talbot, with his colours spread,
And all the troops of English after him.

French march. Enter BURGUNDY and forces

Now in the rearward comes the duke and his:
Fortune in favour makes him lag behind.
Summon a parley; we will talk with him.

Trumpets sound a parley

CHARLES

A parley with the Duke of Burgundy!

BURGUNDY

Who craves a parley with the Burgundy?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

The princely Charles of France, thy countryman.

BURGUNDY

What say'st thou, Charles? for I am marching hence.

CHARLES

Speak, Pucelle, and enchant him with thy words.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Brave Burgundy, undoubted hope of France!
Stay, let thy humble handmaid speak to thee.

BURGUNDY

Speak on; but be not over-tedious.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Look on thy country, look on fertile France,
And see the cities and the towns defaced
By wasting ruin of the cruel foe.
As looks the mother on her lowly babe
When death doth close his tender dying eyes,
See, see the pining malady of France;
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds,
Which thou thyself hast given her woful breast.

O, turn thy edged sword another way;
Strike those that hurt, and hurt not those that help.
One drop of blood drawn from thy country's bosom
Should grieve thee more than streams of foreign gore:
Return thee therefore with a flood of tears,
And wash away thy country's stained spots.

BURGUNDY

Either she hath bewitch'd me with her words,
Or nature makes me suddenly relent.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Besides, all French and France exclaims on thee,
Doubting thy birth and lawful progeny.
Who joint'st thou with but with a lordly nation
That will not trust thee but for profit's sake?
When Talbot hath set footing once in France
And fashion'd thee that instrument of ill,
Who then but English Henry will be lord
And thou be thrust out like a fugitive?
Call we to mind, and mark but this for proof,
Was not the Duke of Orleans thy foe?
And was he not in England prisoner?
But when they heard he was thine enemy,
They set him free without his ransom paid,
In spite of Burgundy and all his friends.
See, then, thou fight'st against thy countrymen
And joint'st with them will be thy slaughtermen.
Come, come, return; return, thou wandering lord:
Charles and the rest will take thee in their arms.

BURGUNDY

I am vanquished; these haughty words of hers
Have batter'd me like roaring cannon-shot,
And made me almost yield upon my knees.
Forgive me, country, and sweet countrymen,
And, lords, accept this hearty kind embrace:
My forces and my power of men are yours:
So farewell, Talbot; I'll no longer trust thee.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

[Aside] Done like a Frenchman: turn, and turn again!

CHARLES

Welcome, brave duke! thy friendship makes us fresh.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

And doth beget new courage in our breasts.

ALENCON

Pucelle hath bravely play'd her part in this,
And doth deserve a coronet of gold.

CHARLES

Now let us on, my lords, and join our powers,
And seek how we may prejudice the foe.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Paris. The palace.

Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, SOMERSET, WARWICK, EXETER, VERNON BASSET, and others. To them with his Soldiers, TALBOT

TALBOT

My gracious prince, and honourable peers,
Hearing of your arrival in this realm,
I have awhile given truce unto my wars,
To do my duty to my sovereign:
In sign, whereof, this arm, that hath reclaim'd
To your obedience fifty fortresses,
Twelve cities and seven walled towns of strength,
Beside five hundred prisoners of esteem,
Lest fall his sword before your highness' feet,
And with submissive loyalty of heart
Ascribes the glory of his conquest got
First to my God and next unto your grace.

Kneels

KING HENRY VI

Is this the Lord Talbot, uncle Gloucester,
That hath so long been resident in France?

GLOUCESTER

Yes, if it please your majesty, my liege.

KING HENRY VI

Welcome, brave captain and victorious lord!
When I was young, as yet I am not old,
I do remember how my father said
A stouter champion never handled sword.
Long since we were resolved of your truth,
Your faithful service and your toil in war;
Yet never have you tasted our reward,
Or been requerdon'd with so much as thanks,
Because till now we never saw your face:
Therefore, stand up; and, for these good deserts,
We here create you Earl of Shrewsbury;
And in our coronation take your place.

Sennet. Flourish. Exeunt all but VERNON and BASSET

VERNON

Now, sir, to you, that were so hot at sea,
Disgracing of these colours that I wear
In honour of my noble Lord of York:
Darest thou maintain the former words thou spakest?

BASSET

Yes, sir; as well as you dare patronage
The envious barking of your saucy tongue
Against my lord the Duke of Somerset.

VERNON

Sirrah, thy lord I honour as he is.

BASSET

Why, what is he? as good a man as York.

VERNON

Hark ye; not so: in witness, take ye that.

Strikes him

BASSET

Villain, thou know'st the law of arms is such
That whoso draws a sword, 'tis present death,
Or else this blow should broach thy dearest blood.
But I'll unto his majesty, and crave
I may have liberty to venge this wrong;
When thou shalt see I'll meet thee to thy cost.

VERNON

Well, miscreant, I'll be there as soon as you;
And, after, meet you sooner than you would.

Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I. Paris. A hall of state.

Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, SOMERSET, WARWICK, TALBOT, EXETER, the Governor, of Paris, and others

GLOUCESTER

Lord bishop, set the crown upon his head.
BISHOP

OF WINCHESTER

God save King Henry, of that name the sixth!

GLOUCESTER

Now, governor of Paris, take your oath,
That you elect no other king but him;
Esteem none friends but such as are his friends,
And none your foes but such as shall pretend
Malicious practises against his state:
This shall ye do, so help you righteous God!

Enter FASTOLFE

FASTOLFE

My gracious sovereign, as I rode from Calais,
To haste unto your coronation,
A letter was deliver'd to my hands,
Writ to your grace from the Duke of Burgundy.

TALBOT

Shame to the Duke of Burgundy and thee!
I vow'd, base knight, when I did meet thee next,
To tear the garter from thy craven's leg,

Plucking it off

Which I have done, because unworthily

Thou wast installed in that high degree.
Pardon me, princely Henry, and the rest
This dastard, at the battle of Patay,
When but in all I was six thousand strong
And that the French were almost ten to one,
Before we met or that a stroke was given,
Like to a trusty squire did run away:
In which assault we lost twelve hundred men;
Myself and divers gentlemen beside
Were there surprised and taken prisoners.
Then judge, great lords, if I have done amiss;
Or whether that such cowards ought to wear
This ornament of knighthood, yea or no.

GLOUCESTER

To say the truth, this fact was infamous
And ill beseeeming any common man,
Much more a knight, a captain and a leader.

TALBOT

When first this order was ordain'd, my lords,
Knights of the garter were of noble birth,
Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage,
Such as were grown to credit by the wars;
Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress,
But always resolute in most extremes.
He then that is not furnish'd in this sort
Doth but usurp the sacred name of knight,
Profaning this most honourable order,
And should, if I were worthy to be judge,
Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain
That doth presume to boast of gentle blood.

KING HENRY VI

Stain to thy countrymen, thou hear'st thy doom!
Be packing, therefore, thou that wast a knight:
Henceforth we banish thee, on pain of death.

Exit FASTOLFE

And now, my lord protector, view the letter
Sent from our uncle Duke of Burgundy.

GLOUCESTER

What means his grace, that he hath changed his style?
No more but, plain and bluntly, "To the king!"

Hath he forgot he is his sovereign?
Or doth this churlish superscription
Pretend some alteration in good will?
What's here?

Reads

'I have, upon especial cause,
Moved with compassion of my country's wreck,
Together with the pitiful complaints
Of such as your oppression feeds upon,
Forsaken your pernicious faction
And join'd with Charles, the rightful King of France.'
O monstrous treachery! can this be so,
That in alliance, amity and oaths,
There should be found such false dissembling guile?

KING HENRY VI

What! doth my uncle Burgundy revolt?

GLOUCESTER

He doth, my lord, and is become your foe.

KING HENRY VI

Is that the worst this letter doth contain?

GLOUCESTER

It is the worst, and all, my lord, he writes.

KING HENRY VI

Why, then, Lord Talbot there shall talk with him
And give him chastisement for this abuse.
How say you, my lord? are you not content?

TALBOT

Content, my liege! yes, but that I am prevented,
I should have begg'd I might have been employ'd.

KING HENRY VI

Then gather strength and march unto him straight:
Let him perceive how ill we brook his treason
And what offence it is to flout his friends.

TALBOT

I go, my lord, in heart desiring still
You may behold confusion of your foes.

Exit

Enter VERNON and BASSET

VERNON

Grant me the combat, gracious sovereign.

BASSET

And me, my lord, grant me the combat too.

YORK

This is my servant: hear him, noble prince.

SOMERSET

And this is mine: sweet Henry, favour him.

KING HENRY VI

Be patient, lords; and give them leave to speak.
Say, gentlemen, what makes you thus exclaim?
And wherefore crave you combat? or with whom?

VERNON

With him, my lord; for he hath done me wrong.

BASSET

And I with him; for he hath done me wrong.

KING HENRY VI

What is that wrong whereof you both complain?
First let me know, and then I'll answer you.

BASSET

Crossing the sea from England into France,
This fellow here, with envious carping tongue,
Upbraided me about the rose I wear;
Saying, the sanguine colour of the leaves

Did represent my master's blushing cheeks,
When stubbornly he did repugn the truth
About a certain question in the law
Argued betwixt the Duke of York and him;
With other vile and ignominious terms:
In confutation of which rude reproach
And in defence of my lord's worthiness,
I crave the benefit of law of arms.

VERNON

And that is my petition, noble lord:
For though he seem with forged quaint conceit
To set a gloss upon his bold intent,
Yet know, my lord, I was provoked by him;
And he first took exceptions at this badge,
Pronouncing that the paleness of this flower
Bewray'd the faintness of my master's heart.

YORK

Will not this malice, Somerset, be left?

SOMERSET

Your private grudge, my Lord of York, will out,
Though ne'er so cunningly you smother it.

KING HENRY VI

Good Lord, what madness rules in brainsick men,
When for so slight and frivolous a cause
Such factious emulations shall arise!
Good cousins both, of York and Somerset,
Quiet yourselves, I pray, and be at peace.

YORK

Let this dissension first be tried by fight,
And then your highness shall command a peace.

SOMERSET

The quarrel toucheth none but us alone;
Betwixt ourselves let us decide it then.

YORK

There is my pledge; accept it, Somerset.

VERNON

Nay, let it rest where it began at first.

BASSET

Confirm it so, mine honourable lord.

GLOUCESTER

Confirm it so! Confounded be your strife!
And perish ye, with your audacious prate!
Presumptuous vassals, are you not ashamed
With this immodest clamorous outrage
To trouble and disturb the king and us?
And you, my lords, methinks you do not well
To bear with their perverse objections;
Much less to take occasion from their mouths
To raise a mutiny betwixt yourselves:
Let me persuade you take a better course.

EXETER

It grieves his highness: good my lords, be friends.

KING HENRY VI

Come hither, you that would be combatants:
Henceforth I charge you, as you love our favour,
Quite to forget this quarrel and the cause.
And you, my lords, remember where we are,
In France, amongst a fickle wavering nation:
If they perceive dissension in our looks
And that within ourselves we disagree,
How will their grudging stomachs be provoked
To wilful disobedience, and rebel!
Beside, what infamy will there arise,
When foreign princes shall be certified
That for a toy, a thing of no regard,
King Henry's peers and chief nobility
Destroy'd themselves, and lost the realm of France!
O, think upon the conquest of my father,
My tender years, and let us not forego
That for a trifle that was bought with blood
Let me be umpire in this doubtful strife.
I see no reason, if I wear this rose,

Putting on a red rose

That any one should therefore be suspicious

I more incline to Somerset than York:
Both are my kinsmen, and I love them both:
As well they may upbraid me with my crown,
Because, forsooth, the king of Scots is crown'd.
But your discretions better can persuade
Than I am able to instruct or teach:
And therefore, as we hither came in peace,
So let us still continue peace and love.
Cousin of York, we institute your grace
To be our regent in these parts of France:
And, good my Lord of Somerset, unite
Your troops of horsemen with his bands of foot;
And, like true subjects, sons of your progenitors,
Go cheerfully together and digest.
Your angry choler on your enemies.
Ourself, my lord protector and the rest
After some respite will return to Calais;
From thence to England; where I hope ere long
To be presented, by your victories,
With Charles, Alencon and that traitorous rout.

Flourish. Exeunt all but YORK, WARWICK, EXETER and VERNON

WARWICK

My Lord of York, I promise you, the king
Prettily, methought, did play the orator.

YORK

And so he did; but yet I like it not,
In that he wears the badge of Somerset.

WARWICK

Tush, that was but his fancy, blame him not;
I dare presume, sweet prince, he thought no harm.

YORK

An if I wist he did,--but let it rest;
Other affairs must now be managed.

Exeunt all but EXETER

EXETER

Well didst thou, Richard, to suppress thy voice;
For, had the passions of thy heart burst out,
I fear we should have seen decipher'd there

More rancorous spite, more furious raging broils,
Than yet can be imagined or supposed.
But howsoe'er, no simple man that sees
This jarring discord of nobility,
This shouldering of each other in the court,
This factious bandying of their favourites,
But that it doth presage some ill event.
'Tis much when sceptres are in children's hands;
But more when envy breeds unkind division;
There comes the rain, there begins confusion.

Exit

SCENE II. Before Bourdeaux.

Enter TALBOT, with trump and drum

TALBOT

Go to the gates of Bourdeaux, trumpeter:
Summon their general unto the wall.

Trumpet sounds. Enter General and others, aloft

English John Talbot, captains, calls you forth,
Servant in arms to Harry King of England;
And thus he would: Open your city gates;
Be humble to us; call my sovereign yours,
And do him homage as obedient subjects;
And I'll withdraw me and my bloody power:
But, if you frown upon this proffer'd peace,
You tempt the fury of my three attendants,
Lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire;
Who in a moment even with the earth
Shall lay your stately and air-braving towers,
If you forsake the offer of their love.

General

Thou ominous and fearful owl of death,
Our nation's terror and their bloody scourge!
The period of thy tyranny approacheth.
On us thou canst not enter but by death;
For, I protest, we are well fortified
And strong enough to issue out and fight:
If thou retire, the Dauphin, well appointed,
Stands with the snares of war to tangle thee:
On either hand thee there are squadrons pitch'd,
To wall thee from the liberty of flight;
And no way canst thou turn thee for redress,
But death doth front thee with apparent spoil

And pale destruction meets thee in the face.
Ten thousand French have ta'en the sacrament
To rive their dangerous artillery
Upon no Christian soul but English Talbot.
Lo, there thou stand'st, a breathing valiant man,
Of an invincible unconquer'd spirit!
This is the latest glory of thy praise
That I, thy enemy, due thee withal;
For ere the glass, that now begins to run,
Finish the process of his sandy hour,
These eyes, that see thee now well coloured,
Shall see thee wither'd, bloody, pale and dead.

Drum afar off

Hark! hark! the Dauphin's drum, a warning bell,
Sings heavy music to thy timorous soul;
And mine shall ring thy dire departure out.

Exeunt General, & c

TALBOT

He fables not; I hear the enemy:
Out, some light horsemen, and peruse their wings.
O, negligent and heedless discipline!
How are we park'd and bounded in a pale,
A little herd of England's timorous deer,
Mazed with a yelping kennel of French curs!
If we be English deer, be then in blood;
Not rascal-like, to fall down with a pinch,
But rather, moody-mad and desperate stags,
Turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel
And make the cowards stand aloof at bay:
Sell every man his life as dear as mine,
And they shall find dear deer of us, my friends.
God and Saint George, Talbot and England's right,
Prosper our colours in this dangerous fight!

Exeunt

SCENE III. Plains in Gascony.

Enter a Messenger that meets YORK. Enter YORK with trumpet and many Soldiers

YORK

Are not the speedy scouts return'd again,
That dogg'd the mighty army of the Dauphin?

Messenger

They are return'd, my lord, and give it out
That he is march'd to Bourdeaux with his power,
To fight with Talbot: as he march'd along,
By your espials were discovered
Two mightier troops than that the Dauphin led,
Which join'd with him and made their march for Bourdeaux.

YORK

A plague upon that villain Somerset,
That thus delays my promised supply
Of horsemen, that were levied for this siege!
Renowned Talbot doth expect my aid,
And I am lowted by a traitor villain
And cannot help the noble chevalier:
God comfort him in this necessity!
If he miscarry, farewell wars in France.

Enter Sir William LUCY

LUCY

Thou princely leader of our English strength,
Never so needful on the earth of France,
Spur to the rescue of the noble Talbot,
Who now is girdled with a waist of iron
And hemm'd about with grim destruction:
To Bourdeaux, warlike duke! to Bourdeaux, York!
Else, farewell Talbot, France, and England's honour.

YORK

O God, that Somerset, who in proud heart
Doth stop my cornets, were in Talbot's place!
So should we save a valiant gentleman
By forfeiting a traitor and a coward.
Mad ire and wrathful fury makes me weep,
That thus we die, while remiss traitors sleep.

LUCY

O, send some succor to the distress'd lord!

YORK

He dies, we lose; I break my warlike word;
We mourn, France smiles; we lose, they daily get;
All 'long of this vile traitor Somerset.

LUCY

Then God take mercy on brave Talbot's soul;
And on his son young John, who two hours since
I met in travel toward his warlike father!
This seven years did not Talbot see his son;
And now they meet where both their lives are done.

YORK

Alas, what joy shall noble Talbot have
To bid his young son welcome to his grave?
Away! vexation almost stops my breath,
That sunder'd friends greet in the hour of death.
Lucy, farewell; no more my fortune can,
But curse the cause I cannot aid the man.
Maine, Blois, Poitiers, and Tours, are won away,
'Long all of Somerset and his delay.

Exit, with his soldiers

LUCY

Thus, while the vulture of sedition
Feeds in the bosom of such great commanders,
Sleeping neglection doth betray to loss
The conquest of our scarce cold conqueror,
That ever living man of memory,
Henry the Fifth: whiles they each other cross,
Lives, honours, lands and all hurry to loss.

Exit

SCENE IV. Other plains in Gascony.

Enter SOMERSET, with his army; a Captain of TALBOT's with him

SOMERSET

It is too late; I cannot send them now:
This expedition was by York and Talbot
Too rashly plotted: all our general force
Might with a sally of the very town
Be buckled with: the over-daring Talbot
Hath sullied all his gloss of former honour
By this unheedful, desperate, wild adventure:
York set him on to fight and die in shame,
That, Talbot dead, great York might bear the name.

Captain

Here is Sir William Lucy, who with me
Set from our o'ermatch'd forces forth for aid.

Enter Sir William LUCY

SOMERSET

How now, Sir William! whither were you sent?

LUCY

Whither, my lord? from bought and sold Lord Talbot;
Who, ring'd about with bold adversity,
Cries out for noble York and Somerset,
To beat assailing death from his weak legions:
And whiles the honourable captain there
Drops bloody sweat from his war-wearied limbs,
And, in advantage lingering, looks for rescue,
You, his false hopes, the trust of England's honour,
Keep off aloof with worthless emulation.
Let not your private discord keep away
The levied succors that should lend him aid,
While he, renowned noble gentleman,
Yields up his life unto a world of odds:
Orleans the Bastard, Charles, Burgundy,
Alencon, Reignier, compass him about,
And Talbot perisheth by your default.

SOMERSET

York set him on; York should have sent him aid.

LUCY

And York as fast upon your grace exclaims;
Swearing that you withhold his levied host,
Collected for this expedition.

SOMERSET

York lies; he might have sent and had the horse;
I owe him little duty, and less love;
And take foul scorn to fawn on him by sending.

LUCY

The fraud of England, not the force of France,
Hath now entrapp'd the noble-minded Talbot:
Never to England shall he bear his life;
But dies, betray'd to fortune by your strife.

SOMERSET

Come, go; I will dispatch the horsemen straight:
Within six hours they will be at his aid.

LUCY

Too late comes rescue: he is ta'en or slain;
For fly he could not, if he would have fled;
And fly would Talbot never, though he might.

SOMERSET

If he be dead, brave Talbot, then adieu!

LUCY

His fame lives in the world, his shame in you.

Exeunt

SCENE V. The English camp near Bourdeaux.

Enter TALBOT and JOHN his son

TALBOT

O young John Talbot! I did send for thee
To tutor thee in stratagems of war,
That Talbot's name might be in thee revived
When sapless age and weak unable limbs
Should bring thy father to his drooping chair.
But, O malignant and ill-boding stars!
Now thou art come unto a feast of death,
A terrible and unavowed danger:
Therefore, dear boy, mount on my swiftest horse;
And I'll direct thee how thou shalt escape
By sudden flight: come, dally not, be gone.

JOHN TALBOT

Is my name Talbot? and am I your son?
And shall I fly? O if you love my mother,
Dishonour not her honourable name,
To make a bastard and a slave of me!
The world will say, he is not Talbot's blood,
That basely fled when noble Talbot stood.

TALBOT

Fly, to revenge my death, if I be slain.

JOHN TALBOT

He that flies so will ne'er return again.

TALBOT

If we both stay, we both are sure to die.

JOHN TALBOT

Then let me stay; and, father, do you fly:
Your loss is great, so your regard should be;
My worth unknown, no loss is known in me.
Upon my death the French can little boast;
In yours they will, in you all hopes are lost.
Flight cannot stain the honour you have won;
But mine it will, that no exploit have done:
You fled for vantage, everyone will swear;
But, if I bow, they'll say it was for fear.
There is no hope that ever I will stay,
If the first hour I shrink and run away.
Here on my knee I beg mortality,
Rather than life preserved with infamy.

TALBOT

Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?

JOHN TALBOT

Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's womb.

TALBOT

Upon my blessing, I command thee go.

JOHN TALBOT

To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.

TALBOT

Part of thy father may be saved in thee.

JOHN TALBOT

No part of him but will be shame in me.

TALBOT

Thou never hadst renown, nor canst not lose it.

JOHN TALBOT

Yes, your renowned name: shall flight abuse it?

TALBOT

Thy father's charge shall clear thee from that stain.

JOHN TALBOT

You cannot witness for me, being slain.
If death be so apparent, then both fly.

TALBOT

And leave my followers here to fight and die?
My age was never tainted with such shame.

JOHN TALBOT

And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?
No more can I be sever'd from your side,
Than can yourself yourself in twain divide:
Stay, go, do what you will, the like do I;
For live I will not, if my father die.

TALBOT

Then here I take my leave of thee, fair son,
Born to eclipse thy life this afternoon.
Come, side by side together live and die.
And soul with soul from France to heaven fly.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. A field of battle.

Alarum: excursions, wherein JOHN TALBOT is hemmed about, and TALBOT rescues him

TALBOT

Saint George and victory! fight, soldiers, fight.
The regent hath with Talbot broke his word
And left us to the rage of France his sword.
Where is John Talbot? Pause, and take thy breath;
I gave thee life and rescued thee from death.

JOHN TALBOT

O, twice my father, twice am I thy son!
The life thou gavest me first was lost and done,
Till with thy warlike sword, despite of late,
To my determined time thou gavest new date.

TALBOT

When from the Dauphin's crest thy sword struck fire,
It warm'd thy father's heart with proud desire
Of bold-faced victory. Then leaden age,
Quicken'd with youthful spleen and warlike rage,
Beat down Alencon, Orleans, Burgundy,
And from the pride of Gallia rescued thee.
The ireful bastard Orleans, that drew blood
From thee, my boy, and had the maidenhood
Of thy first fight, I soon encountered,
And interchanging blows I quickly shed
Some of his bastard blood; and in disgrace
Bespoke him thus; 'Contaminated, base
And misbegotten blood I spill of thine,
Mean and right poor, for that pure blood of mine
Which thou didst force from Talbot, my brave boy:'
Here, purposing the Bastard to destroy,
Came in strong rescue. Speak, thy father's care,
Art thou not weary, John? how dost thou fare?
Wilt thou yet leave the battle, boy, and fly,
Now thou art seal'd the son of chivalry?
Fly, to revenge my death when I am dead:
The help of one stands me in little stead.
O, too much folly is it, well I wot,
To hazard all our lives in one small boat!
If I to-day die not with Frenchmen's rage,
To-morrow I shall die with mickle age:
By me they nothing gain an if I stay;
'Tis but the shortening of my life one day:
In thee thy mother dies, our household's name,
My death's revenge, thy youth, and England's fame:
All these and more we hazard by thy stay;
All these are saved if thou wilt fly away.

JOHN TALBOT

The sword of Orleans hath not made me smart;
These words of yours draw life-blood from my heart:
On that advantage, bought with such a shame,
To save a paltry life and slay bright fame,
Before young Talbot from old Talbot fly,
The coward horse that bears me fail and die!
And like me to the peasant boys of France,
To be shame's scorn and subject of mischance!

Surely, by all the glory you have won,
An if I fly, I am not Talbot's son:
Then talk no more of flight, it is no boot;
If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot.

TALBOT

Then follow thou thy desperate sire of Crete,
Thou Icarus; thy life to me is sweet:
If thou wilt fight, fight by thy father's side;
And, commendable proved, let's die in pride.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

Alarum: excursions. Enter TALBOT led by a Servant

TALBOT

Where is my other life? mine own is gone;
O, where's young Talbot? where is valiant John?
Triumphant death, smear'd with captivity,
Young Talbot's valour makes me smile at thee:
When he perceived me shrink and on my knee,
His bloody sword he brandish'd over me,
And, like a hungry lion, did commence
Rough deeds of rage and stern impatience;
But when my angry guardant stood alone,
Tendering my ruin and assail'd of none,
Dizzy-eyed fury and great rage of heart
Suddenly made him from my side to start
Into the clustering battle of the French;
And in that sea of blood my boy did drench
His over-mounting spirit, and there died,
My Icarus, my blossom, in his pride.

Servant

O, my dear lord, lo, where your son is borne!

Enter Soldiers, with the body of JOHN TALBOT

TALBOT

Thou antic death, which laugh'st us here to scorn,
Anon, from thy insulting tyranny,
Coupled in bonds of perpetuity,
Two Talbots, winged through the lither sky,
In thy despite shall 'scape mortality.
O, thou, whose wounds become hard-favour'd death,

Speak to thy father ere thou yield thy breath!
Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;
Imagine him a Frenchman and thy foe.
Poor boy! he smiles, methinks, as who should say,
Had death been French, then death had died to-day.
Come, come and lay him in his father's arms:
My spirit can no longer bear these harms.
Soldiers, adieu! I have what I would have,
Now my old arms are young John Talbot's grave.

Dies

*Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, BURGUNDY, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, JOAN LA PUCELLE,
and forces*

CHARLES

Had York and Somerset brought rescue in,
We should have found a bloody day of this.

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

How the young whelp of Talbot's, raging-wood,
Did flesh his puny sword in Frenchmen's blood!

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Once I encounter'd him, and thus I said:
'Thou maiden youth, be vanquish'd by a maid:'
But, with a proud majestic high scorn,
He answer'd thus: 'Young Talbot was not born
To be the pillage of a giglot wench:'
So, rushing in the bowels of the French,
He left me proudly, as unworthy fight.

BURGUNDY

Doubtless he would have made a noble knight;
See, where he lies inhearsed in the arms
Of the most bloody nurser of his harms!

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Hew them to pieces, hack their bones asunder
Whose life was England's glory, Gallia's wonder.

CHARLES

O, no, forbear! for that which we have fled
During the life, let us not wrong it dead.

Enter Sir William LUCY, attended; Herald of the French preceding

LUCY

Herald, conduct me to the Dauphin's tent,
To know who hath obtained the glory of the day.

CHARLES

On what submissive message art thou sent?

LUCY

Submission, Dauphin! 'tis a mere French word;
We English warriors wot not what it means.
I come to know what prisoners thou hast ta'en
And to survey the bodies of the dead.

CHARLES

For prisoners ask'st thou? hell our prison is.
But tell me whom thou seek'st.

LUCY

But where's the great Alcides of the field,
Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury,
Created, for his rare success in arms,
Great Earl of Washford, Waterford and Valence;
Lord Talbot of Goodrig and Urchinfield,
Lord Strange of Blackmere, Lord Verdun of Alton,
Lord Cromwell of Wingfield, Lord Furnival of Sheffield,
The thrice-victorious Lord of Falconbridge;
Knight of the noble order of Saint George,
Worthy Saint Michael and the Golden Fleece;
Great marshal to Henry the Sixth
Of all his wars within the realm of France?

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Here is a silly stately style indeed!
The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,
Writes not so tedious a style as this.
Him that thou magnifiest with all these titles
Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet.

LUCY

Is Talbot slain, the Frenchmen's only scourge,
Your kingdom's terror and black Nemesis?

O, were mine eyeballs into bullets turn'd,
That I in rage might shoot them at your faces!
O, that I could but call these dead to life!
It were enough to fright the realm of France:
Were but his picture left amongst you here,
It would amaze the proudest of you all.
Give me their bodies, that I may bear them hence
And give them burial as beseems their worth.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

I think this upstart is old Talbot's ghost,
He speaks with such a proud commanding spirit.
For God's sake let him have 'em; to keep them here,
They would but stink, and putrefy the air.

CHARLES

Go, take their bodies hence.

LUCY

I'll bear them hence; but from their ashes shall be rear'd
A phoenix that shall make all France afeard.

CHARLES

So we be rid of them, do with 'em what thou wilt.
And now to Paris, in this conquering vein:
All will be ours, now bloody Talbot's slain.

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. London. The palace.

Sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, and EXETER

KING HENRY VI

Have you perused the letters from the pope,
The emperor and the Earl of Armagnac?

GLOUCESTER

I have, my lord: and their intent is this:
They humbly sue unto your excellence
To have a godly peace concluded of
Between the realms of England and of France.

KING HENRY VI

How doth your grace affect their motion?

GLOUCESTER

Well, my good lord; and as the only means
To stop effusion of our Christian blood
And 'stablish quietness on every side.

KING HENRY VI

Ay, marry, uncle; for I always thought
It was both impious and unnatural
That such immanity and bloody strife
Should reign among professors of one faith.

GLOUCESTER

Beside, my lord, the sooner to effect
And surer bind this knot of amity,
The Earl of Armagnac, near knit to Charles,
A man of great authority in France,
Proffers his only daughter to your grace
In marriage, with a large and sumptuous dowry.

KING HENRY VI

Marriage, uncle! alas, my years are young!
And fitter is my study and my books
Than wanton dalliance with a paramour.
Yet call the ambassador; and, as you please,
So let them have their answers every one:
I shall be well content with any choice
Tends to God's glory and my country's weal.

Enter CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER in Cardinal's habit, a Legate and two Ambassadors

EXETER

What! is my Lord of Winchester install'd,
And call'd unto a cardinal's degree?
Then I perceive that will be verified
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy,
'If once he come to be a cardinal,
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown.'

KING HENRY VI

My lords ambassadors, your several suits

Have been consider'd and debated on.
And therefore are we certainly resolved
To draw conditions of a friendly peace;
Which by my Lord of Winchester we mean
Shall be transported presently to France.

GLOUCESTER

And for the proffer of my lord your master,
I have inform'd his highness so at large
As liking of the lady's virtuous gifts,
Her beauty and the value of her dower,
He doth intend she shall be England's queen.

KING HENRY VI

In argument and proof of which contract,
Bear her this jewel, pledge of my affection.
And so, my lord protector, see them guarded
And safely brought to Dover; where inshipp'd
Commit them to the fortune of the sea.

Exeunt all but CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER and Legate

CARDINAL

OF WINCHESTER

Stay, my lord legate: you shall first receive
The sum of money which I promised
Should be deliver'd to his holiness
For clothing me in these grave ornaments.

Legate

I will attend upon your lordship's leisure.
CARDINAL

OF WINCHESTER

[Aside] Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
That, neither in birth or for authority,
The bishop will be overborne by thee:
I'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,
Or sack this country with a mutiny.

Exeunt

SCENE II. France. Plains in Anjou.

Enter CHARLES, BURGUNDY, ALENCON, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, REIGNIER, JOAN LA PUCELLE, and forces

CHARLES

These news, my lord, may cheer our drooping spirits:
'Tis said the stout Parisians do revolt
And turn again unto the warlike French.

ALENCON

Then march to Paris, royal Charles of France,
And keep not back your powers in dalliance.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Peace be amongst them, if they turn to us;
Else, ruin combat with their palaces!

Enter Scout

Scout

Success unto our valiant general,
And happiness to his accomplices!

CHARLES

What tidings send our scouts? I prithee, speak.

Scout

The English army, that divided was
Into two parties, is now conjoined in one,
And means to give you battle presently.

CHARLES

Somewhat too sudden, sirs, the warning is;
But we will presently provide for them.

BURGUNDY

I trust the ghost of Talbot is not there:
Now he is gone, my lord, you need not fear.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Of all base passions, fear is most accursed.
Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be thine,
Let Henry fret and all the world repine.

CHARLES

Then on, my lords; and France be fortunate!

Exeunt

SCENE III. Before Angiers.

Alarum. Excursions. Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE

JOAN LA PUCELLE

The regent conquers, and the Frenchmen fly.
Now help, ye charming spells and periapts;
And ye choice spirits that admonish me
And give me signs of future accidents.

Thunder

You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the north,
Appear and aid me in this enterprise.

Enter Fiends

This speedy and quick appearance argues proof
Of your accustom'd diligence to me.
Now, ye familiar spirits, that are cull'd
Out of the powerful regions under earth,
Help me this once, that France may get the field.

They walk, and speak not

O, hold me not with silence over-long!
Where I was wont to feed you with my blood,
I'll lop a member off and give it you
In earnest of further benefit,
So you do condescend to help me now.

They hang their heads

No hope to have redress? My body shall
Pay recompense, if you will grant my suit.

They shake their heads

Cannot my body nor blood-sacrifice
Entreat you to your wonted furtherance?
Then take my soul, my body, soul and all,
Before that England give the French the foil.

They depart

See, they forsake me! Now the time is come
That France must vail her lofty-plumed crest
And let her head fall into England's lap.
My ancient incantations are too weak,
And hell too strong for me to buckle with:
Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust.

Exit

Excursions. Re-enter JOAN LA PUCELLE fighting hand to hand with YORK. JOAN LA PUCELLE is taken. The French fly.

YORK

Damsel of France, I think I have you fast:
Unchain your spirits now with spelling charms
And try if they can gain your liberty.
A goodly prize, fit for the devil's grace!
See, how the ugly wench doth bend her brows,
As if with Circe she would change my shape!

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Changed to a worsen shape thou canst not be.

YORK

O, Charles the Dauphin is a proper man;
No shape but his can please your dainty eye.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

A plaguing mischief light on Charles and thee!
And may ye both be suddenly surprised
By bloody hands, in sleeping on your beds!

YORK

Fell banning hag, enchantress, hold thy tongue!

JOAN LA PUCELLE

I prithee, give me leave to curse awhile.

YORK

Curse, miscreant, when thou comest to the stake.

Exeunt

Alarum. Enter SUFFOLK with MARGARET in his hand

SUFFOLK

Be what thou wilt, thou art my prisoner.

Gazes on her

O fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!
For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;
I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,
And lay them gently on thy tender side.
Who art thou? say, that I may honour thee.

MARGARET

Margaret my name, and daughter to a king,
The King of Naples, whosoe'er thou art.

SUFFOLK

An earl I am, and Suffolk am I call'd.
Be not offended, nature's miracle,
Thou art allotted to be ta'en by me:
So doth the swan her downy cygnets save,
Keeping them prisoner underneath her wings.
Yet, if this servile usage once offend.
Go, and be free again, as Suffolk's friend.

She is going

O, stay! I have no power to let her pass;
My hand would free her, but my heart says no
As plays the sun upon the glassy streams,
Twinkling another counterfeited beam,
So seems this gorgeous beauty to mine eyes.
Fain would I woo her, yet I dare not speak:
I'll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.
Fie, de la Pole! disable not thyself;
Hast not a tongue? is she not here?
Wilt thou be daunted at a woman's sight?
Ay, beauty's princely majesty is such,
Confounds the tongue and makes the senses rough.

MARGARET

Say, Earl of Suffolk--if thy name be so--
What ransom must I pay before I pass?
For I perceive I am thy prisoner.

SUFFOLK

How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit,
Before thou make a trial of her love?

MARGARET

Why speak'st thou not? what ransom must I pay?

SUFFOLK

She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore to be won.

MARGARET

Wilt thou accept of ransom? yea, or no.

SUFFOLK

Fond man, remember that thou hast a wife;
Then how can Margaret be thy paramour?

MARGARET

I were best to leave him, for he will not hear.

SUFFOLK

There all is marr'd; there lies a cooling card.

MARGARET

He talks at random; sure, the man is mad.

SUFFOLK

And yet a dispensation may be had.

MARGARET

And yet I would that you would answer me.

SUFFOLK

I'll win this Lady Margaret. For whom?
Why, for my king: tush, that's a wooden thing!

MARGARET

He talks of wood: it is some carpenter.

SUFFOLK

Yet so my fancy may be satisfied,
And peace established between these realms
But there remains a scruple in that too;
For though her father be the King of Naples,
Duke of Anjou and Maine, yet is he poor,
And our nobility will scorn the match.

MARGARET

Hear ye, captain, are you not at leisure?

SUFFOLK

It shall be so, disdain they ne'er so much.
Henry is youthful and will quickly yield.
Madam, I have a secret to reveal.

MARGARET

What though I be enthrall'd? he seems a knight,
And will not any way dishonour me.

SUFFOLK

Lady, vouchsafe to listen what I say.

MARGARET

Perhaps I shall be rescued by the French;
And then I need not crave his courtesy.

SUFFOLK

Sweet madam, give me a hearing in a cause--

MARGARET

Tush, women have been captivate ere now.

SUFFOLK

Lady, wherefore talk you so?

MARGARET

I cry you mercy, 'tis but Quid for Quo.

SUFFOLK

Say, gentle princess, would you not suppose
Your bondage happy, to be made a queen?

MARGARET

To be a queen in bondage is more vile
Than is a slave in base servility;
For princes should be free.

SUFFOLK

And so shall you,
If happy England's royal king be free.

MARGARET

Why, what concerns his freedom unto me?

SUFFOLK

I'll undertake to make thee Henry's queen,
To put a golden sceptre in thy hand
And set a precious crown upon thy head,
If thou wilt condescend to be my--

MARGARET

What?

SUFFOLK

His love.

MARGARET

I am unworthy to be Henry's wife.

SUFFOLK

No, gentle madam; I unworthy am
To woo so fair a dame to be his wife,
And have no portion in the choice myself.

How say you, madam, are ye so content?

MARGARET

An if my father please, I am content.

SUFFOLK

Then call our captains and our colours forth.
And, madam, at your father's castle walls
We'll crave a parley, to confer with him.

A parley sounded. Enter REIGNIER on the walls

See, Reignier, see, thy daughter prisoner!

REIGNIER

To whom?

SUFFOLK

To me.

REIGNIER

Suffolk, what remedy?
I am a soldier, and unapt to weep,
Or to exclaim on fortune's fickleness.

SUFFOLK

Yes, there is remedy enough, my lord:
Consent, and for thy honour give consent,
Thy daughter shall be wedded to my king;
Whom I with pain have woo'd and won thereto;
And this her easy-held imprisonment
Hath gained thy daughter princely liberty.

REIGNIER

Speaks Suffolk as he thinks?

SUFFOLK

Fair Margaret knows
That Suffolk doth not flatter, face, or feign.

REIGNIER

Upon thy princely warrant, I descend
To give thee answer of thy just demand.

Exit from the walls

SUFFOLK

And here I will expect thy coming.

Trumpets sound. Enter REIGNIER, below

REIGNIER

Welcome, brave earl, into our territories:
Command in Anjou what your honour pleases.

SUFFOLK

Thanks, Reignier, happy for so sweet a child,
Fit to be made companion with a king:
What answer makes your grace unto my suit?

REIGNIER

Since thou dost deign to woo her little worth
To be the princely bride of such a lord;
Upon condition I may quietly
Enjoy mine own, the country Maine and Anjou,
Free from oppression or the stroke of war,
My daughter shall be Henry's, if he please.

SUFFOLK

That is her ransom; I deliver her;
And those two counties I will undertake
Your grace shall well and quietly enjoy.

REIGNIER

And I again, in Henry's royal name,
As deputy unto that gracious king,
Give thee her hand, for sign of plighted faith.

SUFFOLK

Reignier of France, I give thee kingly thanks,
Because this is in traffic of a king.

Aside

And yet, methinks, I could be well content
To be mine own attorney in this case.
I'll over then to England with this news,
And make this marriage to be solemnized.
So farewell, Reignier: set this diamond safe
In golden palaces, as it becomes.

REIGNIER

I do embrace thee, as I would embrace
The Christian prince, King Henry, were he here.

MARGARET

Farewell, my lord: good wishes, praise and prayers
Shall Suffolk ever have of Margaret.

Going

SUFFOLK

Farewell, sweet madam: but hark you, Margaret;
No princely commendations to my king?

MARGARET

Such commendations as becomes a maid,
A virgin and his servant, say to him.

SUFFOLK

Words sweetly placed and modestly directed.
But madam, I must trouble you again;
No loving token to his majesty?

MARGARET

Yes, my good lord, a pure unspotted heart,
Never yet tainted with love, I send the king.

SUFFOLK

And this withal.

Kisses her

MARGARET

That for thyself: I will not so presume
To send such peevish tokens to a king.

Exeunt REIGNIER and MARGARET

SUFFOLK

O, wert thou for myself! But, Suffolk, stay;
Thou mayst not wander in that labyrinth;
There Minotaurs and ugly treasons lurk.
Solicit Henry with her wondrous praise:
Bethink thee on her virtues that surmount,
And natural graces that extinguish art;
Repeat their semblance often on the seas,
That, when thou comest to kneel at Henry's feet,
Thou mayst bereave him of his wits with wonder.

Exit

SCENE IV. Camp of the YORK in Anjou.

Enter YORK, WARWICK, and others

YORK

Bring forth that sorceress condemn'd to burn.

Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE, guarded, and a Shepherd

Shepherd

Ah, Joan, this kills thy father's heart outright!
Have I sought every country far and near,
And, now it is my chance to find thee out,
Must I behold thy timeless cruel death?
Ah, Joan, sweet daughter Joan, I'll die with thee!

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!
I am descended of a gentler blood:
Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

Shepherd

Out, out! My lords, an please you, 'tis not so;
I did beget her, all the parish knows:
Her mother liveth yet, can testify
She was the first fruit of my bachelorship.

WARWICK

Graceless! wilt thou deny thy parentage?

YORK

This argues what her kind of life hath been,
Wicked and vile; and so her death concludes.

Shepherd

Fie, Joan, that thou wilt be so obstacle!
God knows thou art a collop of my flesh;
And for thy sake have I shed many a tear:
Deny me not, I prithee, gentle Joan.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Peasant, avaunt! You have suborn'd this man,
Of purpose to obscure my noble birth.

Shepherd

'Tis true, I gave a noble to the priest
The morn that I was wedded to her mother.
Kneel down and take my blessing, good my girl.
Wilt thou not stoop? Now cursed be the time
Of thy nativity! I would the milk
Thy mother gave thee when thou suck'dst her breast,
Had been a little ratsbane for thy sake!
Or else, when thou didst keep my lambs a-field,
I wish some ravenous wolf had eaten thee!
Dost thou deny thy father, cursed drab?
O, burn her, burn her! hanging is too good.

Exit

YORK

Take her away; for she hath lived too long,
To fill the world with vicious qualities.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd:
Not me begotten of a shepherd swain,
But issued from the progeny of kings;
Virtuous and holy; chosen from above,
By inspiration of celestial grace,
To work exceeding miracles on earth.
I never had to do with wicked spirits:
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,
Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,

Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

YORK

Ay, ay: away with her to execution!

WARWICK

And hark ye, sirs; because she is a maid,
Spare for no faggots, let there be enow:
Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake,
That so her torture may be shortened.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.
I am with child, ye bloody homicides:
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death.

YORK

Now heaven forfend! the holy maid with child!

WARWICK

The greatest miracle that e'er ye wrought:
Is all your strict preciseness come to this?

YORK

She and the Dauphin have been juggling:
I did imagine what would be her refuge.

WARWICK

Well, go to; we'll have no bastards live;
Especially since Charles must father it.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

You are deceived; my child is none of his:
It was Alencon that enjoy'd my love.

YORK

Alencon! that notorious Machiavel!
It dies, an if it had a thousand lives.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

O, give me leave, I have deluded you:
'Twas neither Charles nor yet the duke I named,
But Reignier, king of Naples, that prevail'd.

WARWICK

A married man! that's most intolerable.

YORK

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well,
There were so many, whom she may accuse.

WARWICK

It's sign she hath been liberal and free.

YORK

And yet, forsooth, she is a virgin pure.
Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee:
Use no entreaty, for it is in vain.

JOAN LA PUCELLE

Then lead me hence; with whom I leave my curse:
May never glorious sun reflex his beams
Upon the country where you make abode;
But darkness and the gloomy shade of death
Environ you, till mischief and despair
Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!

Exit, guarded

YORK

Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes,
Thou foul accursed minister of hell!

Enter CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER, attended

CARDINAL

OF WINCHESTER

Lord regent, I do greet your excellence
With letters of commission from the king.
For know, my lords, the states of Christendom,
Moved with remorse of these outrageous broils,
Have earnestly implored a general peace
Betwixt our nation and the aspiring French;
And here at hand the Dauphin and his train
Approacheth, to confer about some matter.

YORK

Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?
After the slaughter of so many peers,
So many captains, gentlemen and soldiers,
That in this quarrel have been overthrown
And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?
Have we not lost most part of all the towns,
By treason, falsehood and by treachery,
Our great progenitors had conquered?
O Warwick, Warwick! I foresee with grief
The utter loss of all the realm of France.

WARWICK

Be patient, York: if we conclude a peace,
It shall be with such strict and severe covenants
As little shall the Frenchmen gain thereby.

Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, REIGNIER, and others

CHARLES

Since, lords of England, it is thus agreed
That peaceful truce shall be proclaim'd in France,
We come to be informed by yourselves
What the conditions of that league must be.

YORK

Speak, Winchester; for boiling choler chokes
The hollow passage of my poison'd voice,
By sight of these our baleful enemies.
CARDINAL

OF WINCHESTER

Charles, and the rest, it is enacted thus:
That, in regard King Henry gives consent,
Of mere compassion and of lenity,
To ease your country of distressful war,
And suffer you to breathe in fruitful peace,
You shall become true liegemen to his crown:
And Charles, upon condition thou wilt swear
To pay him tribute, submit thyself,
Thou shalt be placed as viceroy under him,
And still enjoy thy regal dignity.

ALENCON

Must he be then as shadow of himself?
Adorn his temples with a coronet,
And yet, in substance and authority,
Retain but privilege of a private man?
This proffer is absurd and reasonless.

CHARLES

'Tis known already that I am possess'd
With more than half the Gallian territories,
And therein revered for their lawful king:
Shall I, for lucre of the rest unvanquish'd,
Detract so much from that prerogative,
As to be call'd but viceroy of the whole?
No, lord ambassador, I'll rather keep
That which I have than, coveting for more,
Be cast from possibility of all.

YORK

Insulting Charles! hast thou by secret means
Used intercession to obtain a league,
And, now the matter grows to compromise,
Stand'st thou aloof upon comparison?
Either accept the title thou usurp'st,
Of benefit proceeding from our king
And not of any challenge of desert,
Or we will plague thee with incessant wars.

REIGNIER

My lord, you do not well in obstinacy
To cavil in the course of this contract:
If once it be neglected, ten to one
We shall not find like opportunity.

ALENCON

To say the truth, it is your policy
To save your subjects from such massacre
And ruthless slaughters as are daily seen
By our proceeding in hostility;
And therefore take this compact of a truce,
Although you break it when your pleasure serves.

WARWICK

How say'st thou, Charles? shall our condition stand?

CHARLES

It shall;
Only reserved, you claim no interest
In any of our towns of garrison.

YORK

Then swear allegiance to his majesty,
As thou art knight, never to disobey
Nor be rebellious to the crown of England,
Thou, nor thy nobles, to the crown of England.
So, now dismiss your army when ye please:
Hang up your ensign, let your drums be still,
For here we entertain a solemn peace.

Exeunt

SCENE V. London. The palace.

Enter SUFFOLK in conference with KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER and EXETER

KING HENRY VI

Your wondrous rare description, noble earl,
Of beauteous Margaret hath astonish'd me:
Her virtues graced with external gifts
Do breed love's settled passions in my heart:
And like as rigor of tempestuous gusts
Provokes the mightiest hulk against the tide,
So am I driven by breath of her renown
Either to suffer shipwreck or arrive
Where I may have fruition of her love.

SUFFOLK

Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale
Is but a preface of her worthy praise;
The chief perfections of that lovely dame
Had I sufficient skill to utter them,

Would make a volume of enticing lines,
Able to ravish any dull conceit:
And, which is more, she is not so divine,
So full-replete with choice of all delights,
But with as humble lowliness of mind
She is content to be at your command;
Command, I mean, of virtuous chaste intents,
To love and honour Henry as her lord.

KING HENRY VI

And otherwise will Henry ne'er presume.
Therefore, my lord protector, give consent
That Margaret may be England's royal queen.

GLOUCESTER

So should I give consent to flatter sin.
You know, my lord, your highness is betroth'd
Unto another lady of esteem:
How shall we then dispense with that contract,
And not deface your honour with reproach?

SUFFOLK

As doth a ruler with unlawful oaths;
Or one that, at a triumph having vow'd
To try his strength, forsaketh yet the lists
By reason of his adversary's odds:
A poor earl's daughter is unequal odds,
And therefore may be broke without offence.

GLOUCESTER

Why, what, I pray, is Margaret more than that?
Her father is no better than an earl,
Although in glorious titles he excel.

SUFFOLK

Yes, lord, her father is a king,
The King of Naples and Jerusalem;
And of such great authority in France
As his alliance will confirm our peace
And keep the Frenchmen in allegiance.

GLOUCESTER

And so the Earl of Armagnac may do,
Because he is near kinsman unto Charles.

EXETER

Beside, his wealth doth warrant a liberal dower,
Where Reignier sooner will receive than give.

SUFFOLK

A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,
That he should be so abject, base and poor,
To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.
Henry is able to enrich his queen
And not seek a queen to make him rich:
So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,
As market-men for oxen, sheep, or horse.
Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship;
Not whom we will, but whom his grace affects,
Must be companion of his nuptial bed:
And therefore, lords, since he affects her most,
It most of all these reasons bindeth us,
In our opinions she should be preferr'd.
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife?
Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,
And is a pattern of celestial peace.
Whom should we match with Henry, being a king,
But Margaret, that is daughter to a king?
Her peerless feature, joined with her birth,
Approves her fit for none but for a king:
Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit,
More than in women commonly is seen,
Will answer our hope in issue of a king;
For Henry, son unto a conqueror,
Is likely to beget more conquerors,
If with a lady of so high resolve
As is fair Margaret he be link'd in love.
Then yield, my lords; and here conclude with me
That Margaret shall be queen, and none but she.

KING HENRY VI

Whether it be through force of your report,
My noble Lord of Suffolk, or for that
My tender youth was never yet attaint
With any passion of inflaming love,
I cannot tell; but this I am assured,
I feel such sharp dissension in my breast,
Such fierce alarums both of hope and fear,
As I am sick with working of my thoughts.
Take, therefore, shipping; post, my lord, to France;

Agree to any covenants, and procure
That Lady Margaret do vouchsafe to come
To cross the seas to England and be crown'd
King Henry's faithful and anointed queen:
For your expenses and sufficient charge,
Among the people gather up a tenth.
Be gone, I say; for, till you do return,
I rest perplexed with a thousand cares.
And you, good uncle, banish all offence:
If you do censure me by what you were,
Not what you are, I know it will excuse
This sudden execution of my will.
And so, conduct me where, from company,
I may revolve and ruminate my grief.

Exit

GLOUCESTER

Ay, grief, I fear me, both at first and last.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EXETER

SUFFOLK

Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd; and thus he goes,
As did the youthful Paris once to Greece,
With hope to find the like event in love,
But prosper better than the Trojan did.
Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king;
But I will rule both her, the king and realm.

Exit

Part II

ACT I

SCENE I. London. The palace.

Flourish of trumpets: then hautboys. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and CARDINAL, on the one side; QUEEN MARGARET, SUFFOLK, YORK, SOMERSET, and BUCKINGHAM, on the other

SUFFOLK

As by your high imperial majesty
I had in charge at my depart for France,

As procurator to your excellence,
To marry Princess Margaret for your grace,
So, in the famous ancient city, Tours,
In presence of the Kings of France and Sicil,
The Dukes of Orleans, Calaber, Bretagne and Alencon,
Seven earls, twelve barons and twenty reverend bishops,
I have perform'd my task and was espoused:
And humbly now upon my bended knee,
In sight of England and her lordly peers,
Deliver up my title in the queen
To your most gracious hands, that are the substance
Of that great shadow I did represent;
The happiest gift that ever marquess gave,
The fairest queen that ever king received.

KING HENRY VI

Suffolk, arise. Welcome, Queen Margaret:
I can express no kinder sign of love
Than this kind kiss. O Lord, that lends me life,
Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!
For thou hast given me in this beauteous face
A world of earthly blessings to my soul,
If sympathy of love unite our thoughts.

QUEEN MARGARET

Great King of England and my gracious lord,
The mutual conference that my mind hath had,
By day, by night, waking and in my dreams,
In courtly company or at my beads,
With you, mine alder-liefest sovereign,
Makes me the bolder to salute my king
With ruder terms, such as my wit affords
And over-joy of heart doth minister.

KING HENRY VI

Her sight did ravish; but her grace in speech,
Her words y-clad with wisdom's majesty,
Makes me from wondering fall to weeping joys;
Such is the fulness of my heart's content.
Lords, with one cheerful voice welcome my love.

ALL

[Kneeling] Long live Queen Margaret, England's
happiness!

QUEEN MARGARET

We thank you all.

Flourish

SUFFOLK

My lord protector, so it please your grace,
Here are the articles of contracted peace
Between our sovereign and the French king Charles,
For eighteen months concluded by consent.

GLOUCESTER

[Reads] 'Imprimis, it is agreed between the French king Charles, and William de la Pole, Marquess of Suffolk, ambassador for Henry King of England, that the said Henry shall espouse the Lady Margaret, daughter unto Reignier King of Naples, Sicilia and Jerusalem, and crown her Queen of England ere the thirtieth of May next ensuing. Item, that the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine shall be released and delivered to the king her father'--

Lets the paper fall

KING HENRY VI

Uncle, how now!

GLOUCESTER

Pardon me, gracious lord;
Some sudden qualm hath struck me at the heart
And dimm'd mine eyes, that I can read no further.

KING HENRY VI

Uncle of Winchester, I pray, read on.

CARDINAL

[Reads] 'Item, It is further agreed between them, that the duchies of Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the king her father, and she sent over of the King of England's own proper cost and charges, without having any dowry.'

KING HENRY VI

They please us well. Lord marquess, kneel down:

We here create thee the first duke of Suffolk,
And gird thee with the sword. Cousin of York,
We here discharge your grace from being regent
I' the parts of France, till term of eighteen months
Be full expired. Thanks, uncle Winchester,
Gloucester, York, Buckingham, Somerset,
Salisbury, and Warwick;
We thank you all for the great favour done,
In entertainment to my princely queen.
Come, let us in, and with all speed provide
To see her coronation be perform'd.

Exeunt KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and SUFFOLK

GLOUCESTER

Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,
To you Duke Humphrey must unload his grief,
Your grief, the common grief of all the land.
What! did my brother Henry spend his youth,
His valour, coin and people, in the wars?
Did he so often lodge in open field,
In winter's cold and summer's parching heat,
To conquer France, his true inheritance?
And did my brother Bedford toil his wits,
To keep by policy what Henry got?
Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham,
Brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick,
Received deep scars in France and Normandy?
Or hath mine uncle Beaufort and myself,
With all the learned council of the realm,
Studied so long, sat in the council-house
Early and late, debating to and fro
How France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe,
And had his highness in his infancy
Crowned in Paris in despite of foes?
And shall these labours and these honours die?
Shall Henry's conquest, Bedford's vigilance,
Your deeds of war and all our counsel die?
O peers of England, shameful is this league!
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,
Blotting your names from books of memory,
Razing the characters of your renown,
Defacing monuments of conquer'd France,
Undoing all, as all had never been!

CARDINAL

Nephew, what means this passionate discourse,
This peroration with such circumstance?

For France, 'tis ours; and we will keep it still.

GLOUCESTER

Ay, uncle, we will keep it, if we can;
But now it is impossible we should:
Suffolk, the new-made duke that rules the roast,
Hath given the duchy of Anjou and Maine
Unto the poor King Reignier, whose large style
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse.

SALISBURY

Now, by the death of Him that died for all,
These counties were the keys of Normandy.
But wherefore weeps Warwick, my valiant son?

WARWICK

For grief that they are past recovery:
For, were there hope to conquer them again,
My sword should shed hot blood, mine eyes no tears.
Anjou and Maine! myself did win them both;
Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer:
And are the cities, that I got with wounds,
Delivered up again with peaceful words?
Mort Dieu!

YORK

For Suffolk's duke, may he be suffocate,
That dims the honour of this warlike isle!
France should have torn and rent my very heart,
Before I would have yielded to this league.
I never read but England's kings have had
Large sums of gold and dowries with their wives:
And our King Henry gives away his own,
To match with her that brings no vantages.

GLOUCESTER

A proper jest, and never heard before,
That Suffolk should demand a whole fifteenth
For costs and charges in transporting her!
She should have stayed in France and starved
in France, Before--

CARDINAL

My Lord of Gloucester, now ye grow too hot:

It was the pleasure of my lord the King.

GLOUCESTER

My Lord of Winchester, I know your mind;
'Tis not my speeches that you do mislike,
But 'tis my presence that doth trouble ye.
Rancour will out: proud prelate, in thy face
I see thy fury: if I longer stay,
We shall begin our ancient bickerings.
Lordings, farewell; and say, when I am gone,
I prophesied France will be lost ere long.

Exit

CARDINAL

So, there goes our protector in a rage.
'Tis known to you he is mine enemy,
Nay, more, an enemy unto you all,
And no great friend, I fear me, to the king.
Consider, lords, he is the next of blood,
And heir apparent to the English crown:
Had Henry got an empire by his marriage,
And all the wealthy kingdoms of the west,
There's reason he should be displeased at it.
Look to it, lords! let not his smoothing words
Bewitch your hearts; be wise and circumspect.
What though the common people favour him,
Calling him 'Humphrey, the good Duke of
Gloucester,'
Clapping their hands, and crying with loud voice,
'Jesu maintain your royal excellence!'
With 'God preserve the good Duke Humphrey!'
I fear me, lords, for all this flattering gloss,
He will be found a dangerous protector.

BUCKINGHAM

Why should he, then, protect our sovereign,
He being of age to govern of himself?
Cousin of Somerset, join you with me,
And all together, with the Duke of Suffolk,
We'll quickly hoise Duke Humphrey from his seat.

CARDINAL

This weighty business will not brook delay:
I'll to the Duke of Suffolk presently.

Exit

SOMERSET

Cousin of Buckingham, though Humphrey's pride
And greatness of his place be grief to us,
Yet let us watch the haughty cardinal:
His insolence is more intolerable
Than all the princes in the land beside:
If Gloucester be displaced, he'll be protector.

BUCKINGHAM

Or thou or I, Somerset, will be protector,
Despite Duke Humphrey or the cardinal.

Exeunt BUCKINGHAM and SOMERSET

SALISBURY

Pride went before, ambition follows him.
While these do labour for their own preferment,
Behoves it us to labour for the realm.
I never saw but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester
Did bear him like a noble gentleman.
Oft have I seen the haughty cardinal,
More like a soldier than a man o' the church,
As stout and proud as he were lord of all,
Swear like a ruffian and demean himself
Unlike the ruler of a commonweal.
Warwick, my son, the comfort of my age,
Thy deeds, thy plainness and thy housekeeping,
Hath won the greatest favour of the commons,
Excepting none but good Duke Humphrey:
And, brother York, thy acts in Ireland,
In bringing them to civil discipline,
Thy late exploits done in the heart of France,
When thou wert regent for our sovereign,
Have made thee fear'd and honour'd of the people:
Join we together, for the public good,
In what we can, to bridle and suppress
The pride of Suffolk and the cardinal,
With Somerset's and Buckingham's ambition;
And, as we may, cherish Duke Humphrey's deeds,
While they do tend the profit of the land.

WARWICK

So God help Warwick, as he loves the land,
And common profit of his country!

YORK

[Aside] And so says York, for he hath greatest cause.

SALISBURY

Then let's make haste away, and look unto the main.

WARWICK

Unto the main! O father, Maine is lost;
That Maine which by main force Warwick did win,
And would have kept so long as breath did last!
Main chance, father, you meant; but I meant Maine,
Which I will win from France, or else be slain,

Exeunt WARWICK and SALISBURY

YORK

Anjou and Maine are given to the French;
Paris is lost; the state of Normandy
Stands on a tickle point, now they are gone:
Suffolk concluded on the articles,
The peers agreed, and Henry was well pleased
To change two dukedoms for a duke's fair daughter.
I cannot blame them all: what is't to them?
'Tis thine they give away, and not their own.
Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage
And purchase friends and give to courtezans,
Still revelling like lords till all be gone;
While as the silly owner of the goods
Weeps over them and wrings his hapless hands
And shakes his head and trembling stands aloof,
While all is shared and all is borne away,
Ready to starve and dare not touch his own:
So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue,
While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.
Methinks the realms of England, France and Ireland
Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood
As did the fatal brand Althaea burn'd
Unto the prince's heart of Calydon.
Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!
Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,
Even as I have of fertile England's soil.
A day will come when York shall claim his own;
And therefore I will take the Nevils' parts
And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,
And, when I spy advantage, claim the crown,
For that's the golden mark I seek to hit:

Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,
Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist,
Nor wear the diadem upon his head,
Whose church-like humours fits not for a crown.
Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:
Watch thou and wake when others be asleep,
To pry into the secrets of the state;
Till Henry, surfeiting in joys of love,
With his new bride and England's dear-bought queen,
And Humphrey with the peers be fall'n at jars:
Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,
With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfumed;
And in my standard bear the arms of York
To grapple with the house of Lancaster;
And, force perforce, I'll make him yield the crown,
Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.

Exit

SCENE II. GLOUCESTER'S house.

Enter GLOUCESTER and his DUCHESS

DUCHESS

Why droops my lord, like over-ripen'd corn,
Hanging the head at Ceres' plenteous load?
Why doth the great Duke Humphrey knit his brows,
As frowning at the favours of the world?
Why are thine eyes fixed to the sullen earth,
Gazing on that which seems to dim thy sight?
What seest thou there? King Henry's diadem,
Enchased with all the honours of the world?
If so, gaze on, and grovel on thy face,
Until thy head be circled with the same.
Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold.
What, is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine:
And, having both together heaved it up,
We'll both together lift our heads to heaven,
And never more abase our sight so low
As to vouchsafe one glance unto the ground.

GLOUCESTER

O Nell, sweet Nell, if thou dost love thy lord,
Banish the canker of ambitious thoughts.
And may that thought, when I imagine ill
Against my king and nephew, virtuous Henry,
Be my last breathing in this mortal world!
My troublous dream this night doth make me sad.

DUCHESS

What dream'd my lord? tell me, and I'll requite it
With sweet rehearsal of my morning's dream.

GLOUCESTER

Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court,
Was broke in twain; by whom I have forgot,
But, as I think, it was by the cardinal;
And on the pieces of the broken wand
Were placed the heads of Edmund Duke of Somerset,
And William de la Pole, first duke of Suffolk.
This was my dream: what it doth bode, God knows.

DUCHESS

Tut, this was nothing but an argument
That he that breaks a stick of Gloucester's grove
Shall lose his head for his presumption.
But list to me, my Humphrey, my sweet duke:
Methought I sat in seat of majesty
In the cathedral church of Westminster,
And in that chair where kings and queens are crown'd;
Where Henry and dame Margaret kneel'd to me
And on my head did set the diadem.

GLOUCESTER

Nay, Eleanor, then must I chide outright:
Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtured Eleanor,
Art thou not second woman in the realm,
And the protector's wife, beloved of him?
Hast thou not worldly pleasure at command,
Above the reach or compass of thy thought?
And wilt thou still be hammering treachery,
To tumble down thy husband and thyself
From top of honour to disgrace's feet?
Away from me, and let me hear no more!

DUCHESS

What, what, my lord! are you so choleric
With Eleanor, for telling but her dream?
Next time I'll keep my dreams unto myself,
And not be cheque'd.

GLOUCESTER

Nay, be not angry; I am pleased again.

Enter Messenger

Messenger

My lord protector, 'tis his highness' pleasure
You do prepare to ride unto Saint Alban's,
Where as the king and queen do mean to hawk.

GLOUCESTER

I go. Come, Nell, thou wilt ride with us?

DUCHESS

Yes, my good lord, I'll follow presently.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and Messenger

Follow I must; I cannot go before,
While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind.
Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
I would remove these tedious stumbling-blocks
And smooth my way upon their headless necks;
And, being a woman, I will not be slack
To play my part in Fortune's pageant.
Where are you there? Sir John! nay, fear not, man,
We are alone; here's none but thee and I.

Enter HUME

HUME

Jesus preserve your royal majesty!

DUCHESS

What say'st thou? majesty! I am but grace.

HUME

But, by the grace of God, and Hume's advice,
Your grace's title shall be multiplied.

DUCHESS

What say'st thou, man? hast thou as yet conferr'd
With Margery Jourdain, the cunning witch,
With Roger Bolingbroke, the conjurer?
And will they undertake to do me good?

HUME

This they have promised, to show your highness
A spirit raised from depth of under-ground,
That shall make answer to such questions
As by your grace shall be propounded him.

DUCHESS

It is enough; I'll think upon the questions:
When from St. Alban's we do make return,
We'll see these things effected to the full.
Here, Hume, take this reward; make merry, man,
With thy confederates in this weighty cause.

Exit

HUME

Hume must make merry with the duchess' gold;
Marry, and shall. But how now, Sir John Hume!
Seal up your lips, and give no words but mum:
The business asketh silent secrecy.
Dame Eleanor gives gold to bring the witch:
Gold cannot come amiss, were she a devil.
Yet have I gold flies from another coast;
I dare not say, from the rich cardinal
And from the great and new-made Duke of Suffolk,
Yet I do find it so; for to be plain,
They, knowing Dame Eleanor's aspiring humour,
Have hired me to undermine the duchess
And buz these conjurations in her brain.
They say 'A crafty knave does need no broker.'
Yet am I Suffolk and the cardinal's broker.
Hume, if you take not heed, you shall go near
To call them both a pair of crafty knaves.
Well, so it stands; and thus, I fear, at last
Hume's knavery will be the duchess' wreck,
And her attainture will be Humphrey's fall:
Sort how it will, I shall have gold for all.

Exit

SCENE III. The palace.

Enter three or four Petitioners, PETER, the Armourer's man, being one

First Petitioner

My masters, let's stand close: my lord protector
will come this way by and by, and then we may deliver

our supplications in the quill.

Second Petitioner

Marry, the Lord protect him, for he's a good man!
Jesu bless him!

Enter SUFFOLK and QUEEN MARGARET

PETER

Here a' comes, methinks, and the queen with him.
I'll be the first, sure.

Second Petitioner

Come back, fool; this is the Duke of Suffolk, and
not my lord protector.

SUFFOLK

How now, fellow! would'st anything with me?

First Petitioner

I pray, my lord, pardon me; I took ye for my lord
protector.

QUEEN MARGARET

[Reading] 'To my Lord Protector!' Are your
supplications to his lordship? Let me see them:
what is thine?

First Petitioner

Mine is, an't please your grace, against John
Goodman, my lord cardinal's man, for keeping my
house, and lands, and wife and all, from me.

SUFFOLK

Thy wife, too! that's some wrong, indeed. What's
yours? What's here!

Reads

'Against the Duke of Suffolk, for enclosing the
commons of Melford.' How now, sir knave!

Second Petitioner

Alas, sir, I am but a poor petitioner of our whole township.

PETER

[Giving his petition] Against my master, Thomas Horner, for saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the crown.

QUEEN MARGARET

What sayst thou? did the Duke of York say he was rightful heir to the crown?

PETER

That my master was? no, forsooth: my master said that he was, and that the king was an usurper.

SUFFOLK

Who is there?

Enter Servant

Take this fellow in, and send for his master with a pursuivant presently: we'll hear more of your matter before the King.

Exit Servant with PETER

QUEEN MARGARET

And as for you, that love to be protected
Under the wings of our protector's grace,
Begin your suits anew, and sue to him.

Tears the supplication

Away, base cullions! Suffolk, let them go.

ALL

Come, let's be gone.

Exeunt

QUEEN MARGARET

My Lord of Suffolk, say, is this the guise,
Is this the fashion in the court of England?
Is this the government of Britain's isle,
And this the royalty of Albion's king?
What shall King Henry be a pupil still
Under the surly Gloucester's governance?
Am I a queen in title and in style,
And must be made a subject to a duke?
I tell thee, Pole, when in the city Tours
Thou ran'st a tilt in honour of my love
And stolest away the ladies' hearts of France,
I thought King Henry had resembled thee
In courage, courtship and proportion:
But all his mind is bent to holiness,
To number Ave-Maries on his beads;
His champions are the prophets and apostles,
His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,
His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves
Are brazen images of canonized saints.
I would the college of the cardinals
Would choose him pope, and carry him to Rome,
And set the triple crown upon his head:
That were a state fit for his holiness.

SUFFOLK

Madam, be patient: as I was cause
Your highness came to England, so will I
In England work your grace's full content.

QUEEN MARGARET

Beside the haughty protector, have we Beaufort,
The imperious churchman, Somerset, Buckingham,
And grumbling York: and not the least of these
But can do more in England than the king.

SUFFOLK

And he of these that can do most of all
Cannot do more in England than the Nevils:
Salisbury and Warwick are no simple peers.

QUEEN MARGARET

Not all these lords do vex me half so much
As that proud dame, the lord protector's wife.
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife:
Strangers in court do take her for the queen:

She bears a duke's revenues on her back,
And in her heart she scorns our poverty:
Shall I not live to be avenged on her?
Contemtuos base-born callet as she is,
She vaunted 'mongst her minions t'other day,
The very train of her worst wearing gown
Was better worth than all my father's lands,
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter.

SUFFOLK

Madam, myself have limed a bush for her,
And placed a quire of such enticing birds,
That she will light to listen to the lays,
And never mount to trouble you again.
So, let her rest: and, madam, list to me;
For I am bold to counsel you in this.
Although we fancy not the cardinal,
Yet must we join with him and with the lords,
Till we have brought Duke Humphrey in disgrace.
As for the Duke of York, this late complaint
Will make but little for his benefit.
So, one by one, we'll weed them all at last,
And you yourself shall steer the happy helm.

Sound a sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, CARDINAL, BUCKINGHAM, YORK, SOMERSET, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and the DUCHESS

KING HENRY VI

For my part, noble lords, I care not which;
Or Somerset or York, all's one to me.

YORK

If York have ill demean'd himself in France,
Then let him be deny'd the regentship.

SOMERSET

If Somerset be unworthy of the place,
Let York be regent; I will yield to him.

WARWICK

Whether your grace be worthy, yea or no,
Dispute not that: York is the worthier.

CARDINAL

Ambitious Warwick, let thy betters speak.

WARWICK

The cardinal's not my better in the field.

BUCKINGHAM

All in this presence are thy betters, Warwick.

WARWICK

Warwick may live to be the best of all.

SALISBURY

Peace, son! and show some reason, Buckingham,
Why Somerset should be preferred in this.

QUEEN MARGARET

Because the king, forsooth, will have it so.

GLOUCESTER

Madam, the king is old enough himself
To give his censure: these are no women's matters.

QUEEN MARGARET

If he be old enough, what needs your grace
To be protector of his excellence?

GLOUCESTER

Madam, I am protector of the realm;
And, at his pleasure, will resign my place.

SUFFOLK

Resign it then and leave thine insolence.
Since thou wert king--as who is king but thou?--
The commonwealth hath daily run to wreck;
The Dauphin hath prevail'd beyond the seas;
And all the peers and nobles of the realm
Have been as bondmen to thy sovereignty.

CARDINAL

The commons hast thou rack'd; the clergy's bags

Are lank and lean with thy extortions.

SOMERSET

Thy sumptuous buildings and thy wife's attire
Have cost a mass of public treasury.

BUCKINGHAM

Thy cruelty in execution
Upon offenders, hath exceeded law,
And left thee to the mercy of the law.

QUEEN MARGARET

They sale of offices and towns in France,
If they were known, as the suspect is great,
Would make thee quickly hop without thy head.

Exit GLOUCESTER. QUEEN MARGARET drops her fan

Give me my fan: what, minion! can ye not?

She gives the DUCHESS a box on the ear

I cry you mercy, madam; was it you?

DUCHESS

Was't I! yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman:
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
I'd set my ten commandments in your face.

KING HENRY VI

Sweet aunt, be quiet; 'twas against her will.

DUCHESS

Against her will! good king, look to't in time;
She'll hamper thee, and dandle thee like a baby:
Though in this place most master wear no breeches,
She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unrevenged.

Exit

BUCKINGHAM

Lord cardinal, I will follow Eleanor,
And listen after Humphrey, how he proceeds:

She's tickled now; her fume needs no spurs,
She'll gallop far enough to her destruction.

Exit

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Now, lords, my choler being over-blown
With walking once about the quadrangle,
I come to talk of commonwealth affairs.
As for your spiteful false objections,
Prove them, and I lie open to the law:
But God in mercy so deal with my soul,
As I in duty love my king and country!
But, to the matter that we have in hand:
I say, my sovereign, York is meetest man
To be your regent in the realm of France.

SUFFOLK

Before we make election, give me leave
To show some reason, of no little force,
That York is most unmeet of any man.

YORK

I'll tell thee, Suffolk, why I am unmeet:
First, for I cannot flatter thee in pride;
Next, if I be appointed for the place,
My Lord of Somerset will keep me here,
Without discharge, money, or furniture,
Till France be won into the Dauphin's hands:
Last time, I danced attendance on his will
Till Paris was besieged, famish'd, and lost.

WARWICK

That can I witness; and a fouler fact
Did never traitor in the land commit.

SUFFOLK

Peace, headstrong Warwick!

WARWICK

Image of pride, why should I hold my peace?

Enter HORNER, the Armourer, and his man PETER, guarded

SUFFOLK

Because here is a man accused of treason:
Pray God the Duke of York excuse himself!

YORK

Doth any one accuse York for a traitor?

KING HENRY VI

What mean'st thou, Suffolk; tell me, what are these?

SUFFOLK

Please it your majesty, this is the man
That doth accuse his master of high treason:
His words were these: that Richard, Duke of York,
Was rightful heir unto the English crown
And that your majesty was a usurper.

KING HENRY VI

Say, man, were these thy words?

HORNER

An't shall please your majesty, I never said nor
thought any such matter: God is my witness, I am
falsely accused by the villain.

PETER

By these ten bones, my lords, he did speak them to
me in the garret one night, as we were scouring my
Lord of York's armour.

YORK

Base dunghill villain and mechanical,
I'll have thy head for this thy traitor's speech.
I do beseech your royal majesty,
Let him have all the rigor of the law.

HORNER

Alas, my lord, hang me, if ever I spake the words.
My accuser is my 'prentice; and when I did correct

him for his fault the other day, he did vow upon his knees he would be even with me: I have good witness of this: therefore I beseech your majesty, do not cast away an honest man for a villain's accusation.

KING HENRY VI

Uncle, what shall we say to this in law?

GLOUCESTER

This doom, my lord, if I may judge:
Let Somerset be regent over the French,
Because in York this breeds suspicion:
And let these have a day appointed them
For single combat in convenient place,
For he hath witness of his servant's malice:
This is the law, and this Duke Humphrey's doom.

SOMERSET

I humbly thank your royal majesty.

HORNER

And I accept the combat willingly.

PETER

Alas, my lord, I cannot fight; for God's sake, pity my case. The spite of man prevaieth against me. O Lord, have mercy upon me! I shall never be able to fight a blow. O Lord, my heart!

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah, or you must fight, or else be hang'd.

KING HENRY VI

Away with them to prison; and the day of combat shall be the last of the next month. Come, Somerset, we'll see thee sent away.

Flourish. Exeunt

SCENE IV. GLOUCESTER's garden.

Enter MARGARET JOURDAIN, HUME, SOUTHWELL, and BOLINGBROKE

HUME

Come, my masters; the duchess, I tell you, expects performance of your promises.

BOLINGBROKE

Master Hume, we are therefore provided: will her ladyship behold and hear our exorcisms?

HUME

Ay, what else? fear you not her courage.

BOLINGBROKE

I have heard her reported to be a woman of an invincible spirit: but it shall be convenient, Master Hume, that you be by her aloft, while we be busy below; and so, I pray you, go, in God's name, and leave us.

Exit HUME

Mother Jourdain, be you prostrate and grovel on the earth; John Southwell, read you; and let us to our work.

Enter the DUCHESS aloft, HUME following

DUCHESS

Well said, my masters; and welcome all. To this gear the sooner the better.

BOLINGBROKE

Patience, good lady; wizards know their times:
Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,
The time of night when Troy was set on fire;
The time when screech-owls cry and ban-dogs howl,
And spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves,
That time best fits the work we have in hand.
Madam, sit you and fear not: whom we raise,
We will make fast within a hallow'd verge.

Here they do the ceremonies belonging, and make the circle; BOLINGBROKE or SOUTHWELL reads, Conjuro te, & c. It thunders and lightens terribly; then the Spirit riseth

Spirit

Adsum.

MARGARET JOURDAIN

Asmath,
By the eternal God, whose name and power
Thou tremblest at, answer that I shall ask;
For, till thou speak, thou shalt not pass from hence.

Spirit

Ask what thou wilt. That I had said and done!

BOLINGBROKE

'First of the king: what shall of him become?'

Reading out of a paper

Spirit

The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose;
But him outlive, and die a violent death.

As the Spirit speaks, SOUTHWELL writes the answer

BOLINGBROKE

'What fates await the Duke of Suffolk?'

Spirit

By water shall he die, and take his end.

BOLINGBROKE

'What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?'

Spirit

Let him shun castles;
Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
Than where castles mounted stand.
Have done, for more I hardly can endure.

BOLINGBROKE

Descend to darkness and the burning lake!
False fiend, avoid!

Thunder and lightning. Exit Spirit

Enter YORK and BUCKINGHAM with their Guard and break in

YORK

Lay hands upon these traitors and their trash.
Beldam, I think we watch'd you at an inch.
What, madam, are you there? the king and commonweal
Are deeply indebted for this piece of pains:
My lord protector will, I doubt it not,
See you well guerdon'd for these good deserts.

DUCHESS

Not half so bad as thine to England's king,
Injurious duke, that threatest where's no cause.

BUCKINGHAM

True, madam, none at all: what call you this?
Away with them! let them be clapp'd up close.
And kept asunder. You, madam, shall with us.
Stafford, take her to thee.

Exeunt above DUCHESS and HUME, guarded

We'll see your trinkets here all forthcoming.
All, away!

Exeunt guard with MARGARET JOURDAIN, SOUTHWELL, & c

YORK

Lord Buckingham, methinks, you watch'd her well:
A pretty plot, well chosen to build upon!
Now, pray, my lord, let's see the devil's writ.
What have we here?

Reads

'The duke yet lives, that Henry shall depose;
But him outlive, and die a violent death.'
Why, this is just
'Aio te, AEacida, Romanos vincere posse.'
Well, to the rest:
'Tell me what fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk?
By water shall he die, and take his end.
What shall betide the Duke of Somerset?
Let him shun castles;

Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
Than where castles mounted stand.'
Come, come, my lords;
These oracles are hardly attain'd,
And hardly understood.
The king is now in progress towards Saint Alban's,
With him the husband of this lovely lady:
Thither go these news, as fast as horse can
carry them:
A sorry breakfast for my lord protector.

BUCKINGHAM

Your grace shall give me leave, my Lord of York,
To be the post, in hope of his reward.

YORK

At your pleasure, my good lord. Who's within
there, ho!

Enter a Servingman

Invite my Lords of Salisbury and Warwick
To sup with me to-morrow night. Away!

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. Saint Alban's.

*Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, GLOUCESTER, CARDINAL, and SUFFOLK,
with Falconers halloing*

QUEEN MARGARET

Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook,
I saw not better sport these seven years' day:
Yet, by your leave, the wind was very high;
And, ten to one, old Joan had not gone out.

KING HENRY VI

But what a point, my lord, your falcon made,
And what a pitch she flew above the rest!
To see how God in all his creatures works!
Yea, man and birds are fain of climbing high.

SUFFOLK

No marvel, an it like your majesty,
My lord protector's hawks do tower so well;
They know their master loves to be aloft,
And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.

GLOUCESTER

My lord, 'tis but a base ignoble mind
That mounts no higher than a bird can soar.

CARDINAL

I thought as much; he would be above the clouds.

GLOUCESTER

Ay, my lord cardinal? how think you by that?
Were it not good your grace could fly to heaven?

KING HENRY VI

The treasury of everlasting joy.

CARDINAL

Thy heaven is on earth; thine eyes and thoughts
Beat on a crown, the treasure of thy heart;
Pernicious protector, dangerous peer,
That smooth'st it so with king and commonweal!

GLOUCESTER

What, cardinal, is your priesthood grown peremptory?
Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?
Churchmen so hot? good uncle, hide such malice;
With such holiness can you do it?

SUFFOLK

No malice, sir; no more than well becomes
So good a quarrel and so bad a peer.

GLOUCESTER

As who, my lord?

SUFFOLK

Why, as you, my lord,
An't like your lordly lord-protectorship.

GLOUCESTER

Why, Suffolk, England knows thine insolence.

QUEEN MARGARET

And thy ambition, Gloucester.

KING HENRY VI

I prithee, peace, good queen,
And whet not on these furious peers;
For blessed are the peacemakers on earth.

CARDINAL

Let me be blessed for the peace I make,
Against this proud protector, with my sword!

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CARDINAL] Faith, holy uncle, would
'twere come to that!

CARDINAL

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Marry, when thou darest.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CARDINAL] Make up no factious
numbers for the matter;
In thine own person answer thy abuse.

CARDINAL

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Ay, where thou darest
not peep: an if thou darest,
This evening, on the east side of the grove.

KING HENRY VI

How now, my lords!

CARDINAL

Believe me, cousin Gloucester,
Had not your man put up the fowl so suddenly,
We had had more sport.

Aside to GLOUCESTER

Come with thy two-hand sword.

GLOUCESTER

True, uncle.

CARDINAL

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Are ye advised? the east side of the grove?

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CARDINAL] Cardinal, I am with you.

KING HENRY VI

Why, how now, uncle Gloucester!

GLOUCESTER

Talking of hawking; nothing else, my lord.

Aside to CARDINAL

Now, by God's mother, priest, I'll shave your crown for this,
Or all my fence shall fail.

CARDINAL

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Medice, teipsum--
Protector, see to't well, protect yourself.

KING HENRY VI

The winds grow high; so do your stomachs, lords.
How irksome is this music to my heart!
When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?
I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife.

Enter a Townsman of Saint Alban's, crying 'A miracle!'

GLOUCESTER

What means this noise?
Fellow, what miracle dost thou proclaim?

Townsman

A miracle! a miracle!

SUFFOLK

Come to the king and tell him what miracle.

Townsman

Forsooth, a blind man at Saint Alban's shrine,
Within this half-hour, hath received his sight;
A man that ne'er saw in his life before.

KING HENRY VI

Now, God be praised, that to believing souls
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair!

Enter the Mayor of Saint Alban's and his brethren, bearing SIMPCOX, between two in a chair, SIMPCOX's Wife following

CARDINAL

Here comes the townsmen on procession,
To present your highness with the man.

KING HENRY VI

Great is his comfort in this earthly vale,
Although by his sight his sin be multiplied.

GLOUCESTER

Stand by, my masters: bring him near the king;
His highness' pleasure is to talk with him.

KING HENRY VI

Good fellow, tell us here the circumstance,
That we for thee may glorify the Lord.
What, hast thou been long blind and now restored?

SIMPCOX

Born blind, an't please your grace.

Wife

Ay, indeed, was he.

SUFFOLK

What woman is this?

Wife

His wife, an't like your worship.

GLOUCESTER

Hadst thou been his mother, thou couldst have
better told.

KING HENRY VI

Where wert thou born?

SIMPCOX

At Berwick in the north, an't like your grace.

KING HENRY VI

Poor soul, God's goodness hath been great to thee:
Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.

QUEEN MARGARET

Tell me, good fellow, camest thou here by chance,
Or of devotion, to this holy shrine?

SIMPCOX

God knows, of pure devotion; being call'd
A hundred times and oftener, in my sleep,
By good Saint Alban; who said, 'Simpcox, come,
Come, offer at my shrine, and I will help thee.'

Wife

Most true, forsooth; and many time and oft
Myself have heard a voice to call him so.

CARDINAL

What, art thou lame?

SIMPCOX

Ay, God Almighty help me!

SUFFOLK

How camest thou so?

SIMPCOX

A fall off of a tree.

Wife

A plum-tree, master.

GLOUCESTER

How long hast thou been blind?

SIMPCOX

Born so, master.

GLOUCESTER

What, and wouldst climb a tree?

SIMPCOX

But that in all my life, when I was a youth.

Wife

Too true; and bought his climbing very dear.

GLOUCESTER

Mass, thou lovedst plums well, that wouldst
venture so.

SIMPCOX

Alas, good master, my wife desired some damsons,
And made me climb, with danger of my life.

GLOUCESTER

A subtle knave! but yet it shall not serve.
Let me see thine eyes: wink now: now open them:
In my opinion yet thou seest not well.

SIMPCOX

Yes, master, clear as day, I thank God and
Saint Alban.

GLOUCESTER

Say'st thou me so? What colour is this cloak of?

SIMPCOX

Red, master; red as blood.

GLOUCESTER

Why, that's well said. What colour is my gown of?

SIMPCOX

Black, forsooth: coal-black as jet.

KING HENRY VI

Why, then, thou know'st what colour jet is of?

SUFFOLK

And yet, I think, jet did he never see.

GLOUCESTER

But cloaks and gowns, before this day, a many.

Wife

Never, before this day, in all his life.

GLOUCESTER

Tell me, sirrah, what's my name?

SIMPCOX

Alas, master, I know not.

GLOUCESTER

What's his name?

SIMPCOX

I know not.

GLOUCESTER

Nor his?

SIMPCOX

No, indeed, master.

GLOUCESTER

What's thine own name?

SIMPCOX

Saunders Simpcox, an if it please you, master.

GLOUCESTER

Then, Saunders, sit there, the lyingest knave in Christendom. If thou hadst been born blind, thou mightest as well have known all our names as thus to name the several colours we do wear. Sight may distinguish of colours, but suddenly to nominate them all, it is impossible. My lords, Saint Alban here hath done a miracle; and would ye not think his cunning to be great, that could restore this cripple to his legs again?

SIMPCOX

O master, that you could!

GLOUCESTER

My masters of Saint Alban's, have you not beadles in your town, and things called whips?

Mayor

Yes, my lord, if it please your grace.

GLOUCESTER

Then send for one presently.

Mayor

Sirrah, go fetch the beadle hither straight.

Exit an Attendant

GLOUCESTER

Now fetch me a stool hither by and by. Now, sirrah,
if you mean to save yourself from whipping, leap me
over this stool and run away.

SIMPCOX

Alas, master, I am not able to stand alone:
You go about to torture me in vain.

Enter a Beadle with whips

GLOUCESTER

Well, sir, we must have you find your legs. Sirrah
beadle, whip him till he leap over that same stool.

Beadle

I will, my lord. Come on, sirrah; off with your
doublet quickly.

SIMPCOX

Alas, master, what shall I do? I am not able to stand.

*After the Beadle hath hit him once, he leaps over the stool and runs away; and they follow
and cry, 'A miracle!'*

KING HENRY VI

O God, seest Thou this, and bearest so long?

QUEEN MARGARET

It made me laugh to see the villain run.

GLOUCESTER

Follow the knave; and take this drab away.

Wife

Alas, sir, we did it for pure need.

GLOUCESTER

Let them be whipped through every market-town, till
they come to Berwick, from whence they came.

Exeunt Wife, Beadle, Mayor, & c

CARDINAL

Duke Humphrey has done a miracle to-day.

SUFFOLK

True; made the lame to leap and fly away.

GLOUCESTER

But you have done more miracles than I;
You made in a day, my lord, whole towns to fly.

Enter BUCKINGHAM

KING HENRY VI

What tidings with our cousin Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM

Such as my heart doth tremble to unfold.
A sort of naughty persons, lewdly bent,
Under the countenance and confederacy
Of Lady Eleanor, the protector's wife,
The ringleader and head of all this rout,
Have practised dangerously against your state,
Dealing with witches and with conjurers:
Whom we have apprehended in the fact;
Raising up wicked spirits from under ground,
Demanding of King Henry's life and death,
And other of your highness' privy-council;
As more at large your grace shall understand.

CARDINAL

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] And so, my lord protector,
by this means
Your lady is forthcoming yet at London.
This news, I think, hath turn'd your weapon's edge;
'Tis like, my lord, you will not keep your hour.

GLOUCESTER

Ambitious churchman, leave to afflict my heart:
Sorrow and grief have vanquish'd all my powers;
And, vanquish'd as I am, I yield to thee,
Or to the meanest groom.

KING HENRY VI

O God, what mischiefs work the wicked ones,
Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!

QUEEN MARGARET

Gloucester, see here the tainture of thy nest.
And look thyself be faultless, thou wert best.

GLOUCESTER

Madam, for myself, to heaven I do appeal,
How I have loved my king and commonweal:
And, for my wife, I know not how it stands;
Sorry I am to hear what I have heard:
Noble she is, but if she have forgot
Honour and virtue and conversed with such
As, like to pitch, defile nobility,
I banish her my bed and company
And give her as a prey to law and shame,
That hath dishonour'd Gloucester's honest name.

KING HENRY VI

Well, for this night we will repose us here:
To-morrow toward London back again,
To look into this business thoroughly
And call these foul offenders to their answers
And poise the cause in justice' equal scales,
Whose beam stands sure, whose rightful cause prevails.

Flourish. Exeunt

SCENE II. London. YORK'S garden.

Enter YORK, SALISBURY, and WARWICK

YORK

Now, my good Lords of Salisbury and Warwick,
Our simple supper ended, give me leave
In this close walk to satisfy myself,
In craving your opinion of my title,
Which is infallible, to England's crown.

SALISBURY

My lord, I long to hear it at full.

WARWICK

Sweet York, begin: and if thy claim be good,
The Nevils are thy subjects to command.

YORK

Then thus:
Edward the Third, my lords, had seven sons:
The first, Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales;
The second, William of Hatfield, and the third,
Lionel Duke of Clarence: next to whom
Was John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster;
The fifth was Edmund Langley, Duke of York;
The sixth was Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester;
William of Windsor was the seventh and last.
Edward the Black Prince died before his father
And left behind him Richard, his only son,
Who after Edward the Third's death reign'd as king;
Till Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster,
The eldest son and heir of John of Gaunt,
Crown'd by the name of Henry the Fourth,
Seized on the realm, deposed the rightful king,
Sent his poor queen to France, from whence she came,
And him to Pomfret; where, as all you know,
Harmless Richard was murder'd traitorously.

WARWICK

Father, the duke hath told the truth:
Thus got the house of Lancaster the crown.

YORK

Which now they hold by force and not by right;
For Richard, the first son's heir, being dead,
The issue of the next son should have reign'd.

SALISBURY

But William of Hatfield died without an heir.

YORK

The third son, Duke of Clarence, from whose line
I claimed the crown, had issue, Philippe, a daughter,
Who married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March:
Edmund had issue, Roger Earl of March;
Roger had issue, Edmund, Anne and Eleanor.

SALISBURY

This Edmund, in the reign of Bolingbroke,
As I have read, laid claim unto the crown;
And, but for Owen Glendower, had been king,
Who kept him in captivity till he died.
But to the rest.

YORK

His eldest sister, Anne,
My mother, being heir unto the crown
Married Richard Earl of Cambridge; who was son
To Edmund Langley, Edward the Third's fifth son.
By her I claim the kingdom: she was heir
To Roger Earl of March, who was the son
Of Edmund Mortimer, who married Philippe,
Sole daughter unto Lionel Duke of Clarence:
So, if the issue of the elder son
Succeed before the younger, I am king.

WARWICK

What plain proceeding is more plain than this?
Henry doth claim the crown from John of Gaunt,
The fourth son; York claims it from the third.
Till Lionel's issue fails, his should not reign:
It fails not yet, but flourishes in thee
And in thy sons, fair slips of such a stock.
Then, father Salisbury, kneel we together;
And in this private plot be we the first
That shall salute our rightful sovereign
With honour of his birthright to the crown.

BOTH

Long live our sovereign Richard, England's king!

YORK

We thank you, lords. But I am not your king
Till I be crown'd and that my sword be stain'd
With heart-blood of the house of Lancaster;
And that's not suddenly to be perform'd,
But with advice and silent secrecy.
Do you as I do in these dangerous days:
Wink at the Duke of Suffolk's insolence,
At Beaufort's pride, at Somerset's ambition,
At Buckingham and all the crew of them,
Till they have snared the shepherd of the flock,

That virtuous prince, the good Duke Humphrey:
'Tis that they seek, and they in seeking that
Shall find their deaths, if York can prophesy.

SALISBURY

My lord, break we off; we know your mind at full.

WARWICK

My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick
Shall one day make the Duke of York a king.

YORK

And, Nevil, this I do assure myself:
Richard shall live to make the Earl of Warwick
The greatest man in England but the king.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A hall of justice.

Sound trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, GLOUCESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, and SALISBURY; the DUCHESS, MARGARET JOURDAIN, SOUTHWELL, HUME, and BOLINGBROKE, under guard

KING HENRY VI

Stand forth, Dame Eleanor Cobham, Gloucester's wife:
In sight of God and us, your guilt is great:
Receive the sentence of the law for sins
Such as by God's book are adjudged to death.
You four, from hence to prison back again;
From thence unto the place of execution:
The witch in Smithfield shall be burn'd to ashes,
And you three shall be strangled on the gallows.
You, madam, for you are more nobly born,
Despoiled of your honour in your life,
Shall, after three days' open penance done,
Live in your country here in banishment,
With Sir John Stanley, in the Isle of Man.

DUCHESS

Welcome is banishment; welcome were my death.

GLOUCESTER

Eleanor, the law, thou see'st, hath judged thee:

I cannot justify whom the law condemns.

Exeunt DUCHESS and other prisoners, guarded

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.
Ah, Humphrey, this dishonour in thine age
Will bring thy head with sorrow to the ground!
I beseech your majesty, give me leave to go;
Sorrow would solace and mine age would ease.

KING HENRY VI

Stay, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester: ere thou go,
Give up thy staff: Henry will to himself
Protector be; and God shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide and lantern to my feet:
And go in peace, Humphrey, no less beloved
Than when thou wert protector to thy King.

QUEEN MARGARET

I see no reason why a king of years
Should be to be protected like a child.
God and King Henry govern England's realm.
Give up your staff, sir, and the king his realm.

GLOUCESTER

My staff? here, noble Henry, is my staff:
As willingly do I the same resign
As e'er thy father Henry made it mine;
And even as willingly at thy feet I leave it
As others would ambitiously receive it.
Farewell, good king: when I am dead and gone,
May honourable peace attend thy throne!

Exit

QUEEN MARGARET

Why, now is Henry king, and Margaret queen;
And Humphrey Duke of Gloucester scarce himself,
That bears so shrewd a maim; two pulls at once;
His lady banish'd, and a limb lopp'd off.
This staff of honour raught, there let it stand
Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand.

SUFFOLK

Thus droops this lofty pine and hangs his sprays;

Thus Eleanor's pride dies in her youngest days.

YORK

Lords, let him go. Please it your majesty,
This is the day appointed for the combat;
And ready are the appellant and defendant,
The armourer and his man, to enter the lists,
So please your highness to behold the fight.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, good my lord; for purposely therefore
Left I the court, to see this quarrel tried.

KING HENRY VI

O God's name, see the lists and all things fit:
Here let them end it; and God defend the right!

YORK

I never saw a fellow worse bested,
Or more afraid to fight, than is the appellant,
The servant of this armourer, my lords.

Enter at one door, HORNER, the Armourer, and his Neighbours, drinking to him so much that he is drunk; and he enters with a drum before him and his staff with a sand-bag fastened to it; and at the other door PETER, his man, with a drum and sand-bag, and 'Prentices drinking to him

First Neighbour

Here, neighbour Horner, I drink to you in a cup of
sack: and fear not, neighbour, you shall do well enough.

Second Neighbour

And here, neighbour, here's a cup of charneco.

Third Neighbour

And here's a pot of good double beer, neighbour:
drink, and fear not your man.

HORNER

Let it come, i' faith, and I'll pledge you all; and
a fig for Peter!
First 'Prentice Here, Peter, I drink to thee: and be not afraid.

Second 'Prentice Be merry, Peter, and fear not thy master: fight for credit of the 'prentices.

PETER

I thank you all: drink, and pray for me, I pray you; for I think I have taken my last draught in this world. Here, Robin, an if I die, I give thee my apron: and, Will, thou shalt have my hammer: and here, Tom, take all the money that I have. O Lord bless me! I pray God! for I am never able to deal with my master, he hath learnt me so much fence already.

SALISBURY

Come, leave your drinking, and fall to blows. Sirrah, what's thy name?

PETER

Peter, forsooth.

SALISBURY

Peter! what more?

PETER

Thump.

SALISBURY

Thump! then see thou thump thy master well.

HORNER

Masters, I am come hither, as it were, upon my man's instigation, to prove him a knave and myself an honest man: and touching the Duke of York, I will take my death, I never meant him any ill, nor the king, nor the queen: and therefore, Peter, have at thee with a downright blow!

YORK

Dispatch: this knave's tongue begins to double. Sound, trumpets, alarum to the combatants!

Alarum. They fight, and PETER strikes him down

HORNER

Hold, Peter, hold! I confess, I confess treason.

Dies

YORK

Take away his weapon. Fellow, thank God, and the good wine in thy master's way.

PETER

O God, have I overcome mine enemy in this presence?
O Peter, thou hast prevailed in right!

KING HENRY VI

Go, take hence that traitor from our sight;
For his death we do perceive his guilt:
And God in justice hath revealed to us
The truth and innocence of this poor fellow,
Which he had thought to have murder'd wrongfully.
Come, fellow, follow us for thy reward.

Sound a flourish. Exeunt

SCENE IV. A street.

Enter GLOUCESTER and his Servingmen, in mourning cloaks

GLOUCESTER

Thus sometimes hath the brightest day a cloud;
And after summer evermore succeeds
Barren winter, with his wrathful nipping cold:
So cares and joys abound, as seasons fleet.
Sirs, what's o'clock?

Servants

Ten, my lord.

GLOUCESTER

Ten is the hour that was appointed me
To watch the coming of my punish'd duchess:
Uneath may she endure the flinty streets,
To tread them with her tender-feeling feet.
Sweet Nell, ill can thy noble mind abrook

The abject people gazing on thy face,
With envious looks, laughing at thy shame,
That erst did follow thy proud chariot-wheels
When thou didst ride in triumph through the streets.
But, soft! I think she comes; and I'll prepare
My tear-stain'd eyes to see her miseries.

Enter the DUCHESS in a white sheet, and a taper burning in her hand; with STANLEY, the Sheriff, and Officers

Servant

So please your grace, we'll take her from the sheriff.

GLOUCESTER

No, stir not, for your lives; let her pass by.

DUCHESS

Come you, my lord, to see my open shame?
Now thou dost penance too. Look how they gaze!
See how the giddy multitude do point,
And nod their heads, and throw their eyes on thee!
Ah, Gloucester, hide thee from their hateful looks,
And, in thy closet pent up, rue my shame,
And ban thine enemies, both mine and thine!

GLOUCESTER

Be patient, gentle Nell; forget this grief.

DUCHESS

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself!
For whilst I think I am thy married wife
And thou a prince, protector of this land,
Methinks I should not thus be led along,
Mail'd up in shame, with papers on my back,
And followed with a rabble that rejoice
To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans.
The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet,
And when I start, the envious people laugh
And bid me be advised how I tread.
Ah, Humphrey, can I bear this shameful yoke?
Trow'st thou that e'er I'll look upon the world,
Or count them happy that enjoy the sun?
No; dark shall be my light and night my day;
To think upon my pomp shall be my hell.
Sometime I'll say, I am Duke Humphrey's wife,

And he a prince and ruler of the land:
Yet so he ruled and such a prince he was
As he stood by whilst I, his forlorn duchess,
Was made a wonder and a pointing-stock
To every idle rascal follower.
But be thou mild and blush not at my shame,
Nor stir at nothing till the axe of death
Hang over thee, as, sure, it shortly will;
For Suffolk, he that can do all in all
With her that hateth thee and hates us all,
And York and impious Beaufort, that false priest,
Have all limed bushes to betray thy wings,
And, fly thou how thou canst, they'll tangle thee:
But fear not thou, until thy foot be snared,
Nor never seek prevention of thy foes.

GLOUCESTER

Ah, Nell, forbear! thou aimest all awry;
I must offend before I be attainted;
And had I twenty times so many foes,
And each of them had twenty times their power,
All these could not procure me any scathe,
So long as I am loyal, true and crimeless.
Wouldst have me rescue thee from this reproach?
Why, yet thy scandal were not wiped away
But I in danger for the breach of law.
Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell:
I pray thee, sort thy heart to patience;
These few days' wonder will be quickly worn.

Enter a Herald

Herald

I summon your grace to his majesty's parliament,
Holden at Bury the first of this next month.

GLOUCESTER

And my consent ne'er ask'd herein before!
This is close dealing. Well, I will be there.

Exit Herald

My Nell, I take my leave: and, master sheriff,
Let not her penance exceed the king's commission.

Sheriff

An't please your grace, here my commission stays,
And Sir John Stanley is appointed now
To take her with him to the Isle of Man.

GLOUCESTER

Must you, Sir John, protect my lady here?

STANLEY

So am I given in charge, may't please your grace.

GLOUCESTER

Entreat her not the worse in that I pray
You use her well: the world may laugh again;
And I may live to do you kindness if
You do it her: and so, Sir John, farewell!

DUCHESS

What, gone, my lord, and bid me not farewell!

GLOUCESTER

Witness my tears, I cannot stay to speak.

Exeunt GLOUCESTER and Servingmen

DUCHESS

Art thou gone too? all comfort go with thee!
For none abides with me: my joy is death;
Death, at whose name I oft have been afraid,
Because I wish'd this world's eternity.
Stanley, I prithee, go, and take me hence;
I care not whither, for I beg no favour,
Only convey me where thou art commanded.

STANLEY

Why, madam, that is to the Isle of Man;
There to be used according to your state.

DUCHESS

That's bad enough, for I am but reproach:
And shall I then be used reproachfully?

STANLEY

Like to a duchess, and Duke Humphrey's lady;
According to that state you shall be used.

DUCHESS

Sheriff, farewell, and better than I fare,
Although thou hast been conduct of my shame.

Sheriff

It is my office; and, madam, pardon me.

DUCHESS

Ay, ay, farewell; thy office is discharged.
Come, Stanley, shall we go?

STANLEY

Madam, your penance done, throw off this sheet,
And go we to attire you for our journey.

DUCHESS

My shame will not be shifted with my sheet:
No, it will hang upon my richest robes
And show itself, attire me how I can.
Go, lead the way; I long to see my prison.

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. The Abbey at Bury St. Edmund's.

Sound a sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SUFFOLK, YORK, BUCKINGHAM, SALISBURY and WARWICK to the Parliament

KING HENRY VI

I muse my Lord of Gloucester is not come:
'Tis not his wont to be the hindmost man,
Whate'er occasion keeps him from us now.

QUEEN MARGARET

Can you not see? or will ye not observe
The strangeness of his alter'd countenance?
With what a majesty he bears himself,
How insolent of late he is become,

How proud, how peremptory, and unlike himself?
We know the time since he was mild and affable,
And if we did but glance a far-off look,
Immediately he was upon his knee,
That all the court admired him for submission:
But meet him now, and, be it in the morn,
When every one will give the time of day,
He knits his brow and shows an angry eye,
And passeth by with stiff unbowed knee,
Disdaining duty that to us belongs.
Small curs are not regarded when they grin;
But great men tremble when the lion roars;
And Humphrey is no little man in England.
First note that he is near you in descent,
And should you fall, he as the next will mount.
Me seemeth then it is no policy,
Respecting what a rancorous mind he bears
And his advantage following your decease,
That he should come about your royal person
Or be admitted to your highness' council.
By flattery hath he won the commons' hearts,
And when he please to make commotion,
'Tis to be fear'd they all will follow him.
Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted;
Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden
And choke the herbs for want of husbandry.
The reverent care I bear unto my lord
Made me collect these dangers in the duke.
If it be fond, call it a woman's fear;
Which fear if better reasons can supplant,
I will subscribe and say I wrong'd the duke.
My Lord of Suffolk, Buckingham, and York,
Reprove my allegation, if you can;
Or else conclude my words effectual.

SUFFOLK

Well hath your highness seen into this duke;
And, had I first been put to speak my mind,
I think I should have told your grace's tale.
The duchess, by his subornation,
Upon my life, began her devilish practises:
Or, if he were not privy to those faults,
Yet, by repute of his high descent,
As next the king he was successive heir,
And such high vaunts of his nobility,
Did instigate the bedlam brain-sick duchess
By wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall.
Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep;
And in his simple show he harbours treason.
The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb.

No, no, my sovereign; Gloucester is a man
Unsound yet and full of deep deceit.

CARDINAL

Did he not, contrary to form of law,
Devise strange deaths for small offences done?

YORK

And did he not, in his protectorship,
Levy great sums of money through the realm
For soldiers' pay in France, and never sent it?
By means whereof the towns each day revolted.

BUCKINGHAM

Tut, these are petty faults to faults unknown.
Which time will bring to light in smooth
Duke Humphrey.

KING HENRY VI

My lords, at once: the care you have of us,
To mow down thorns that would annoy our foot,
Is worthy praise: but, shall I speak my conscience,
Our kinsman Gloucester is as innocent
From meaning treason to our royal person
As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove:
The duke is virtuous, mild and too well given
To dream on evil or to work my downfall.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, what's more dangerous than this fond affiance!
Seems he a dove? his feathers are but borrowed,
For he's disposed as the hateful raven:
Is he a lamb? his skin is surely lent him,
For he's inclined as is the ravenous wolf.
Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit?
Take heed, my lord; the welfare of us all
Hangs on the cutting short that fraudulent man.

Enter SOMERSET

SOMERSET

All health unto my gracious sovereign!

KING HENRY VI

Welcome, Lord Somerset. What news from France?

SOMERSET

That all your interest in those territories
Is utterly bereft you; all is lost.

KING HENRY VI

Cold news, Lord Somerset: but God's will be done!

YORK

[Aside] Cold news for me; for I had hope of France
As firmly as I hope for fertile England.
Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud
And caterpillars eat my leaves away;
But I will remedy this gear ere long,
Or sell my title for a glorious grave.

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

All happiness unto my lord the king!
Pardon, my liege, that I have stay'd so long.

SUFFOLK

Nay, Gloucester, know that thou art come too soon,
Unless thou wert more loyal than thou art:
I do arrest thee of high treason here.

GLOUCESTER

Well, Suffolk, thou shalt not see me blush
Nor change my countenance for this arrest:
A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.
The purest spring is not so free from mud
As I am clear from treason to my sovereign:
Who can accuse me? wherein am I guilty?

YORK

'Tis thought, my lord, that you took bribes of France,
And, being protector, stayed the soldiers' pay;
By means whereof his highness hath lost France.

GLOUCESTER

Is it but thought so? what are they that think it?
I never robb'd the soldiers of their pay,
Nor ever had one penny bribe from France.
So help me God, as I have watch'd the night,
Ay, night by night, in studying good for England,
That do it that e'er I wrested from the king,
Or any groat I hoarded to my use,
Be brought against me at my trial-day!
No; many a pound of mine own proper store,
Because I would not tax the needy commons,
Have I disbursed to the garrisons,
And never ask'd for restitution.

CARDINAL

It serves you well, my lord, to say so much.

GLOUCESTER

I say no more than truth, so help me God!

YORK

In your protectorship you did devise
Strange tortures for offenders never heard of,
That England was defamed by tyranny.

GLOUCESTER

Why, 'tis well known that, whiles I was
protector,
Pity was all the fault that was in me;
For I should melt at an offender's tears,
And lowly words were ransom for their fault.
Unless it were a bloody murderer,
Or foul felonious thief that fleeced poor passengers,
I never gave them condign punishment:
Murder indeed, that bloody sin, I tortured
Above the felon or what trespass else.

SUFFOLK

My lord, these faults are easy, quickly answered:
But mightier crimes are laid unto your charge,
Whereof you cannot easily purge yourself.
I do arrest you in his highness' name;
And here commit you to my lord cardinal
To keep, until your further time of trial.

KING HENRY VI

My lord of Gloucester, 'tis my special hope
That you will clear yourself from all suspect:
My conscience tells me you are innocent.

GLOUCESTER

Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous:
Virtue is choked with foul ambition
And charity chased hence by rancour's hand;
Foul subornation is predominant
And equity exiled your highness' land.
I know their complot is to have my life,
And if my death might make this island happy,
And prove the period of their tyranny,
I would expend it with all willingness:
But mine is made the prologue to their play;
For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.
Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,
And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate;
Sharp Buckingham unburthens with his tongue
The envious load that lies upon his heart;
And dogged York, that reaches at the moon,
Whose overweening arm I have pluck'd back,
By false accuse doth level at my life:
And you, my sovereign lady, with the rest,
Causeless have laid disgraces on my head,
And with your best endeavour have stirr'd up
My liefeest liege to be mine enemy:
Ay, all you have laid your heads together--
Myself had notice of your conventicles--
And all to make away my guiltless life.
I shall not want false witness to condemn me,
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;
The ancient proverb will be well effected:
'A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.'

CARDINAL

My liege, his railing is intolerable:
If those that care to keep your royal person
From treason's secret knife and traitors' rage
Be thus upbraided, chid and rated at,
And the offender granted scope of speech,
'Twill make them cool in zeal unto your grace.

SUFFOLK

Hath he not twit our sovereign lady here
With ignominious words, though clerkly couch'd,

As if she had suborned some to swear
False allegations to o'erthrow his state?

QUEEN MARGARET

But I can give the loser leave to chide.

GLOUCESTER

Far truer spoke than meant: I lose, indeed;
Beshrew the winners, for they play'd me false!
And well such losers may have leave to speak.

BUCKINGHAM

He'll wrest the sense and hold us here all day:
Lord cardinal, he is your prisoner.

CARDINAL

Sirs, take away the duke, and guard him sure.

GLOUCESTER

Ah! thus King Henry throws away his crutch
Before his legs be firm to bear his body.
Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side,
And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first.
Ah, that my fear were false! ah, that it were!
For, good King Henry, thy decay I fear.

Exit, guarded

KING HENRY VI

My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,
Do or undo, as if ourself were here.

QUEEN MARGARET

What, will your highness leave the parliament?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drown'd with grief,
Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes,
My body round engirt with misery,
For what's more miserable than discontent?
Ah, uncle Humphrey! in thy face I see
The map of honour, truth and loyalty:

And yet, good Humphrey, is the hour to come
That e'er I proved thee false or fear'd thy faith.
What loursing star now envies thy estate,
That these great lords and Margaret our queen
Do seek subversion of thy harmless life?
Thou never didst them wrong, nor no man wrong;
And as the butcher takes away the calf
And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays,
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,
Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;
And as the dam runs lowing up and down,
Looking the way her harmless young one went,
And can do nought but wail her darling's loss,
Even so myself bewails good Gloucester's case
With sad unhelpful tears, and with dimm'd eyes
Look after him and cannot do him good,
So mighty are his vowed enemies.
His fortunes I will weep; and, 'twixt each groan
Say 'Who's a traitor? Gloucester he is none.'

*Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SUFFOLK, and YORK; SOMERSET
remains apart*

QUEEN MARGARET

Free lords, cold snow melts with the sun's hot beams.
Henry my lord is cold in great affairs,
Too full of foolish pity, and Gloucester's show
Beguiles him as the mournful crocodile
With sorrow snares relenting passengers,
Or as the snake roll'd in a flowering bank,
With shining chequer'd slough, doth sting a child
That for the beauty thinks it excellent.
Believe me, lords, were none more wise than I--
And yet herein I judge mine own wit good--
This Gloucester should be quickly rid the world,
To rid us of the fear we have of him.

CARDINAL

That he should die is worthy policy;
But yet we want a colour for his death:
'Tis meet he be condemn'd by course of law.

SUFFOLK

But, in my mind, that were no policy:
The king will labour still to save his life,
The commons haply rise, to save his life;
And yet we have but trivial argument,

More than mistrust, that shows him worthy death.

YORK

So that, by this, you would not have him die.

SUFFOLK

Ah, York, no man alive so fain as I!

YORK

'Tis York that hath more reason for his death.
But, my lord cardinal, and you, my Lord of Suffolk,
Say as you think, and speak it from your souls,
Were't not all one, an empty eagle were set
To guard the chicken from a hungry kite,
As place Duke Humphrey for the king's protector?

QUEEN MARGARET

So the poor chicken should be sure of death.

SUFFOLK

Madam, 'tis true; and were't not madness, then,
To make the fox surveyor of the fold?
Who being accused a crafty murderer,
His guilt should be but idly posted over,
Because his purpose is not executed.
No; let him die, in that he is a fox,
By nature proved an enemy to the flock,
Before his chaps be stain'd with crimson blood,
As Humphrey, proved by reasons, to my liege.
And do not stand on quilllets how to slay him:
Be it by gins, by snares, by subtlety,
Sleeping or waking, 'tis no matter how,
So he be dead; for that is good deceit
Which mates him first that first intends deceit.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thrice-noble Suffolk, 'tis resolutely spoke.

SUFFOLK

Not resolute, except so much were done;
For things are often spoke and seldom meant:
But that my heart accordeth with my tongue,
Seeing the deed is meritorious,

And to preserve my sovereign from his foe,
Say but the word, and I will be his priest.

CARDINAL

But I would have him dead, my Lord of Suffolk,
Ere you can take due orders for a priest:
Say you consent and censure well the deed,
And I'll provide his executioner,
I tender so the safety of my liege.

SUFFOLK

Here is my hand, the deed is worthy doing.

QUEEN MARGARET

And so say I.

YORK

And I and now we three have spoke it,
It skills not greatly who impugns our doom.

Enter a Post

Post

Great lords, from Ireland am I come amain,
To signify that rebels there are up
And put the Englishmen unto the sword:
Send succors, lords, and stop the rage betime,
Before the wound do grow uncurable;
For, being green, there is great hope of help.

CARDINAL

A breach that craves a quick expedient stop!
What counsel give you in this weighty cause?

YORK

That Somerset be sent as regent thither:
'Tis meet that lucky ruler be employ'd;
Witness the fortune he hath had in France.

SOMERSET

If York, with all his far-fet policy,
Had been the regent there instead of me,

He never would have stay'd in France so long.

YORK

No, not to lose it all, as thou hast done:
I rather would have lost my life betimes
Than bring a burthen of dishonour home
By staying there so long till all were lost.
Show me one scar character'd on thy skin:
Men's flesh preserved so whole do seldom win.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, then, this spark will prove a raging fire,
If wind and fuel be brought to feed it with:
No more, good York; sweet Somerset, be still:
Thy fortune, York, hadst thou been regent there,
Might happily have proved far worse than his.

YORK

What, worse than nought? nay, then, a shame take all!

SOMERSET

And, in the number, thee that wishest shame!

CARDINAL

My Lord of York, try what your fortune is.
The uncivil kerns of Ireland are in arms
And temper clay with blood of Englishmen:
To Ireland will you lead a band of men,
Collected choicely, from each county some,
And try your hap against the Irishmen?

YORK

I will, my lord, so please his majesty.

SUFFOLK

Why, our authority is his consent,
And what we do establish he confirms:
Then, noble York, take thou this task in hand.

YORK

I am content: provide me soldiers, lords,
Whiles I take order for mine own affairs.

SUFFOLK

A charge, Lord York, that I will see perform'd.
But now return we to the false Duke Humphrey.

CARDINAL

No more of him; for I will deal with him
That henceforth he shall trouble us no more.
And so break off; the day is almost spent:
Lord Suffolk, you and I must talk of that event.

YORK

My Lord of Suffolk, within fourteen days
At Bristol I expect my soldiers;
For there I'll ship them all for Ireland.

SUFFOLK

I'll see it truly done, my Lord of York.

Exeunt all but YORK

YORK

Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,
And change misdoubt to resolution:
Be that thou hopest to be, or what thou art
Resign to death; it is not worth the enjoying:
Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man,
And find no harbour in a royal heart.
Faster than spring-time showers comes thought
on thought,
And not a thought but thinks on dignity.
My brain more busy than the labouring spider
Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.
Well, nobles, well, 'tis politicly done,
To send me packing with an host of men:
I fear me you but warm the starved snake,
Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting
your hearts.
'Twas men I lack'd and you will give them me:
I take it kindly; and yet be well assured
You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.
Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,
I will stir up in England some black storm
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage
Until the golden circuit on my head,

Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,
Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.
And, for a minister of my intent,
I have seduced a headstrong Kentishman,
John Cade of Ashford,
To make commotion, as full well he can,
Under the title of John Mortimer.
In Ireland have I seen this stubborn Cade
Oppose himself against a troop of kerns,
And fought so long, till that his thighs with darts
Were almost like a sharp-quill'd porpentine;
And, in the end being rescued, I have seen
Him caper upright like a wild Morisco,
Shaking the bloody darts as he his bells.
Full often, like a shag-hair'd crafty kern,
Hath he conversed with the enemy,
And undiscover'd come to me again
And given me notice of their villanies.
This devil here shall be my substitute;
For that John Mortimer, which now is dead,
In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble:
By this I shall perceive the commons' mind,
How they affect the house and claim of York.
Say he be taken, rack'd and tortured,
I know no pain they can inflict upon him
Will make him say I moved him to those arms.
Say that he thrive, as 'tis great like he will,
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;
For Humphrey being dead, as he shall be,
And Henry put apart, the next for me.

Exit

SCENE II. Bury St. Edmund's. A room of state.

Enter certain Murderers, hastily

First Murderer

Run to my Lord of Suffolk; let him know
We have dispatch'd the duke, as he commanded.

Second Murderer

O that it were to do! What have we done?
Didst ever hear a man so penitent?

Enter SUFFOLK

First Murderer

Here comes my lord.

SUFFOLK

Now, sirs, have you dispatch'd this thing?

First Murderer

Ay, my good lord, he's dead.

SUFFOLK

Why, that's well said. Go, get you to my house;
I will reward you for this venturous deed.
The king and all the peers are here at hand.
Have you laid fair the bed? Is all things well,
According as I gave directions?

First Murderer

'Tis, my good lord.

SUFFOLK

Away! be gone.

Exeunt Murderers

*Sound trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SOMERSET,
with Attendants*

KING HENRY VI

Go, call our uncle to our presence straight;
Say we intend to try his grace to-day.
If he be guilty, as 'tis published.

SUFFOLK

I'll call him presently, my noble lord.

Exit

KING HENRY VI

Lords, take your places; and, I pray you all,
Proceed no straiter 'gainst our uncle Gloucester
Than from true evidence of good esteem
He be approved in practise culpable.

QUEEN MARGARET

God forbid any malice should prevail,
That faultless may condemn a nobleman!
Pray God he may acquit him of suspicion!

KING HENRY VI

I thank thee, Meg; these words content me much.

Re-enter SUFFOLK

How now! why look'st thou pale? why tremblest thou?
Where is our uncle? what's the matter, Suffolk?

SUFFOLK

Dead in his bed, my lord; Gloucester is dead.

QUEEN MARGARET

Marry, God forfend!

CARDINAL

God's secret judgment: I did dream to-night
The duke was dumb and could not speak a word.

KING HENRY VI swoons

QUEEN MARGARET

How fares my lord? Help, lords! the king is dead.

SOMERSET

Rear up his body; wring him by the nose.

QUEEN MARGARET

Run, go, help, help! O Henry, ope thine eyes!

SUFFOLK

He doth revive again: madam, be patient.

KING HENRY VI

O heavenly God!

QUEEN MARGARET

How fares my gracious lord?

SUFFOLK

Comfort, my sovereign! gracious Henry, comfort!

KING HENRY VI

What, doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?
Came he right now to sing a raven's note,
Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers;
And thinks he that the chirping of a wren,
By crying comfort from a hollow breast,
Can chase away the first-conceived sound?
Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words;
Lay not thy hands on me; forbear, I say;
Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!
Upon thy eye-balls murderous tyranny
Sits in grim majesty, to fright the world.
Look not upon me, for thine eyes are wounding:
Yet do not go away: come, basilisk,
And kill the innocent gazer with thy sight;
For in the shade of death I shall find joy;
In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead.

QUEEN MARGARET

Why do you rate my Lord of Suffolk thus?
Although the duke was enemy to him,
Yet he most Christian-like laments his death:
And for myself, foe as he was to me,
Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans
Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,
I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,
And all to have the noble duke alive.
What know I how the world may deem of me?
For it is known we were but hollow friends:
It may be judged I made the duke away;
So shall my name with slander's tongue be wounded,
And princes' courts be fill'd with my reproach.
This get I by his death: ay me, unhappy!
To be a queen, and crown'd with infamy!

KING HENRY VI

Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man!

QUEEN MARGARET

Be woe for me, more wretched than he is.
What, dost thou turn away and hide thy face?
I am no loathsome leper; look on me.
What! art thou, like the adder, waxen deaf?
Be poisonous too and kill thy forlorn queen.
Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb?
Why, then, dame Margaret was ne'er thy joy.
Erect his statue and worship it,
And make my image but an alehouse sign.
Was I for this nigh wreck'd upon the sea
And twice by awkward wind from England's bank
Drove back again unto my native clime?
What boded this, but well forewarning wind
Did seem to say 'Seek not a scorpion's nest,
Nor set no footing on this unkind shore'?
What did I then, but cursed the gentle gusts
And he that loosed them forth their brazen caves:
And bid them blow towards England's blessed shore,
Or turn our stern upon a dreadful rock
Yet AEolus would not be a murderer,
But left that hateful office unto thee:
The pretty-vaulting sea refused to drown me,
Knowing that thou wouldst have me drown'd on shore,
With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness:
The splitting rocks cower'd in the sinking sands
And would not dash me with their ragged sides,
Because thy flinty heart, more hard than they,
Might in thy palace perish Margaret.
As far as I could ken thy chalky cliffs,
When from thy shore the tempest beat us back,
I stood upon the hatches in the storm,
And when the dusky sky began to rob
My earnest-gaping sight of thy land's view,
I took a costly jewel from my neck,
A heart it was, bound in with diamonds,
And threw it towards thy land: the sea received it,
And so I wish'd thy body might my heart:
And even with this I lost fair England's view
And bid mine eyes be packing with my heart
And call'd them blind and dusky spectacles,
For losing ken of Albion's wished coast.
How often have I tempted Suffolk's tongue,
The agent of thy foul inconstancy,
To sit and witch me, as Ascanius did
When he to madding Dido would unfold
His father's acts commenced in burning Troy!
Am I not witch'd like her? or thou not false like him?
Ay me, I can no more! die, Margaret!
For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long.

Noise within. Enter WARWICK, SALISBURY, and many Commons

WARWICK

It is reported, mighty sovereign,
That good Duke Humphrey traitorously is murder'd
By Suffolk and the Cardinal Beaufort's means.
The commons, like an angry hive of bees
That want their leader, scatter up and down
And care not who they sting in his revenge.
Myself have calm'd their spleenful mutiny,
Until they hear the order of his death.

KING HENRY VI

That he is dead, good Warwick, 'tis too true;
But how he died God knows, not Henry:
Enter his chamber, view his breathless corpse,
And comment then upon his sudden death.

WARWICK

That shall I do, my liege. Stay, Salisbury,
With the rude multitude till I return.

Exit

KING HENRY VI

O Thou that judgest all things, stay my thoughts,
My thoughts, that labour to persuade my soul
Some violent hands were laid on Humphrey's life!
If my suspect be false, forgive me, God,
For judgment only doth belong to thee.
Fain would I go to chafe his paly lips
With twenty thousand kisses, and to drain
Upon his face an ocean of salt tears,
To tell my love unto his dumb deaf trunk,
And with my fingers feel his hand unfeeling:
But all in vain are these mean obsequies;
And to survey his dead and earthly image,
What were it but to make my sorrow greater?

Re-enter WARWICK and others, bearing GLOUCESTER'S body on a bed

WARWICK

Come hither, gracious sovereign, view this body.

KING HENRY VI

That is to see how deep my grave is made;
For with his soul fled all my worldly solace,
For seeing him I see my life in death.

WARWICK

As surely as my soul intends to live
With that dread King that took our state upon him
To free us from his father's wrathful curse,
I do believe that violent hands were laid
Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke.

SUFFOLK

A dreadful oath, sworn with a solemn tongue!
What instance gives Lord Warwick for his vow?

WARWICK

See how the blood is settled in his face.
Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost,
Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale and bloodless,
Being all descended to the labouring heart;
Who, in the conflict that it holds with death,
Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the enemy;
Which with the heart there cools and ne'er returneth
To blush and beautify the cheek again.
But see, his face is black and full of blood,
His eye-balls further out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly like a strangled man;
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretched with struggling;
His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd
And tugg'd for life and was by strength subdued:
Look, on the sheets his hair you see, is sticking;
His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged,
Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.
It cannot be but he was murder'd here;
The least of all these signs were probable.

SUFFOLK

Why, Warwick, who should do the duke to death?
Myself and Beaufort had him in protection;
And we, I hope, sir, are no murderers.

WARWICK

But both of you were vow'd Duke Humphrey's foes,
And you, forsooth, had the good duke to keep:
'Tis like you would not feast him like a friend;

And 'tis well seen he found an enemy.

QUEEN MARGARET

Then you, belike, suspect these noblemen
As guilty of Duke Humphrey's timeless death.

WARWICK

Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh
And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,
But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?
Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,
But may imagine how the bird was dead,
Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?
Even so suspicious is this tragedy.

QUEEN MARGARET

Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?
Is Beaufort term'd a kite? Where are his talons?

SUFFOLK

I wear no knife to slaughter sleeping men;
But here's a vengeful sword, rusted with ease,
That shall be scour'd in his rancorous heart
That slanders me with murder's crimson badge.
Say, if thou darest, proud Lord of Warwick-shire,
That I am faulty in Duke Humphrey's death.

Exeunt CARDINAL, SOMERSET, and others

WARWICK

What dares not Warwick, if false Suffolk dare him?

QUEEN MARGARET

He dares not calm his contumelious spirit
Nor cease to be an arrogant controller,
Though Suffolk dare him twenty thousand times.

WARWICK

Madam, be still; with reverence may I say;
For every word you speak in his behalf
Is slander to your royal dignity.

SUFFOLK

Blunt-witted lord, ignoble in demeanor!
If ever lady wrong'd her lord so much,
Thy mother took into her blameful bed
Some stern untutor'd churl, and noble stock
Was graft with crab-tree slip; whose fruit thou art,
And never of the Nevils' noble race.

WARWICK

But that the guilt of murder bucklers thee
And I should rob the deathsman of his fee,
Quitting thee thereby of ten thousand shames,
And that my sovereign's presence makes me mild,
I would, false murderous coward, on thy knee
Make thee beg pardon for thy passed speech,
And say it was thy mother that thou meant'st
That thou thyself was born in bastardy;
And after all this fearful homage done,
Give thee thy hire and send thy soul to hell,
Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men!

SUFFOLK

Thou shall be waking well I shed thy blood,
If from this presence thou darest go with me.

WARWICK

Away even now, or I will drag thee hence:
Unworthy though thou art, I'll cope with thee
And do some service to Duke Humphrey's ghost.

Exeunt SUFFOLK and WARWICK

KING HENRY VI

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

A noise within

QUEEN MARGARET

What noise is this?

Re-enter SUFFOLK and WARWICK, with their weapons drawn

KING HENRY VI

Why, how now, lords! your wrathful weapons drawn
Here in our presence! dare you be so bold?
Why, what tumultuous clamour have we here?

SUFFOLK

The traitorous Warwick with the men of Bury
Set all upon me, mighty sovereign.

SALISBURY

[To the Commons, entering] Sirs, stand apart;
the king shall know your mind.
Dread lord, the commons send you word by me,
Unless Lord Suffolk straight be done to death,
Or banished fair England's territories,
They will by violence tear him from your palace
And torture him with grievous lingering death.
They say, by him the good Duke Humphrey died;
They say, in him they fear your highness' death;
And mere instinct of love and loyalty,
Free from a stubborn opposite intent,
As being thought to contradict your liking,
Makes them thus forward in his banishment.
They say, in care of your most royal person,
That if your highness should intend to sleep
And charge that no man should disturb your rest
In pain of your dislike or pain of death,
Yet, notwithstanding such a strait edict,
Were there a serpent seen, with forked tongue,
That slily glided towards your majesty,
It were but necessary you were waked,
Lest, being suffer'd in that harmful slumber,
The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal;
And therefore do they cry, though you forbid,
That they will guard you, whether you will or no,
From such fell serpents as false Suffolk is,
With whose envenomed and fatal sting,
Your loving uncle, twenty times his worth,
They say, is shamefully bereft of life.

Commons

[Within] An answer from the king, my
Lord of Salisbury!

SUFFOLK

'Tis like the commons, rude unpolish'd hinds,
Could send such message to their sovereign:

But you, my lord, were glad to be employ'd,
To show how quaint an orator you are:
But all the honour Salisbury hath won
Is, that he was the lord ambassador
Sent from a sort of tinkers to the king.

Commons

[Within] An answer from the king, or we will all break in!

KING HENRY VI

Go, Salisbury, and tell them all from me.
I thank them for their tender loving care;
And had I not been cited so by them,
Yet did I purpose as they do entreat;
For, sure, my thoughts do hourly prophesy
Mischance unto my state by Suffolk's means:
And therefore, by His majesty I swear,
Whose far unworthy deputy I am,
He shall not breathe infection in this air
But three days longer, on the pain of death.

Exit SALISBURY

QUEEN MARGARET

O Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk!

KING HENRY VI

Ungentle queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!
No more, I say: if thou dost plead for him,
Thou wilt but add increase unto my wrath.
Had I but said, I would have kept my word,
But when I swear, it is irrevocable.
If, after three days' space, thou here be'st found
On any ground that I am ruler of,
The world shall not be ransom for thy life.
Come, Warwick, come, good Warwick, go with me;
I have great matters to impart to thee.

Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET and SUFFOLK

QUEEN MARGARET

Mischance and sorrow go along with you!
Heart's discontent and sour affliction
Be playfellows to keep you company!
There's two of you; the devil make a third!

And threefold vengeance tend upon your steps!

SUFFOLK

Cease, gentle queen, these execrations,
And let thy Suffolk take his heavy leave.

QUEEN MARGARET

Fie, coward woman and soft-hearted wretch!
Hast thou not spirit to curse thine enemy?

SUFFOLK

A plague upon them! wherefore should I curse them?
Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,
I would invent as bitter-searching terms,
As curst, as harsh and horrible to hear,
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-faced Envy in her loathsome cave:
My tongue should stumble in mine earnest words;
Mine eyes should sparkle like the beaten flint;
Mine hair be fixed on end, as one distract;
Ay, every joint should seem to curse and ban:
And even now my burthen'd heart would break,
Should I not curse them. Poison be their drink!
Gall, worse than gall, the daintiest that they taste!
Their sweetest shade a grove of cypress trees!
Their chiefest prospect murdering basilisks!
Their softest touch as smart as lizards' sting!
Their music frightful as the serpent's hiss,
And boding screech-owls make the concert full!
All the foul terrors in dark-seated hell--

QUEEN MARGARET

Enough, sweet Suffolk; thou torment'st thyself;
And these dread curses, like the sun 'gainst glass,
Or like an overcharged gun, recoil,
And turn the force of them upon thyself.

SUFFOLK

You bade me ban, and will you bid me leave?
Now, by the ground that I am banish'd from,
Well could I curse away a winter's night,
Though standing naked on a mountain top,
Where biting cold would never let grass grow,
And think it but a minute spent in sport.

QUEEN MARGARET

O, let me entreat thee cease. Give me thy hand,
That I may dew it with my mournful tears;
Nor let the rain of heaven wet this place,
To wash away my woful monuments.
O, could this kiss be printed in thy hand,
That thou mightst think upon these by the seal,
Through whom a thousand sighs are breathed for thee!
So, get thee gone, that I may know my grief;
'Tis but surmised whiles thou art standing by,
As one that surfeits thinking on a want.
I will repeal thee, or, be well assured,
Adventure to be banished myself:
And banished I am, if but from thee.
Go; speak not to me; even now be gone.
O, go not yet! Even thus two friends condemn'd
Embrace and kiss and take ten thousand leaves,
Loather a hundred times to part than die.
Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee!

SUFFOLK

Thus is poor Suffolk ten times banished;
Once by the king, and three times thrice by thee.
'Tis not the land I care for, wert thou thence;
A wilderness is populous enough,
So Suffolk had thy heavenly company:
For where thou art, there is the world itself,
With every several pleasure in the world,
And where thou art not, desolation.
I can no more: live thou to joy thy life;
Myself no joy in nought but that thou livest.

Enter VAUX

QUEEN MARGARET

Wither goes Vaux so fast? what news, I prithee?

VAUX

To signify unto his majesty
That Cardinal Beaufort is at point of death;
For suddenly a grievous sickness took him,
That makes him gasp and stare and catch the air,
Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth.
Sometimes he talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost
Were by his side; sometime he calls the king,
And whispers to his pillow, as to him,

The secrets of his overcharged soul;
And I am sent to tell his majesty
That even now he cries aloud for him.

QUEEN MARGARET

Go tell this heavy message to the king.

Exit VAUX

Ay me! what is this world! what news are these!
But wherefore grieve I at an hour's poor loss,
Omitting Suffolk's exile, my soul's treasure?
Why only, Suffolk, mourn I not for thee,
And with the southern clouds contend in tears,
Theirs for the earth's increase, mine for my sorrows?
Now get thee hence: the king, thou know'st, is coming;
If thou be found by me, thou art but dead.

SUFFOLK

If I depart from thee, I cannot live;
And in thy sight to die, what were it else
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?
Here could I breathe my soul into the air,
As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe
Dying with mother's dug between its lips:
Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad,
And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,
To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth;
So shouldst thou either turn my flying soul,
Or I should breathe it so into thy body,
And then it lived in sweet Elysium.
To die by thee were but to die in jest;
From thee to die were torture more than death:
O, let me stay, befall what may befall!

QUEEN MARGARET

Away! though parting be a fretful corrosive,
It is applied to a deathful wound.
To France, sweet Suffolk: let me hear from thee;
For wheresoe'er thou art in this world's globe,
I'll have an Iris that shall find thee out.

SUFFOLK

I go.

QUEEN MARGARET

And take my heart with thee.

SUFFOLK

A jewel, lock'd into the wofull'st cask
That ever did contain a thing of worth.
Even as a splitted bark, so sunder we
This way fall I to death.

QUEEN MARGARET

This way for me.

Exeunt severally

SCENE III. A bedchamber.

Enter the KING, SALISBURY, WARWICK, to the CARDINAL in bed

KING HENRY VI

How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to
thy sovereign.

CARDINAL

If thou be'st death, I'll give thee England's treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain.

KING HENRY VI

Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is seen so terrible!

WARWICK

Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee.

CARDINAL

Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he not in his bed? where should he die?
Can I make men live, whether they will or no?
O, torture me no more! I will confess.
Alive again? then show me where he is:
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair; look, look! it stands upright,
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.

Give me some drink; and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.

KING HENRY VI

O thou eternal Mover of the heavens.
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul.
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

WARWICK

See, how the pangs of death do make him grin!

SALISBURY

Disturb him not; let him pass peaceably.

KING HENRY VI

Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!
Lord cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him!

WARWICK

So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

KING HENRY VI

Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close;
And let us all to meditation.

Exeunt

ACT IV

SCENE I. The coast of Kent.

*Alarum. Fight at sea. Ordnance goes off. Enter a Captain, a Master, a Master's-mate,
WALTER WHITMORE, and others; with them SUFFOLK, and others, prisoners*

Captain

The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea;
And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades

That drag the tragic melancholy night;
Who, with their drowsy, slow and flagging wings,
Clip dead men's graves and from their misty jaws
Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.
Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize;
For, whilst our pinnace anchors in the Downs,
Here shall they make their ransom on the sand,
Or with their blood stain this discolour'd shore.
Master, this prisoner freely give I thee;
And thou that art his mate, make boot of this;
The other, Walter Whitmore, is thy share.

First Gentleman

What is my ransom, master? let me know.

Master

A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.
Master's-Mate And so much shall you give, or off goes yours.

Captain

What, think you much to pay two thousand crowns,
And bear the name and port of gentlemen?
Cut both the villains' throats; for die you shall:
The lives of those which we have lost in fight
Be counterpoised with such a petty sum!

First Gentleman

I'll give it, sir; and therefore spare my life.

Second Gentleman

And so will I and write home for it straight.

WHITMORE

I lost mine eye in laying the prize aboard,
And therefore to revenge it, shalt thou die;

To SUFFOLK

And so should these, if I might have my will.

Captain

Be not so rash; take ransom, let him live.

SUFFOLK

Look on my George; I am a gentleman:
Rate me at what thou wilt, thou shalt be paid.

WHITMORE

And so am I; my name is Walter Whitmore.
How now! why start'st thou? what, doth
death affright?

SUFFOLK

Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.
A cunning man did calculate my birth
And told me that by water I should die:
Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded;
Thy name is Gaultier, being rightly sounded.

WHITMORE

Gaultier or Walter, which it is, I care not:
Never yet did base dishonour blur our name,
But with our sword we wiped away the blot;
Therefore, when merchant-like I sell revenge,
Broke be my sword, my arms torn and defaced,
And I proclaim'd a coward through the world!

SUFFOLK

Stay, Whitmore; for thy prisoner is a prince,
The Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole.

WHITMORE

The Duke of Suffolk muffled up in rags!

SUFFOLK

Ay, but these rags are no part of the duke:
Jove sometimes went disguised, and why not I?

Captain

But Jove was never slain, as thou shalt be.

SUFFOLK

Obscure and lowly swain, King Henry's blood,
The honourable blood of Lancaster,

Must not be shed by such a jaded groom.
Hast thou not kiss'd thy hand and held my stirrup?
Bare-headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule
And thought thee happy when I shook my head?
How often hast thou waited at my cup,
Fed from my trencher, kneel'd down at the board.
When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?
Remember it and let it make thee crest-fall'n,
Ay, and allay this thy abortive pride;
How in our voiding lobby hast thou stood
And duly waited for my coming forth?
This hand of mine hath writ in thy behalf,
And therefore shall it charm thy riotous tongue.

WHITMORE

Speak, captain, shall I stab the forlorn swain?

Captain

First let my words stab him, as he hath me.

SUFFOLK

Base slave, thy words are blunt and so art thou.

Captain

Convey him hence and on our longboat's side
Strike off his head.

SUFFOLK

Thou darest not, for thy own.

Captain

Yes, Pole.

SUFFOLK

Pole!

Captain

Pool! Sir Pool! lord!
Ay, kennel, puddle, sink; whose filth and dirt
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks.
Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth
For swallowing the treasure of the realm:

Thy lips that kiss'd the queen shall sweep the ground;
And thou that smiledst at good Duke Humphrey's death,
Against the senseless winds shalt grin in vain,
Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again:
And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
For daring to affy a mighty lord
Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem.
By devilish policy art thou grown great,
And, like ambitious Sylla, overgorged
With gobbets of thy mother's bleeding heart.
By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France,
The false revolting Normans thorough thee
Disdain to call us lord, and Picardy
Hath slain their governors, surprised our forts,
And sent the ragged soldiers wounded home.
The princely Warwick, and the Nevils all,
Whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain,
As hating thee, are rising up in arms:
And now the house of York, thrust from the crown
By shameful murder of a guiltless king
And lofty proud encroaching tyranny,
Burns with revenging fire; whose hopeful colours
Advance our half-faced sun, striving to shine,
Under the which is writ 'Invitis nubibus.'
The commons here in Kent are up in arms:
And, to conclude, reproach and beggary
Is crept into the palace of our king.
And all by thee. Away! convey him hence.

SUFFOLK

O that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder
Upon these paltry, servile, abject drudges!
Small things make base men proud: this villain here,
Being captain of a pinnacle, threatens more
Than Bargulus the strong Illyrian pirate.
Drones suck not eagles' blood but rob beehives:
It is impossible that I should die
By such a lowly vassal as thyself.
Thy words move rage and not remorse in me:
I go of message from the queen to France;
I charge thee waft me safely cross the Channel.

Captain

Walter,--

WHITMORE

Come, Suffolk, I must waft thee to thy death.

SUFFOLK

Gelidus timor occupat artus it is thee I fear.

WHITMORE

Thou shalt have cause to fear before I leave thee.
What, are ye daunted now? now will ye stoop?

First Gentleman

My gracious lord, entreat him, speak him fair.

SUFFOLK

Suffolk's imperial tongue is stern and rough,
Used to command, untaught to plead for favour.
Far be it we should honour such as these
With humble suit: no, rather let my head
Stoop to the block than these knees bow to any
Save to the God of heaven and to my king;
And sooner dance upon a bloody pole
Than stand uncover'd to the vulgar groom.
True nobility is exempt from fear:
More can I bear than you dare execute.

Captain

Hale him away, and let him talk no more.

SUFFOLK

Come, soldiers, show what cruelty ye can,
That this my death may never be forgot!
Great men oft die by vile bezonians:
A Roman sworder and banditto slave
Murder'd sweet Tully; Brutus' bastard hand
Stabb'd Julius Caesar; savage islanders
Pompey the Great; and Suffolk dies by pirates.

Exeunt Whitmore and others with Suffolk

Captain

And as for these whose ransom we have set,
It is our pleasure one of them depart;
Therefore come you with us and let him go.

Exeunt all but the First Gentleman

Re-enter WHITMORE with SUFFOLK's body

WHITMORE

There let his head and lifeless body lie,
Until the queen his mistress bury it.

Exit

First Gentleman

O barbarous and bloody spectacle!
His body will I bear unto the king:
If he revenge it not, yet will his friends;
So will the queen, that living held him dear.

Exit with the body

SCENE II. Blackheath.

Enter GEORGE BEVIS and JOHN HOLLAND

BEVIS

Come, and get thee a sword, though made of a lath;
they have been up these two days.

HOLLAND

They have the more need to sleep now, then.

BEVIS

I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress
the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

HOLLAND

So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say it
was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

BEVIS

O miserable age! virtue is not regarded in handicrafts-men.

HOLLAND

The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

BEVIS

Nay, more, the king's council are no good workmen.

HOLLAND

True; and yet it is said, labour in thy vocation;
which is as much to say as, let the magistrates be
labouring men; and therefore should we be
magistrates.

BEVIS

Thou hast hit it; for there's no better sign of a
brave mind than a hard hand.

HOLLAND

I see them! I see them! there's Best's son, the
tanner of Wingham,--

BEVIS

He shall have the skin of our enemies, to make
dog's-leather of.

HOLLAND

And Dick the Butcher,--

BEVIS

Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity's
throat cut like a calf.

HOLLAND

And Smith the weaver,--

BEVIS

Argo, their thread of life is spun.

HOLLAND

Come, come, let's fall in with them.

Drum. Enter CADE, DICK the Butcher, SMITH the Weaver, and a Sawyer, with infinite numbers

CADE

We John Cade, so termed of our supposed father,--

DICK

[Aside] Or rather, of stealing a cade of herrings.

CADE

For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with
the spirit of putting down kings and princes,
--Command silence.

DICK

Silence!

CADE

My father was a Mortimer,--

DICK

[Aside] He was an honest man, and a good
bricklayer.

CADE

My mother a Plantagenet,--

DICK

[Aside] I knew her well; she was a midwife.

CADE

My wife descended of the Lacies,--

DICK

[Aside] She was, indeed, a pedler's daughter, and
sold many laces.

SMITH

[Aside] But now of late, notable to travel with her
furred pack, she washes bucks here at home.

CADE

Therefore am I of an honourable house.

DICK

[Aside] Ay, by my faith, the field is honourable;
and there was he borne, under a hedge, for his
father had never a house but the cage.

CADE

Valiant I am.

SMITH

[Aside] A' must needs; for beggary is valiant.

CADE

I am able to endure much.

DICK

[Aside] No question of that; for I have seen him
whipped three market-days together.

CADE

I fear neither sword nor fire.

SMITH

[Aside] He need not fear the sword; for his coat is of proof.

DICK

[Aside] But methinks he should stand in fear of
fire, being burnt i' the hand for stealing of sheep.

CADE

Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows
reformation. There shall be in England seven
halfpenny loaves sold for a penny: the three-hooped
pot; shall have ten hoops and I will make it felony
to drink small beer: all the realm shall be in
common; and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to
grass: and when I am king, as king I will be,--

ALL

God save your majesty!

CADE

I thank you, good people: there shall be no money;
all shall eat and drink on my score; and I will
apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree
like brothers and worship me their lord.

DICK

The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

CADE

Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable
thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should
be made parchment? that parchment, being scribbled
o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings:
but I say, 'tis the bee's wax; for I did but seal
once to a thing, and I was never mine own man
since. How now! who's there?

Enter some, bringing forward the Clerk of Chatham

SMITH

The clerk of Chatham: he can write and read and
cast accompt.

CADE

O monstrous!

SMITH

We took him setting of boys' copies.

CADE

Here's a villain!

SMITH

Has a book in his pocket with red letters in't.

CADE

Nay, then, he is a conjurer.

DICK

Nay, he can make obligations, and write court-hand.

CADE

I am sorry for't: the man is a proper man, of mine
honour; unless I find him guilty, he shall not die.
Come hither, sirrah, I must examine thee: what is thy name?

Clerk

Emmanuel.

DICK

They use to write it on the top of letters: 'twill
go hard with you.

CADE

Let me alone. Dost thou use to write thy name? or
hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest
plain-dealing man?

CLERK

Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up
that I can write my name.

ALL

He hath confessed: away with him! he's a villain
and a traitor.

CADE

Away with him, I say! hang him with his pen and
ink-horn about his neck.

Exit one with the Clerk

Enter MICHAEL

MICHAEL

Where's our general?

CADE

Here I am, thou particular fellow.

MICHAEL

Fly, fly, fly! Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother are hard by, with the king's forces.

CADE

Stand, villain, stand, or I'll fell thee down. He shall be encountered with a man as good as himself: he is but a knight, is a'?

MICHAEL

No.

CADE

To equal him, I will make myself a knight presently.

Kneels

Rise up Sir John Mortimer.

Rises

Now have at him!

Enter SIR HUMPHREY and WILLIAM STAFFORD, with drum and soldiers

SIR HUMPHREY

Rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent,
Mark'd for the gallows, lay your weapons down;
Home to your cottages, forsake this groom:
The king is merciful, if you revolt.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

But angry, wrathful, and inclined to blood,
If you go forward; therefore yield, or die.

CADE

As for these silken-coated slaves, I pass not:
It is to you, good people, that I speak,
Over whom, in time to come, I hope to reign;
For I am rightful heir unto the crown.

SIR HUMPHREY

Villain, thy father was a plasterer;
And thou thyself a shearman, art thou not?

CADE

And Adam was a gardener.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

And what of that?

CADE

Marry, this: Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.
Married the Duke of Clarence' daughter, did he not?

SIR HUMPHREY

Ay, sir.

CADE

By her he had two children at one birth.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

That's false.

CADE

Ay, there's the question; but I say, 'tis true:
The elder of them, being put to nurse,
Was by a beggar-woman stolen away;
And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,
Became a bricklayer when he came to age:
His son am I; deny it, if you can.

DICK

Nay, 'tis too true; therefore he shall be king.

SMITH

Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and
the bricks are alive at this day to testify it;
therefore deny it not.

SIR HUMPHREY

And will you credit this base drudge's words,
That speaks he knows not what?

ALL

Ay, marry, will we; therefore get ye gone.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Jack Cade, the Duke of York hath taught you this.

CADE

[Aside] He lies, for I invented it myself.
Go to, sirrah, tell the king from me, that, for his
father's sake, Henry the Fifth, in whose time boys
went to span-counter for French crowns, I am content
he shall reign; but I'll be protector over him.

DICK

And furthermore, well have the Lord Say's head for
selling the dukedom of Maine.

CADE

And good reason; for thereby is England maimed, and
fain to go with a staff, but that my puissance holds
it up. Fellow kings, I tell you that that Lord Say
hath gelded the commonwealth, and made it an eunuch:
and more than that, he can speak French; and
therefore he is a traitor.

SIR HUMPHREY

O gross and miserable ignorance!

CADE

Nay, answer, if you can: the Frenchmen are our
enemies; go to, then, I ask but this: can he that
speaks with the tongue of an enemy be a good
counsellor, or no?

ALL

No, no; and therefore we'll have his head.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Well, seeing gentle words will not prevail,
Assail them with the army of the king.

SIR HUMPHREY

Herald, away; and throughout every town
Proclaim them traitors that are up with Cade;
That those which fly before the battle ends
May, even in their wives' and children's sight,
Be hang'd up for example at their doors:
And you that be the king's friends, follow me.

Exeunt WILLIAM STAFFORD and SIR HUMPHREY, and soldiers

CADE

And you that love the commons, follow me.
Now show yourselves men; 'tis for liberty.
We will not leave one lord, one gentleman:
Spare none but such as go in clouted shoon;
For they are thrifty honest men, and such
As would, but that they dare not, take our parts.

DICK

They are all in order and march toward us.

CADE

But then are we in order when we are most
out of order. Come, march forward.

Exeunt

SCENE III. Another part of Blackheath.

Alarums to the fight, wherein SIR HUMPHREY and WILLIAM STAFFORD are slain. Enter CADE and the rest

CADE

Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?

DICK

Here, sir.

CADE

They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, and thou

behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house: therefore thus will I reward thee, the Lent shall be as long again as it is; and thou shalt have a licence to kill for a hundred lacking one.

DICK

I desire no more.

CADE

And, to speak truth, thou deservest no less. This monument of the victory will I bear;

Putting on SIR HUMPHREY'S brigandine

and the bodies shall be dragged at my horse' heels till I do come to London, where we will have the mayor's sword borne before us.

DICK

If we mean to thrive and do good, break open the gaols and let out the prisoners.

CADE

Fear not that, I warrant thee. Come, let's march towards London.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The palace.

Enter KING HENRY VI with a supplication, and the QUEEN with SUFFOLK'S head, BUCKINGHAM and Lord SAY

QUEEN MARGARET

Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind,
And makes it fearful and degenerate;
Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.
But who can cease to weep and look on this?
Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast:
But where's the body that I should embrace?

BUCKINGHAM

What answer makes your grace to the rebels'

supplication?

KING HENRY VI

I'll send some holy bishop to entreat;
For God forbid so many simple souls
Should perish by the sword! And I myself,
Rather than bloody war shall cut them short,
Will parley with Jack Cade their general:
But stay, I'll read it over once again.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, barbarous villains! hath this lovely face
Ruled, like a wandering planet, over me,
And could it not enforce them to relent,
That were unworthy to behold the same?

KING HENRY VI

Lord Say, Jack Cade hath sworn to have thy head.

SAY

Ay, but I hope your highness shall have his.

KING HENRY VI

How now, madam!
Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death?
I fear me, love, if that I had been dead,
Thou wouldst not have mourn'd so much for me.

QUEEN MARGARET

No, my love, I should not mourn, but die for thee.

Enter a Messenger

KING HENRY VI

How now! what news? why comest thou in such haste?

Messenger

The rebels are in Southwark; fly, my lord!
Jack Cade proclaims himself Lord Mortimer,
Descended from the Duke of Clarence' house,
And calls your grace usurper openly
And vows to crown himself in Westminster.

His army is a ragged multitude
Of hinds and peasants, rude and merciless:
Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother's death
Hath given them heart and courage to proceed:
All scholars, lawyers, courtiers, gentlemen,
They call false caterpillars, and intend their death.

KING HENRY VI

O graceless men! they know not what they do.

BUCKINGHAM

My gracious lord, return to Killingworth,
Until a power be raised to put them down.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, were the Duke of Suffolk now alive,
These Kentish rebels would be soon appeased!

KING HENRY VI

Lord Say, the traitors hate thee;
Therefore away with us to Killingworth.

SAY

So might your grace's person be in danger.
The sight of me is odious in their eyes;
And therefore in this city will I stay
And live alone as secret as I may.

Enter another Messenger

Messenger

Jack Cade hath gotten London bridge:
The citizens fly and forsake their houses:
The rascal people, thirsting after prey,
Join with the traitor, and they jointly swear
To spoil the city and your royal court.

BUCKINGHAM

Then linger not, my lord, away, take horse.

KING HENRY VI

Come, Margaret; God, our hope, will succor us.

QUEEN MARGARET

My hope is gone, now Suffolk is deceased.

KING HENRY VI

Farewell, my lord: trust not the Kentish rebels.

BUCKINGHAM

Trust nobody, for fear you be betray'd.

SAY

The trust I have is in mine innocence,
And therefore am I bold and resolute.

Exeunt

SCENE V. London. The Tower.

Enter SCALES upon the Tower, walking. Then enter two or three Citizens below

SCALES

How now! is Jack Cade slain?

First Citizen

No, my lord, nor likely to be slain; for they have
won the bridge, killing all those that withstand
them: the lord mayor craves aid of your honour from
the Tower, to defend the city from the rebels.

SCALES

Such aid as I can spare you shall command;
But I am troubled here with them myself;
The rebels have assay'd to win the Tower.
But get you to Smithfield, and gather head,
And thither I will send you Matthew Goffe;
Fight for your king, your country and your lives;
And so, farewell, for I must hence again.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. London. Cannon Street.

Enter CADE and the rest, and strikes his staff on London-stone

CADE

Now is Mortimer lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London-stone, I charge and command that, of the city's cost, the pissing-conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. And now henceforward it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer.

Enter a Soldier, running

Soldier

Jack Cade! Jack Cade!

CADE

Knock him down there.

They kill him

SMITH

If this fellow be wise, he'll never call ye Jack Cade more: I think he hath a very fair warning.

DICK

My lord, there's an army gathered together in Smithfield.

CADE

Come, then, let's go fight with them; but first, go and set London bridge on fire; and, if you can, burn down the Tower too. Come, let's away.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. London. Smithfield.

Alarums. MATTHEW GOFFE is slain, and all the rest. Then enter CADE, with his company.

CADE

So, sirs: now go some and pull down the Savoy; others to the inns of court; down with them all.

DICK

I have a suit unto your lordship.

CADE

Be it a lordship, thou shalt have it for that word.

DICK

Only that the laws of England may come out of your mouth.

HOLLAND

[Aside] Mass, 'twill be sore law, then; for he was thrust in the mouth with a spear, and 'tis not whole yet.

SMITH

[Aside] Nay, John, it will be stinking law for his breath stinks with eating toasted cheese.

CADE

I have thought upon it, it shall be so. Away, burn all the records of the realm: my mouth shall be the parliament of England.

HOLLAND

[Aside] Then we are like to have biting statutes, unless his teeth be pulled out.

CADE

And henceforward all things shall be in common.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

My lord, a prize, a prize! here's the Lord Say, which sold the towns in France; he that made us pay one and twenty fifteens, and one shilling to the pound, the last subsidy.

Enter BEVIS, with Lord SAY

CADE

Well, he shall be beheaded for it ten times. Ah, thou say, thou serge, nay, thou buckram lord! now art thou within point-blank of our jurisdiction

regal. What canst thou answer to my majesty for giving up of Normandy unto Mounsieur Basimecu, the dauphin of France? Be it known unto thee by these presence, even the presence of Lord Mortimer, that I am the besom that must sweep the court clean of such filth as thou art. Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used, and, contrary to the king, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison; and because they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed, only for that cause they have been most worthy to live. Thou dost ride in a foot-cloth, dost thou not?

SAY

What of that?

CADE

Marry, thou oughtest not to let thy horse wear a cloak, when honest men than thou go in their hose and doublets.

DICK

And work in their shirt too; as myself, for example, that am a butcher.

SAY

You men of Kent,--

DICK

What say you of Kent?

SAY

Nothing but this; 'tis 'bona terra, mala gens.'

CADE

Away with him, away with him! he speaks Latin.

SAY

Hear me but speak, and bear me where you will.
Kent, in the Commentaries Caesar writ,
Is term'd the civil'st place of this isle:
Sweet is the country, because full of riches;
The people liberal, valiant, active, wealthy;
Which makes me hope you are not void of pity.
I sold not Maine, I lost not Normandy,
Yet, to recover them, would lose my life.
Justice with favour have I always done;
Prayers and tears have moved me, gifts could never.
When have I aught exacted at your hands,
But to maintain the king, the realm and you?
Large gifts have I bestow'd on learned clerks,
Because my book preferr'd me to the king,
And seeing ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven,
Unless you be possess'd with devilish spirits,
You cannot but forbear to murder me:
This tongue hath parley'd unto foreign kings
For your behoof,--

CADE

Tut, when struck'st thou one blow in the field?

SAY

Great men have reaching hands: oft have I struck
Those that I never saw and struck them dead.

BEVIS

O monstrous coward! what, to come behind folks?

SAY

These cheeks are pale for watching for your good.

CADE

Give him a box o' the ear and that will make 'em red again.

SAY

Long sitting to determine poor men's causes
Hath made me full of sickness and diseases.

CADE

Ye shall have a hempen caudle, then, and the help of hatchet.

DICK

Why dost thou quiver, man?

SAY

The palsy, and not fear, provokes me.

CADE

Nay, he nods at us, as who should say, I'll be even with you: I'll see if his head will stand steadier on a pole, or no. Take him away, and behead him.

SAY

Tell me wherein have I offended most?
Have I affected wealth or honour? speak.
Are my chests fill'd up with extorted gold?
Is my apparel sumptuous to behold?
Whom have I injured, that ye seek my death?
These hands are free from guiltless bloodshedding,
This breast from harbouring foul deceitful thoughts.
O, let me live!

CADE

[Aside] I feel remorse in myself with his words;
but I'll bridle it: he shall die, and it be but for
pleading so well for his life. Away with him! he
has a familiar under his tongue; he speaks not o'
God's name. Go, take him away, I say, and strike
off his head presently; and then break into his
son-in-law's house, Sir James Cromer, and strike off
his head, and bring them both upon two poles hither.

ALL

It shall be done.

SAY

Ah, countrymen! if when you make your prayers,
God should be so obdurate as yourselves,
How would it fare with your departed souls?
And therefore yet relent, and save my life.

CADE

Away with him! and do as I command ye.

Exeunt some with Lord SAY

The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head
on his shoulders, unless he pay me tribute; there
shall not a maid be married, but she shall pay to me
her maidenhead ere they have it: men shall hold of
me in capite; and we charge and command that their
wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell.

DICK

My lord, when shall we go to Cheapside and take up
commodities upon our bills?

CADE

Marry, presently.

ALL

O, brave!

Re-enter one with the heads

CADE

But is not this braver? Let them kiss one another,
for they loved well when they were alive. Now part
them again, lest they consult about the giving up of
some more towns in France. Soldiers, defer the
spoil of the city until night: for with these borne
before us, instead of maces, will we ride through
the streets, and at every corner have them kiss. Away!

Exeunt

SCENE VIII. Southwark.

Alarum and retreat. Enter CADE and all his rabblement

CADE

Up Fish Street! down Saint Magnus' Corner! Kill
and knock down! throw them into Thames!

Sound a parley

What noise is this I hear? Dare any be so bold to
sound retreat or parley, when I command them kill?

Enter BUCKINGHAM and CLIFFORD, attended

BUCKINGHAM

Ay, here they be that dare and will disturb thee:
Know, Cade, we come ambassadors from the king
Unto the commons whom thou hast misled;
And here pronounce free pardon to them all
That will forsake thee and go home in peace.

CLIFFORD

What say ye, countrymen? will ye relent,
And yield to mercy whilst 'tis offer'd you;
Or let a rebel lead you to your deaths?
Who loves the king and will embrace his pardon,
Fling up his cap, and say 'God save his majesty!'
Who hateth him and honours not his father,
Henry the Fifth, that made all France to quake,
Shake he his weapon at us and pass by.

ALL

God save the king! God save the king!

CADE

What, Buckingham and Clifford, are ye so brave? And
you, base peasants, do ye believe him? will you
needs be hanged with your pardons about your necks?
Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates,
that you should leave me at the White Hart in
Southwark? I thought ye would never have given out
these arms till you had recovered your ancient
freedom: but you are all recreants and dastards,
and delight to live in slavery to the nobility. Let
them break your backs with burthens, take your
houses over your heads, ravish your wives and
daughters before your faces: for me, I will make
shift for one; and so, God's curse light upon you
all!

ALL

We'll follow Cade, we'll follow Cade!

CLIFFORD

Is Cade the son of Henry the Fifth,
That thus you do exclaim you'll go with him?
Will he conduct you through the heart of France,
And make the meanest of you earls and dukes?
Alas, he hath no home, no place to fly to;
Nor knows he how to live but by the spoil,
Unless by robbing of your friends and us.
Were't not a shame, that whilst you live at jar,
The fearful French, whom you late vanquished,
Should make a start o'er seas and vanquish you?
Methinks already in this civil broil
I see them lording it in London streets,
Crying 'Villiago!' unto all they meet.
Better ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry
Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy.
To France, to France, and get what you have lost;
Spare England, for it is your native coast;
Henry hath money, you are strong and manly;
God on our side, doubt not of victory.

ALL

A Clifford! a Clifford! we'll follow the king and Clifford.

CADE

Was ever feather so lightly blown to and fro as this
multitude? The name of Henry the Fifth hailes them
to an hundred mischiefs, and makes them leave me
desolate. I see them lay their heads together to
surprise me. My sword make way for me, for here is
no staying. In despite of the devils and hell, have
through the very middest of you? and heavens and
honour be witness, that no want of resolution in me.
but only my followers' base and ignominious
treasons, makes me betake me to my heels.

Exit

BUCKINGHAM

What, is he fled? Go some, and follow him;
And he that brings his head unto the king
Shall have a thousand crowns for his reward.

Exeunt some of them

Follow me, soldiers: we'll devise a mean
To reconcile you all unto the king.

Exeunt

SCENE IX. Kenilworth Castle.

Sound Trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and SOMERSET, on the terrace

KING HENRY VI

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne,
And could command no more content than I?
No sooner was I crept out of my cradle
But I was made a king, at nine months old.
Was never subject long'd to be a king
As I do long and wish to be a subject.

Enter BUCKINGHAM and CLIFFORD

BUCKINGHAM

Health and glad tidings to your majesty!

KING HENRY VI

Why, Buckingham, is the traitor Cade surprised?
Or is he but retired to make him strong?

Enter below, multitudes, with halters about their necks

CLIFFORD

He is fled, my lord, and all his powers do yield;
And humbly thus, with halters on their necks,
Expect your highness' doom of life or death.

KING HENRY VI

Then, heaven, set ope thy everlasting gates,
To entertain my vows of thanks and praise!
Soldiers, this day have you redeemed your lives,
And show'd how well you love your prince and country:
Continue still in this so good a mind,
And Henry, though he be infortunate,
Assure yourselves, will never be unkind:
And so, with thanks and pardon to you all,
I do dismiss you to your several countries.

ALL

God save the king! God save the king!

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

Please it your grace to be advertised
The Duke of York is newly come from Ireland,
And with a puissant and a mighty power
Of gallowglasses and stout kerns
Is marching hitherward in proud array,
And still proclaimeth, as he comes along,
His arms are only to remove from thee
The Duke of Somerset, whom he terms traitor.

KING HENRY VI

Thus stands my state, 'twixt Cade and York distress'd.
Like to a ship that, having 'scaped a tempest,
Is straightway calm'd and boarded with a pirate:
But now is Cade driven back, his men dispersed;
And now is York in arms to second him.
I pray thee, Buckingham, go and meet him,
And ask him what's the reason of these arms.
Tell him I'll send Duke Edmund to the Tower;
And, Somerset, we'll commit thee thither,
Until his army be dismiss'd from him.

SOMERSET

My lord,
I'll yield myself to prison willingly,
Or unto death, to do my country good.

KING HENRY VI

In any case, be not too rough in terms;
For he is fierce and cannot brook hard language.

BUCKINGHAM

I will, my lord; and doubt not so to deal
As all things shall redound unto your good.

KING HENRY VI

Come, wife, let's in, and learn to govern better;
For yet may England curse my wretched reign.

Flourish. Exeunt

SCENE X. Kent. IDEN's garden.

Enter CADE

CADE

Fie on ambition! fie on myself, that have a sword,
and yet am ready to famish! These five days have I
hid me in these woods and durst not peep out, for
all the country is laid for me; but now am I so
hungry that if I might have a lease of my life for a
thousand years I could stay no longer. Wherefore,
on a brick wall have I climbed into this garden, to
see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another
while, which is not amiss to cool a man's stomach
this hot weather. And I think this word 'sallet'
was born to do me good: for many a time, but for a
sallet, my brainpan had been cleft with a brown
bill; and many a time, when I have been dry and
bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a
quart pot to drink in; and now the word 'sallet'
must serve me to feed on.

Enter IDEN

IDEN

Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court,
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?
This small inheritance my father left me
Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.
I seek not to wax great by others' waning,
Or gather wealth, I care not, with what envy:
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state
And sends the poor well pleased from my gate.

CADE

Here's the lord of the soil come to seize me for a
stray, for entering his fee-simple without leave.
Ah, villain, thou wilt betray me, and get a thousand
crowns of the king carrying my head to him: but
I'll make thee eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow
my sword like a great pin, ere thou and I part.

IDEN

Why, rude companion, whatsoe'er thou be,
I know thee not; why, then, should I betray thee?
Is't not enough to break into my garden,
And, like a thief, to come to rob my grounds,

Climbing my walls in spite of me the owner,
But thou wilt brave me with these saucy terms?

CADE

Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was
broached, and beard thee too. Look on me well: I
have eat no meat these five days; yet, come thou and
thy five men, and if I do not leave you all as dead
as a doornail, I pray God I may never eat grass more.

IDEN

Nay, it shall ne'er be said, while England stands,
That Alexander Iden, an esquire of Kent,
Took odds to combat a poor famish'd man.
Oppose thy steadfast-gazing eyes to mine,
See if thou canst outface me with thy looks:
Set limb to limb, and thou art far the lesser;
Thy hand is but a finger to my fist,
Thy leg a stick compared with this truncheon;
My foot shall fight with all the strength thou hast;
And if mine arm be heaved in the air,
Thy grave is digg'd already in the earth.
As for words, whose greatness answers words,
Let this my sword report what speech forbears.

CADE

By my valour, the most complete champion that ever I
heard! Steel, if thou turn the edge, or cut not out
the burly-boned clown in chines of beef ere thou
sleep in thy sheath, I beseech God on my knees thou
mayst be turned to hobnails.

Here they fight. CADE falls

O, I am slain! famine and no other hath slain me:
let ten thousand devils come against me, and give me
but the ten meals I have lost, and I'll defy them
all. Wither, garden; and be henceforth a
burying-place to all that do dwell in this house,
because the unconquered soul of Cade is fled.

IDEN

Is't Cade that I have slain, that monstrous traitor?
Sword, I will hollow thee for this thy deed,
And hang thee o'er my tomb when I am dead:
Ne'er shall this blood be wiped from thy point;

But thou shalt wear it as a herald's coat,
To emblaze the honour that thy master got.

CADE

Iden, farewell, and be proud of thy victory. Tell
Kent from me, she hath lost her best man, and exhort
all the world to be cowards; for I, that never
feared any, am vanquished by famine, not by valour.

Dies

IDEN

How much thou wrong'st me, heaven be my judge.
Die, damned wretch, the curse of her that bare thee;
And as I thrust thy body in with my sword,
So wish I, I might thrust thy soul to hell.
Hence will I drag thee headlong by the heels
Unto a dunghill which shall be thy grave,
And there cut off thy most ungracious head;
Which I will bear in triumph to the king,
Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon.

Exit

ACT V

SCENE I. Fields between Dartford and Blackheath.

Enter YORK, and his army of Irish, with drum and colours

YORK

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right,
And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head:
Ring, bells, aloud; burn, bonfires, clear and bright,
To entertain great England's lawful king.
Ah! sancta majestas, who would not buy thee dear?
Let them obey that know not how to rule;
This hand was made to handle naught but gold.
I cannot give due action to my words,
Except a sword or sceptre balance it:
A sceptre shall it have, have I a soul,
On which I'll toss the flower-de-luce of France.

Enter BUCKINGHAM

Whom have we here? Buckingham, to disturb me?
The king hath sent him, sure: I must dissemble.

BUCKINGHAM

York, if thou meanest well, I greet thee well.

YORK

Humphrey of Buckingham, I accept thy greeting.
Art thou a messenger, or come of pleasure?

BUCKINGHAM

A messenger from Henry, our dread liege,
To know the reason of these arms in peace;
Or why thou, being a subject as I am,
Against thy oath and true allegiance sworn,
Should raise so great a power without his leave,
Or dare to bring thy force so near the court.

YORK

[Aside] Scarce can I speak, my choler is so great:
O, I could hew up rocks and fight with flint,
I am so angry at these abject terms;
And now, like Ajax Telamonius,
On sheep or oxen could I spend my fury.
I am far better born than is the king,
More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts:
But I must make fair weather yet a while,
Till Henry be more weak and I more strong,--
Buckingham, I prithee, pardon me,
That I have given no answer all this while;
My mind was troubled with deep melancholy.
The cause why I have brought this army hither
Is to remove proud Somerset from the king,
Seditious to his grace and to the state.

BUCKINGHAM

That is too much presumption on thy part:
But if thy arms be to no other end,
The king hath yielded unto thy demand:
The Duke of Somerset is in the Tower.

YORK

Upon thine honour, is he prisoner?

BUCKINGHAM

Upon mine honour, he is prisoner.

YORK

Then, Buckingham, I do dismiss my powers.
Soldiers, I thank you all; disperse yourselves;
Meet me to-morrow in St. George's field,
You shall have pay and every thing you wish.
And let my sovereign, virtuous Henry,
Command my eldest son, nay, all my sons,
As pledges of my fealty and love;
I'll send them all as willing as I live:
Lands, goods, horse, armour, any thing I have,
Is his to use, so Somerset may die.

BUCKINGHAM

York, I commend this kind submission:
We twain will go into his highness' tent.

Enter KING HENRY VI and Attendants

KING HENRY VI

Buckingham, doth York intend no harm to us,
That thus he marcheth with thee arm in arm?

YORK

In all submission and humility
York doth present himself unto your highness.

KING HENRY VI

Then what intends these forces thou dost bring?

YORK

To heave the traitor Somerset from hence,
And fight against that monstrous rebel Cade,
Who since I heard to be discomfited.

Enter IDEN, with CADE'S head

IDEN

If one so rude and of so mean condition
May pass into the presence of a king,
Lo, I present your grace a traitor's head,
The head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.

KING HENRY VI

The head of Cade! Great God, how just art Thou!
O, let me view his visage, being dead,
That living wrought me such exceeding trouble.
Tell me, my friend, art thou the man that slew him?

IDEN

I was, an't like your majesty.

KING HENRY VI

How art thou call'd? and what is thy degree?

IDEN

Alexander Iden, that's my name;
A poor esquire of Kent, that loves his king.

BUCKINGHAM

So please it you, my lord, 'twere not amiss
He were created knight for his good service.

KING HENRY VI

Iden, kneel down.

He kneels

Rise up a knight.
We give thee for reward a thousand marks,
And will that thou henceforth attend on us.

IDEN

May Iden live to merit such a bounty.
And never live but true unto his liege!

Rises

Enter QUEEN MARGARET and SOMERSET

KING HENRY VI

See, Buckingham, Somerset comes with the queen:
Go, bid her hide him quickly from the duke.

QUEEN MARGARET

For thousand Yorks he shall not hide his head,

But boldly stand and front him to his face.

YORK

How now! is Somerset at liberty?
Then, York, unloose thy long-imprison'd thoughts,
And let thy tongue be equal with thy heart.
Shall I endure the sight of Somerset?
False king! why hast thou broken faith with me,
Knowing how hardly I can brook abuse?
King did I call thee? no, thou art not king,
Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,
Which darest not, no, nor canst not rule a traitor.
That head of thine doth not become a crown;
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,
And not to grace an awful princely sceptre.
That gold must round engirt these brows of mine,
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear,
Is able with the change to kill and cure.
Here is a hand to hold a sceptre up
And with the same to act controlling laws.
Give place: by heaven, thou shalt rule no more
O'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler.

SOMERSET

O monstrous traitor! I arrest thee, York,
Of capital treason 'gainst the king and crown;
Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace.

YORK

Wouldst have me kneel? first let me ask of these,
If they can brook I bow a knee to man.
Sirrah, call in my sons to be my bail;

Exit Attendant

I know, ere they will have me go to ward,
They'll pawn their swords for my enfranchisement.

QUEEN MARGARET

Call hither Clifford! bid him come amain,
To say if that the bastard boys of York
Shall be the surety for their traitor father.

Exit BUCKINGHAM

YORK

O blood-besotted Neapolitan,
Outcast of Naples, England's bloody scourge!
The sons of York, thy betters in their birth,
Shall be their father's bail; and bane to those
That for my surety will refuse the boys!

Enter EDWARD and RICHARD

See where they come: I'll warrant they'll
make it good.

Enter CLIFFORD and YOUNG CLIFFORD

QUEEN MARGARET

And here comes Clifford to deny their bail.

CLIFFORD

Health and all happiness to my lord the king!

Kneels

YORK

I thank thee, Clifford: say, what news with thee?
Nay, do not fright us with an angry look;
We are thy sovereign, Clifford, kneel again;
For thy mistaking so, we pardon thee.

CLIFFORD

This is my king, York, I do not mistake;
But thou mistakest me much to think I do:
To Bedlam with him! is the man grown mad?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, Clifford; a bedlam and ambitious humour
Makes him oppose himself against his king.

CLIFFORD

He is a traitor; let him to the Tower,
And chop away that factious pate of his.

QUEEN MARGARET

He is arrested, but will not obey;
His sons, he says, shall give their words for him.

YORK

Will you not, sons?

EDWARD

Ay, noble father, if our words will serve.

RICHARD

And if words will not, then our weapons shall.

CLIFFORD

Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!

YORK

Look in a glass, and call thy image so:
I am thy king, and thou a false-heart traitor.
Call hither to the stake my two brave bears,
That with the very shaking of their chains
They may astonish these fell-lurking curs:
Bid Salisbury and Warwick come to me.

Enter the WARWICK and SALISBURY

CLIFFORD

Are these thy bears? we'll bait thy bears to death.
And manacle the bear-ward in their chains,
If thou darest bring them to the baiting place.

RICHARD

Oft have I seen a hot o'erweening cur
Run back and bite, because he was withheld;
Who, being suffer'd with the bear's fell paw,
Hath clapp'd his tail between his legs and cried:
And such a piece of service will you do,
If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick.

CLIFFORD

Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump,
As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!

YORK

Nay, we shall heat you thoroughly anon.

CLIFFORD

Take heed, lest by your heat you burn yourselves.

KING HENRY VI

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?
Old Salisbury, shame to thy silver hair,
Thou mad misleader of thy brain-sick son!
What, wilt thou on thy death-bed play the ruffian,
And seek for sorrow with thy spectacles?
O, where is faith? O, where is loyalty?
If it be banish'd from the frosty head,
Where shall it find a harbour in the earth?
Wilt thou go dig a grave to find out war,
And shame thine honourable age with blood?
Why art thou old, and want'st experience?
Or wherefore dost abuse it, if thou hast it?
For shame! in duty bend thy knee to me
That bows unto the grave with mickle age.

SALISBURY

My lord, I have consider'd with myself
The title of this most renowned duke;
And in my conscience do repute his grace
The rightful heir to England's royal seat.

KING HENRY VI

Hast thou not sworn allegiance unto me?

SALISBURY

I have.

KING HENRY VI

Canst thou dispense with heaven for such an oath?

SALISBURY

It is great sin to swear unto a sin,
But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.
Who can be bound by any solemn vow
To do a murderous deed, to rob a man,
To force a spotless virgin's chastity,
To reave the orphan of his patrimony,
To wring the widow from her custom'd right,
And have no other reason for this wrong

But that he was bound by a solemn oath?

QUEEN MARGARET

A subtle traitor needs no sophister.

KING HENRY VI

Call Buckingham, and bid him arm himself.

YORK

Call Buckingham, and all the friends thou hast,
I am resolved for death or dignity.

CLIFFORD

The first I warrant thee, if dreams prove true.

WARWICK

You were best to go to bed and dream again,
To keep thee from the tempest of the field.

CLIFFORD

I am resolved to bear a greater storm
Than any thou canst conjure up to-day;
And that I'll write upon thy burgonet,
Might I but know thee by thy household badge.

WARWICK

Now, by my father's badge, old Nevil's crest,
The rampant bear chain'd to the ragged staff,
This day I'll wear aloft my burgonet,
As on a mountain top the cedar shows
That keeps his leaves in spite of any storm,
Even to affright thee with the view thereof.

CLIFFORD

And from thy burgonet I'll rend thy bear
And tread it under foot with all contempt,
Despite the bear-ward that protects the bear.

YOUNG CLIFFORD

And so to arms, victorious father,
To quell the rebels and their complices.

RICHARD

Fie! charity, for shame! speak not in spite,
For you shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night.

YOUNG CLIFFORD

Foul stigmatic, that's more than thou canst tell.

RICHARD

If not in heaven, you'll surely sup in hell.

Exeunt severally

SCENE II. Saint Alban's.

Alarums to the battle. Enter WARWICK

WARWICK

Clifford of Cumberland, 'tis Warwick calls:
And if thou dost not hide thee from the bear,
Now, when the angry trumpet sounds alarum
And dead men's cries do fill the empty air,
Clifford, I say, come forth and fight with me:
Proud northern lord, Clifford of Cumberland,
Warwick is hoarse with calling thee to arms.

Enter YORK

How now, my noble lord? what, all afoot?

YORK

The deadly-handed Clifford slew my steed,
But match to match I have encounter'd him
And made a prey for carrion kites and crows
Even of the bonny beast he loved so well.

Enter CLIFFORD

WARWICK

Of one or both of us the time is come.

YORK

Hold, Warwick, seek thee out some other chase,
For I myself must hunt this deer to death.

WARWICK

Then, nobly, York; 'tis for a crown thou fight'st.
As I intend, Clifford, to thrive to-day,
It grieves my soul to leave thee unassail'd.

Exit

CLIFFORD

What seest thou in me, York? why dost thou pause?

YORK

With thy brave bearing should I be in love,
But that thou art so fast mine enemy.

CLIFFORD

Nor should thy prowess want praise and esteem,
But that 'tis shown ignobly and in treason.

YORK

So let it help me now against thy sword
As I in justice and true right express it.

CLIFFORD

My soul and body on the action both!

YORK

A dreadful lay! Address thee instantly.

They fight, and CLIFFORD falls

CLIFFORD

La fin couronne les oeuvres.

Dies

YORK

Thus war hath given thee peace, for thou art still.
Peace with his soul, heaven, if it be thy will!

Exit

Enter YOUNG CLIFFORD

YOUNG CLIFFORD

Shame and confusion! all is on the rout;
Fear frames disorder, and disorder wounds
Where it should guard. O war, thou son of hell,
Whom angry heavens do make their minister
Throw in the frozen bosoms of our part
Hot coals of vengeance! Let no soldier fly.
He that is truly dedicate to war
Hath no self-love, nor he that loves himself
Hath not essentially but by circumstance
The name of valour.

Seeing his dead father

O, let the vile world end,
And the premised flames of the last day
Knit earth and heaven together!
Now let the general trumpet blow his blast,
Particularities and petty sounds
To cease! Wast thou ordain'd, dear father,
To lose thy youth in peace, and to achieve
The silver livery of advised age,
And, in thy reverence and thy chair-days, thus
To die in ruffian battle? Even at this sight
My heart is turn'd to stone: and while 'tis mine,
It shall be stony. York not our old men spares;
No more will I their babes: tears virginal
Shall be to me even as the dew to fire,
And beauty that the tyrant oft reclaims
Shall to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.
Henceforth I will not have to do with pity:
Meet I an infant of the house of York,
Into as many gobbets will I cut it
As wild Medea young Absyrtus did:
In cruelty will I seek out my fame.
Come, thou new ruin of old Clifford's house:
As did AEneas old Anchises bear,
So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders;
But then AEneas bare a living load,
Nothing so heavy as these woes of mine.

Exit, bearing off his father

Enter RICHARD and SOMERSET to fight. SOMERSET is killed

RICHARD

So, lie thou there;
For underneath an alehouse' paltry sign,
The Castle in Saint Alban's, Somerset
Hath made the wizard famous in his death.
Sword, hold thy temper; heart, be wrathful still:
Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill.

Exit

Fight: excursions. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and others

QUEEN MARGARET

Away, my lord! you are slow; for shame, away!

KING HENRY VI

Can we outrun the heavens? good Margaret, stay.

QUEEN MARGARET

What are you made of? you'll nor fight nor fly:
Now is it manhood, wisdom and defence,
To give the enemy way, and to secure us
By what we can, which can no more but fly.

Alarum afar off

If you be ta'en, we then should see the bottom
Of all our fortunes: but if we haply scape,
As well we may, if not through your neglect,
We shall to London get, where you are loved
And where this breach now in our fortunes made
May readily be stopp'd.

Re-enter YOUNG CLIFFORD

YOUNG CLIFFORD

But that my heart's on future mischief set,
I would speak blasphemy ere bid you fly:
But fly you must; uncurable discomfit
Reigns in the hearts of all our present parts.
Away, for your relief! and we will live
To see their day and them our fortune give:
Away, my lord, away!

Exeunt

SCENE III. Fields near St. Alban's.

Alarum. Retreat. Enter YORK, RICHARD, WARWICK, and Soldiers, with drum and colours

YORK

Of Salisbury, who can report of him,
That winter lion, who in rage forgets
Aged contusions and all brush of time,
And, like a gallant in the brow of youth,
Repairs him with occasion? This happy day
Is not itself, nor have we won one foot,
If Salisbury be lost.

RICHARD

My noble father,
Three times to-day I help him to his horse,
Three times bestrid him; thrice I led him off,
Persuaded him from any further act:
But still, where danger was, still there I met him;
And like rich hangings in a homely house,
So was his will in his old feeble body.
But, noble as he is, look where he comes.

Enter SALISBURY

SALISBURY

Now, by my sword, well hast thou fought to-day;
By the mass, so did we all. I thank you, Richard:
God knows how long it is I have to live;
And it hath pleased him that three times to-day
You have defended me from imminent death.
Well, lords, we have not got that which we have:
'Tis not enough our foes are this time fled,
Being opposites of such repairing nature.

YORK

I know our safety is to follow them;
For, as I hear, the king is fled to London,
To call a present court of parliament.
Let us pursue him ere the writs go forth.
What says Lord Warwick? shall we after them?

WARWICK

After them! nay, before them, if we can.
Now, by my faith, lords, 'twas a glorious day:
Saint Alban's battle won by famous York

Shall be eternized in all age to come.
Sound drums and trumpets, and to London all:
And more such days as these to us befall!

Exeunt

Part III

ACT I

SCENE I. London. The Parliament-house.

Alarum. Enter YORK, EDWARD, RICHARD, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, and Soldiers

WARWICK

I wonder how the king escaped our hands.

YORK

While we pursued the horsemen of the north,
He slily stole away and left his men:
Whereat the great Lord of Northumberland,
Whose warlike ears could never brook retreat,
Cheer'd up the drooping army; and himself,
Lord Clifford and Lord Stafford, all abreast,
Charged our main battle's front, and breaking in
Were by the swords of common soldiers slain.

EDWARD

Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,
Is either slain or wounded dangerously;
I cleft his beaver with a downright blow:
That this is true, father, behold his blood.

MONTAGUE

And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,
Whom I encounter'd as the battles join'd.

RICHARD

Speak thou for me and tell them what I did.

Throwing down SOMERSET's head

YORK

Richard hath best deserved of all my sons.
But is your grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?

NORFOLK

Such hope have all the line of John of Gaunt!

RICHARD

Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head.

WARWICK

And so do I. Victorious Prince of York,
Before I see thee seated in that throne
Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,
I vow by heaven these eyes shall never close.
This is the palace of the fearful king,
And this the regal seat: possess it, York;
For this is thine and not King Henry's heirs'

YORK

Assist me, then, sweet Warwick, and I will;
For hither we have broken in by force.

NORFOLK

We'll all assist you; he that flies shall die.

YORK

Thanks, gentle Norfolk: stay by me, my lords;
And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.

They go up

WARWICK

And when the king comes, offer no violence,
Unless he seek to thrust you out perforce.

YORK

The queen this day here holds her parliament,
But little thinks we shall be of her council:
By words or blows here let us win our right.

RICHARD

Arm'd as we are, let's stay within this house.

WARWICK

The bloody parliament shall this be call'd,
Unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, be king,
And bashful Henry deposed, whose cowardice
Hath made us by-words to our enemies.

YORK

Then leave me not, my lords; be resolute;
I mean to take possession of my right.

WARWICK

Neither the king, nor he that loves him best,
The proudest he that holds up Lancaster,
Dares stir a wing, if Warwick shake his bells.
I'll plant Plantagenet, root him up who dares:
Resolve thee, Richard; claim the English crown.

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, WESTMORELAND, EXETER, and the rest

KING HENRY VI

My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits,
Even in the chair of state: belike he means,
Back'd by the power of Warwick, that false peer,
To aspire unto the crown and reign as king.
Earl of Northumberland, he slew thy father.
And thine, Lord Clifford; and you both have vow'd revenge
On him, his sons, his favourites and his friends.

NORTHUMBERLAND

If I be not, heavens be revenged on me!

CLIFFORD

The hope thereof makes Clifford mourn in steel.

WESTMORELAND

What, shall we suffer this? let's pluck him down:
My heart for anger burns; I cannot brook it.

KING HENRY VI

Be patient, gentle Earl of Westmoreland.

CLIFFORD

Patience is for poltroons, such as he:
He durst not sit there, had your father lived.
My gracious lord, here in the parliament
Let us assail the family of York.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Well hast thou spoken, cousin: be it so.

KING HENRY VI

Ah, know you not the city favours them,
And they have troops of soldiers at their beck?

EXETER

But when the duke is slain, they'll quickly fly.

KING HENRY VI

Far be the thought of this from Henry's heart,
To make a shambles of the parliament-house!
Cousin of Exeter, frowns, words and threats
Shall be the war that Henry means to use.
Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne,
and kneel for grace and mercy at my feet;
I am thy sovereign.

YORK

I am thine.

EXETER

For shame, come down: he made thee Duke of York.

YORK

'Twas my inheritance, as the earldom was.

EXETER

Thy father was a traitor to the crown.

WARWICK

Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown
In following this usurping Henry.

CLIFFORD

Whom should he follow but his natural king?

WARWICK

True, Clifford; and that's Richard Duke of York.

KING HENRY VI

And shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne?

YORK

It must and shall be so: content thyself.

WARWICK

Be Duke of Lancaster; let him be king.

WESTMORELAND

He is both king and Duke of Lancaster;
And that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain.

WARWICK

And Warwick shall disprove it. You forget
That we are those which chased you from the field
And slew your fathers, and with colours spread
March'd through the city to the palace gates.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief;
And, by his soul, thou and thy house shall rue it.

WESTMORELAND

Plantagenet, of thee and these thy sons,
Thy kinsman and thy friends, I'll have more lives
Than drops of blood were in my father's veins.

CLIFFORD

Urge it no more; lest that, instead of words,
I send thee, Warwick, such a messenger
As shall revenge his death before I stir.

WARWICK

Poor Clifford! how I scorn his worthless threats!

YORK

Will you we show our title to the crown?
If not, our swords shall plead it in the field.

KING HENRY VI

What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?
Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;
Thy grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March:
I am the son of Henry the Fifth,
Who made the Dauphin and the French to stoop
And seized upon their towns and provinces.

WARWICK

Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.

KING HENRY VI

The lord protector lost it, and not I:
When I was crown'd I was but nine months old.

RICHARD

You are old enough now, and yet, methinks, you lose.
Father, tear the crown from the usurper's head.

EDWARD

Sweet father, do so; set it on your head.

MONTAGUE

Good brother, as thou lovest and honourest arms,
Let's fight it out and not stand cavilling thus.

RICHARD

Sound drums and trumpets, and the king will fly.

YORK

Sons, peace!

KING HENRY VI

Peace, thou! and give King Henry leave to speak.

WARWICK

Plantagenet shall speak first: hear him, lords;
And be you silent and attentive too,
For he that interrupts him shall not live.

KING HENRY VI

Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne,
Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?
No: first shall war unpeople this my realm;
Ay, and their colours, often borne in France,
And now in England to our heart's great sorrow,
Shall be my winding-sheet. Why faint you, lords?
My title's good, and better far than his.

WARWICK

Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.

KING HENRY VI

Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.

YORK

'Twas by rebellion against his king.

KING HENRY VI

[Aside] I know not what to say; my title's weak.--
Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?

YORK

What then?

KING HENRY VI

An if he may, then am I lawful king;
For Richard, in the view of many lords,
Resign'd the crown to Henry the Fourth,
Whose heir my father was, and I am his.

YORK

He rose against him, being his sovereign,
And made him to resign his crown perforce.

WARWICK

Suppose, my lords, he did it unconstrain'd,
Think you 'twere prejudicial to his crown?

EXETER

No; for he could not so resign his crown
But that the next heir should succeed and reign.

KING HENRY VI

Art thou against us, Duke of Exeter?

EXETER

His is the right, and therefore pardon me.

YORK

Why whisper you, my lords, and answer not?

EXETER

My conscience tells me he is lawful king.

KING HENRY VI

[Aside] All will revolt from me, and turn to him.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Plantagenet, for all the claim thou lay'st,
Think not that Henry shall be so deposed.

WARWICK

Deposed he shall be, in despite of all.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Thou art deceived: 'tis not thy southern power,
Of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, nor of Kent,
Which makes thee thus presumptuous and proud,
Can set the duke up in despite of me.

CLIFFORD

King Henry, be thy title right or wrong,
Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence:
May that ground gape and swallow me alive,
Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father!

KING HENRY VI

O Clifford, how thy words revive my heart!

YORK

Henry of Lancaster, resign thy crown.
What matter you, or what conspire you, lords?

WARWICK

Do right unto this princely Duke of York,
Or I will fill the house with armed men,
And over the chair of state, where now he sits,
Write up his title with usurping blood.

He stamps with his foot and the soldiers show themselves

KING HENRY VI

My Lord of Warwick, hear me but one word:
Let me for this my life-time reign as king.

YORK

Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs,
And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou livest.

KING HENRY VI

I am content: Richard Plantagenet,
Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.

CLIFFORD

What wrong is this unto the prince your son!

WARWICK

What good is this to England and himself!

WESTMORELAND

Base, fearful and despairing Henry!

CLIFFORD

How hast thou injured both thyself and us!

WESTMORELAND

I cannot stay to hear these articles.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Nor I.

CLIFFORD

Come, cousin, let us tell the queen these news.

WESTMORELAND

Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,
In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Be thou a prey unto the house of York,
And die in bands for this unmanly deed!

CLIFFORD

In dreadful war mayst thou be overcome,
Or live in peace abandon'd and despised!

Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND, CLIFFORD, and WESTMORELAND

WARWICK

Turn this way, Henry, and regard them not.

EXETER

They seek revenge and therefore will not yield.

KING HENRY VI

Ah, Exeter!

WARWICK

Why should you sigh, my lord?

KING HENRY VI

Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.
But be it as it may: I here entail
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath
To cease this civil war, and, whilst I live,
To honour me as thy king and sovereign,
And neither by treason nor hostility
To seek to put me down and reign thyself.

YORK

This oath I willingly take and will perform.

WARWICK

Long live King Henry! Plantagenet embrace him.

KING HENRY VI

And long live thou and these thy forward sons!

YORK

Now York and Lancaster are reconciled.

EXETER

Accursed be he that seeks to make them foes!

Sennet. Here they come down

YORK

Farewell, my gracious lord; I'll to my castle.

WARWICK

And I'll keep London with my soldiers.

NORFOLK

And I to Norfolk with my followers.

MONTAGUE

And I unto the sea from whence I came.

*Exeunt YORK, EDWARD, EDMUND, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK,
MONTAGUE, their Soldiers, and Attendants*

KING HENRY VI

And I, with grief and sorrow, to the court.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET and PRINCE EDWARD

EXETER

Here comes the queen, whose looks bewray her anger:
I'll steal away.

KING HENRY VI

Exeter, so will I.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee.

KING HENRY VI

Be patient, gentle queen, and I will stay.

QUEEN MARGARET

Who can be patient in such extremes?
Ah, wretched man! would I had died a maid
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast proved so unnatural a father
Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?
Hadst thou but loved him half so well as I,
Or felt that pain which I did for him once,
Or nourish'd him as I did with my blood,
Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there,
Rather than have that savage duke thine heir
And disinherited thine only son.

PRINCE EDWARD

Father, you cannot disinherit me:
If you be king, why should not I succeed?

KING HENRY VI

Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son:
The Earl of Warwick and the duke enforced me.

QUEEN MARGARET

Enforced thee! art thou king, and wilt be forced?
I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!
Thou hast undone thyself, thy son and me;
And given unto the house of York such head
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.
To entail him and his heirs unto the crown,
What is it, but to make thy sepulchre
And creep into it far before thy time?
Warwick is chancellor and the lord of Calais;
Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas;
The duke is made protector of the realm;
And yet shalt thou be safe? such safety finds
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou preferr'st thy life before thine honour:
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
Until that act of parliament be repeal'd
Whereby my son is disinherited.
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colours
Will follow mine, if once they see them spread;
And spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace
And utter ruin of the house of York.
Thus do I leave thee. Come, son, let's away;
Our army is ready; come, we'll after them.

KING HENRY VI

Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone.

KING HENRY VI

Gentle son Edward, thou wilt stay with me?

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, to be murder'd by his enemies.

PRINCE EDWARD

When I return with victory from the field
I'll see your grace: till then I'll follow her.

QUEEN MARGARET

Come, son, away; we may not linger thus.

Exeunt QUEEN MARGARET and PRINCE EDWARD

KING HENRY VI

Poor queen! how love to me and to her son
Hath made her break out into terms of rage!
Revenge may she be on that hateful duke,
Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,
Will cost my crown, and like an empty eagle
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son!
The loss of those three lords torments my heart:
I'll write unto them and entreat them fair.
Come, cousin you shall be the messenger.

EXETER

And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Sandal Castle.

Enter RICHARD, EDWARD, and MONTAGUE

RICHARD

Brother, though I be youngest, give me leave.

EDWARD

No, I can better play the orator.

MONTAGUE

But I have reasons strong and forcible.

Enter YORK

YORK

Why, how now, sons and brother! at a strife?
What is your quarrel? how began it first?

EDWARD

No quarrel, but a slight contention.

YORK

About what?

RICHARD

About that which concerns your grace and us;
The crown of England, father, which is yours.

YORK

Mine boy? not till King Henry be dead.

RICHARD

Your right depends not on his life or death.

EDWARD

Now you are heir, therefore enjoy it now:
By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,
It will outrun you, father, in the end.

YORK

I took an oath that he should quietly reign.

EDWARD

But for a kingdom any oath may be broken:
I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.

RICHARD

No; God forbid your grace should be forsworn.

YORK

I shall be, if I claim by open war.

RICHARD

I'll prove the contrary, if you'll hear me speak.

YORK

Thou canst not, son; it is impossible.

RICHARD

An oath is of no moment, being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate,
That hath authority over him that swears:
Henry had none, but did usurp the place;
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore, to arms! And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown;
Within whose circuit is Elysium
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.
Why do we finger thus? I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.

YORK

Richard, enough; I will be king, or die.
Brother, thou shalt to London presently,
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk,
And tell him privily of our intent.
You Edward, shall unto my Lord Cobham,
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise:
In them I trust; for they are soldiers,
Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.
While you are thus employ'd, what resteth more,
But that I seek occasion how to rise,
And yet the king not privy to my drift,
Nor any of the house of Lancaster?

Enter a Messenger

But, stay: what news? Why comest thou in such post?

Messenger

The queen with all the northern earls and lords
Intend here to besiege you in your castle:
She is hard by with twenty thousand men;
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK

Ay, with my sword. What! think'st thou that we fear them?
Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;
My brother Montague shall post to London:
Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,
Whom we have left protectors of the king,
With powerful policy strengthen themselves,
And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.

MONTAGUE

Brother, I go; I'll win them, fear it not:
And thus most humbly I do take my leave.

Exit

Enter JOHN MORTIMER and HUGH MORTIMER

Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles,
You are come to Sandal in a happy hour;
The army of the queen mean to besiege us.

JOHN MORTIMER

She shall not need; we'll meet her in the field.

YORK

What, with five thousand men?

RICHARD

Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need:
A woman's general; what should we fear?

A march afar off

EDWARD

I hear their drums: let's set our men in order,
And issue forth and bid them battle straight.

YORK

Five men to twenty! though the odds be great,
I doubt not, uncle, of our victory.
Many a battle have I won in France,
When as the enemy hath been ten to one:
Why should I not now have the like success?

Alarum. Exeunt

SCENE III. Field of battle betwixt Sandal Castle and Wakefield.

Alarums. Enter RUTLAND and his Tutor

RUTLAND

Ah, whither shall I fly to 'scape their hands?

Ah, tutor, look where bloody Clifford comes!

Enter CLIFFORD and Soldiers

CLIFFORD

Chaplain, away! thy priesthood saves thy life.
As for the brat of this accursed duke,
Whose father slew my father, he shall die.

Tutor

And I, my lord, will bear him company.

CLIFFORD

Soldiers, away with him!

Tutor

Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,
Lest thou be hated both of God and man!

Exit, dragged off by Soldiers

CLIFFORD

How now! is he dead already? or is it fear
That makes him close his eyes? I'll open them.

RUTLAND

So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch
That trembles under his devouring paws;
And so he walks, insulting o'er his prey,
And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder.
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,
And not with such a cruel threatening look.
Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die.
I am too mean a subject for thy wrath:
Be thou revenged on men, and let me live.

CLIFFORD

In vain thou speak'st, poor boy; my father's blood
Hath stopp'd the passage where thy words should enter.

RUTLAND

Then let my father's blood open it again:

He is a man, and, Clifford, cope with him.

CLIFFORD

Had thy brethren here, their lives and thine
Were not revenge sufficient for me;
No, if I digg'd up thy forefathers' graves
And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,
It could not slake mine ire, nor ease my heart.
The sight of any of the house of York
Is as a fury to torment my soul;
And till I root out their accursed line
And leave not one alive, I live in hell.
Therefore--

Lifting his hand

RUTLAND

O, let me pray before I take my death!
To thee I pray; sweet Clifford, pity me!

CLIFFORD

Such pity as my rapier's point affords.

RUTLAND

I never did thee harm: why wilt thou slay me?

CLIFFORD

Thy father hath.

RUTLAND

But 'twas ere I was born.
Thou hast one son; for his sake pity me,
Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,
He be as miserably slain as I.
Ah, let me live in prison all my days;
And when I give occasion of offence,
Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.

CLIFFORD

No cause!
Thy father slew my father; therefore, die.

Stabs him

RUTLAND

Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!

Dies

CLIFFORD

Plantagenet! I come, Plantagenet!
And this thy son's blood cleaving to my blade
Shall rust upon my weapon, till thy blood,
Congeal'd with this, do make me wipe off both.

Exit

SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

Alarum. Enter YORK

YORK

The army of the queen hath got the field:
My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;
And all my followers to the eager foe
Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind
Or lambs pursued by hunger-starved wolves.
My sons, God knows what hath bechanced them:
But this I know, they have demean'd themselves
Like men born to renown by life or death.
Three times did Richard make a lane to me.
And thrice cried 'Courage, father! fight it out!'
And full as oft came Edward to my side,
With purple falchion, painted to the hilt
In blood of those that had encounter'd him:
And when the hardiest warriors did retire,
Richard cried 'Charge! and give no foot of ground!'
And cried 'A crown, or else a glorious tomb!
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!'
With this, we charged again: but, out, alas!
We bodged again; as I have seen a swan
With bootless labour swim against the tide
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.

A short alarum within

Ah, hark! the fatal followers do pursue;
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury:
And were I strong, I would not shun their fury:
The sands are number'd that make up my life;
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, PRINCE EDWARD, and Soldiers

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland,
I dare your quenchless fury to more rage:
I am your butt, and I abide your shot.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.

CLIFFORD

Ay, to such mercy as his ruthless arm,
With downright payment, show'd unto my father.
Now Phaethon hath tumbled from his car,
And made an evening at the noontide prick.

YORK

My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all:
And in that hope I throw mine eyes to heaven,
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.
Why come you not? what! multitudes, and fear?

CLIFFORD

So cowards fight when they can fly no further;
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons;
So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives,
Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers.

YORK

O Clifford, but bethink thee once again,
And in thy thought o'er-run my former time;
And, if though canst for blushing, view this face,
And bite thy tongue, that slanders him with cowardice
Whose frown hath made thee faint and fly ere this!

CLIFFORD

I will not bandy with thee word for word,
But buckle with thee blows, twice two for one.

QUEEN MARGARET

Hold, valiant Clifford! for a thousand causes
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.

Wrath makes him deaf: speak thou, Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Hold, Clifford! do not honour him so much
To prick thy finger, though to wound his heart:
What valour were it, when a cur doth grin,
For one to thrust his hand between his teeth,
When he might spurn him with his foot away?
It is war's prize to take all vantages;
And ten to one is no impeach of valour.

They lay hands on YORK, who struggles

CLIFFORD

Ay, ay, so strives the woodcock with the gin.

NORTHUMBERLAND

So doth the cony struggle in the net.

YORK

So triumph thieves upon their conquer'd booty;
So true men yield, with robbers so o'ermatch'd.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What would your grace have done unto him now?

QUEEN MARGARET

Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,
Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
What! was it you that would be England's king?
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament,
And made a preachment of your high descent?
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?
The wanton Edward, and the lusty George?
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford, with his rapier's point,
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;
And if thine eyes can water for his death,

I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient, man? thou shouldst be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport:
York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.
A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:
Hold you his hands, whilst I do set it on.

Putting a paper crown on his head

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!
Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,
And this is he was his adopted heir.
But how is it that great Plantagenet
Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?
As I bethink me, you should not be king
Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.
And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,
And rob his temples of the diadem,
Now in his life, against your holy oath?
O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable!
Off with the crown, and with the crown his head;
And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

CLIFFORD

That is my office, for my father's sake.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, stay; let's hear the orisons he makes.

YORK

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph, like an Amazonian trull,
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!
But that thy face is, vizard-like, unchanging,
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.
To tell thee whence thou camest, of whom derived,
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert thou not shameless.

Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicils and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.
Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult?
It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen,
Unless the adage must be verified,
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But, God he knows, thy share thereof is small:
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;
The contrary doth make thee wonder'd at:
'Tis government that makes them seem divine;
The want thereof makes thee abominable:
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the Antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the septentrion.
O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?
Women are soft, mild, pitiful and flexible;
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Bids't thou me rage? why, now thou hast thy wish:
Wouldst have me weep? why, now thou hast thy will:
For raging wind blows up incessant showers,
And when the rage allays, the rain begins.
These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies:
And every drop cries vengeance for his death,
'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false
Frenchwoman.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Beshrew me, but his passion moves me so
That hardly can I cheque my eyes from tears.

YORK

That face of his the hungry cannibals
Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood:
But you are more inhuman, more inexorable,
O, ten times more, than tigers of Hyrcania.
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears:
This cloth thou dip'dst in blood of my sweet boy,
And I with tears do wash the blood away.
Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this:
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,
Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;
Yea even my foes will shed fast-falling tears,
And say 'Alas, it was a piteous deed!'

There, take the crown, and, with the crown, my curse;
And in thy need such comfort come to thee
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world:
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!

NORTHUMBERLAND

Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,
I should not for my life but weep with him.
To see how inly sorrow gripes his soul.

QUEEN MARGARET

What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland?
Think but upon the wrong he did us all,
And that will quickly dry thy melting tears.

CLIFFORD

Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death.

Stabbing him

QUEEN MARGARET

And here's to right our gentle-hearted king.

Stabbing him

YORK

Open Thy gate of mercy, gracious God!
My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee.

Dies

QUEEN MARGARET

Off with his head, and set it on York gates;
So York may overlook the town of York.

Flourish. Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire.

A march. Enter EDWARD, RICHARD, and their power

EDWARD

I wonder how our princely father 'scaped,
Or whether he be 'scaped away or no
From Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit:
Had he been ta'en, we should have heard the news;
Had he been slain, we should have heard the news;
Or had he 'scaped, methinks we should have heard
The happy tidings of his good escape.
How fares my brother? why is he so sad?

RICHARD

I cannot joy, until I be resolved
Where our right valiant father is become.
I saw him in the battle range about;
And watch'd him how he singled Clifford forth.
Methought he bore him in the thickest troop
As doth a lion in a herd of neat;
Or as a bear, encompass'd round with dogs,
Who having pinch'd a few and made them cry,
The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.
So fared our father with his enemies;
So fled his enemies my warlike father:
Methinks, 'tis prize enough to be his son.
See how the morning opes her golden gates,
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun!
How well resembles it the prime of youth,
Trimm'd like a younger prancing to his love!

EDWARD

Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICHARD

Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;
Not separated with the racking clouds,
But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.
See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
As if they vow'd some league inviolable:
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.
In this the heaven figures some event.

EDWARD

'Tis wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.
I think it cites us, brother, to the field,
That we, the sons of brave Plantagenet,
Each one already blazing by our meeds,

Should notwithstanding join our lights together
And over-shine the earth as this the world.
Whate'er it bodes, henceforward will I bear
Upon my target three fair-shining suns.

RICHARD

Nay, bear three daughters: by your leave I speak it,
You love the breeder better than the male.

Enter a Messenger

But what art thou, whose heavy looks foretell
Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?

Messenger

Ah, one that was a woful looker-on
When as the noble Duke of York was slain,
Your princely father and my loving lord!

EDWARD

O, speak no more, for I have heard too much.

RICHARD

Say how he died, for I will hear it all.

Messenger

Environed he was with many foes,
And stood against them, as the hope of Troy
Against the Greeks that would have enter'd Troy.
But Hercules himself must yield to odds;
And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hew down and fell the hardest-timber'd oak.
By many hands your father was subdued;
But only slaughter'd by the ireful arm
Of unrelenting Clifford and the queen,
Who crown'd the gracious duke in high despite,
Laugh'd in his face; and when with grief he wept,
The ruthless queen gave him to dry his cheeks
A napkin steeped in the harmless blood
Of sweet young Rutland, by rough Clifford slain:
And after many scorns, many foul taunts,
They took his head, and on the gates of York
They set the same; and there it doth remain,
The saddest spectacle that e'er I view'd.

EDWARD

Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon,
Now thou art gone, we have no staff, no stay.
O Clifford, boisterous Clifford! thou hast slain
The flower of Europe for his chivalry;
And treacherously hast thou vanquish'd him,
For hand to hand he would have vanquish'd thee.
Now my soul's palace is become a prison:
Ah, would she break from hence, that this my body
Might in the ground be closed up in rest!
For never henceforth shall I joy again,
Never, O never shall I see more joy!

RICHARD

I cannot weep; for all my body's moisture
Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart:
Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burthen;
For selfsame wind that I should speak withal
Is kindling coals that fires all my breast,
And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.
To weep is to make less the depth of grief:
Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me
Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,
Or die renowned by attempting it.

EDWARD

His name that valiant duke hath left with thee;
His dukedom and his chair with me is left.

RICHARD

Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun:
For chair and dukedom, throne and kingdom say;
Either that is thine, or else thou wert not his.

March. Enter WARWICK, MONTAGUE, and their army

WARWICK

How now, fair lords! What fare? what news abroad?

RICHARD

Great Lord of Warwick, if we should recount
Our baleful news, and at each word's deliverance
Stab poniards in our flesh till all were told,

The words would add more anguish than the wounds.
O valiant lord, the Duke of York is slain!

EDWARD

O Warwick, Warwick! that Plantagenet,
Which held three dearly as his soul's redemption,
Is by the stern Lord Clifford done to death.

WARWICK

Ten days ago I drown'd these news in tears;
And now, to add more measure to your woes,
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.
After the bloody fray at Wakefield fought,
Where your brave father breathed his latest gasp,
Tidings, as swiftly as the posts could run,
Were brought me of your loss and his depart.
I, then in London keeper of the king,
Muster'd my soldiers, gather'd flocks of friends,
And very well appointed, as I thought,
March'd toward Saint Alban's to intercept the queen,
Bearing the king in my behalf along;
For by my scouts I was advertised
That she was coming with a full intent
To dash our late decree in parliament
Touching King Henry's oath and your succession.
Short tale to make, we at Saint Alban's met
Our battles join'd, and both sides fiercely fought:
But whether 'twas the coldness of the king,
Who look'd full gently on his warlike queen,
That robb'd my soldiers of their heated spleen;
Or whether 'twas report of her success;
Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour,
Who thunders to his captives blood and death,
I cannot judge: but to conclude with truth,
Their weapons like to lightning came and went;
Our soldiers', like the night-owl's lazy flight,
Or like an idle thresher with a flail,
Fell gently down, as if they struck their friends.
I cheer'd them up with justice of our cause,
With promise of high pay and great rewards:
But all in vain; they had no heart to fight,
And we in them no hope to win the day;
So that we fled; the king unto the queen;
Lord George your brother, Norfolk and myself,
In haste, post-haste, are come to join with you:
For in the marches here we heard you were,
Making another head to fight again.

EDWARD

Where is the Duke of Norfolk, gentle Warwick?
And when came George from Burgundy to England?

WARWICK

Some six miles off the duke is with the soldiers;
And for your brother, he was lately sent
From your kind aunt, Duchess of Burgundy,
With aid of soldiers to this needful war.

RICHARD

'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled:
Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,
But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

WARWICK

Nor now my scandal, Richard, dost thou hear;
For thou shalt know this strong right hand of mine
Can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head,
And wring the awful sceptre from his fist,
Were he as famous and as bold in war
As he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer.

RICHARD

I know it well, Lord Warwick; blame me not:
'Tis love I bear thy glories makes me speak.
But in this troublous time what's to be done?
Shall we go throw away our coats of steel,
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,
Numbering our Ave-Maries with our beads?
Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?
If for the last, say ay, and to it, lords.

WARWICK

Why, therefore Warwick came to seek you out;
And therefore comes my brother Montague.
Attend me, lords. The proud insulting queen,
With Clifford and the haught Northumberland,
And of their feather many more proud birds,
Have wrought the easy-melting king like wax.
He swore consent to your succession,
His oath enrolled in the parliament;
And now to London all the crew are gone,

To frustrate both his oath and what beside
May make against the house of Lancaster.
Their power, I think, is thirty thousand strong:
Now, if the help of Norfolk and myself,
With all the friends that thou, brave Earl of March,
Amongst the loving Welshmen canst procure,
Will but amount to five and twenty thousand,
Why, Via! to London will we march amain,
And once again bestride our foaming steeds,
And once again cry 'Charge upon our foes!'
But never once again turn back and fly.

RICHARD

Ay, now methinks I hear great Warwick speak:
Ne'er may he live to see a sunshine day,
That cries 'Retire,' if Warwick bid him stay.

EDWARD

Lord Warwick, on thy shoulder will I lean;
And when thou fail'st--as God forbid the hour!--
Must Edward fall, which peril heaven forbend!

WARWICK

No longer Earl of March, but Duke of York:
The next degree is England's royal throne;
For King of England shalt thou be proclaim'd
In every borough as we pass along;
And he that throws not up his cap for joy
Shall for the fault make forfeit of his head.
King Edward, valiant Richard, Montague,
Stay we no longer, dreaming of renown,
But sound the trumpets, and about our task.

RICHARD

Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,
As thou hast shown it flinty by thy deeds,
I come to pierce it, or to give thee mine.

EDWARD

Then strike up drums: God and Saint George for us!

Enter a Messenger

WARWICK

How now! what news?

Messenger

The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me,
The queen is coming with a puissant host;
And craves your company for speedy counsel.

WARWICK

Why then it sorts, brave warriors, let's away.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Before York.

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, CLIFFORD, and NORTHUMBERLAND, with drum and trumpets

QUEEN MARGARET

Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.
Yonder's the head of that arch-enemy
That sought to be encompass'd with your crown:
Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wreck:
To see this sight, it irks my very soul.
Withhold revenge, dear God! 'tis not my fault,
Nor wittingly have I infringed my vow.

CLIFFORD

My gracious liege, this too much lenity
And harmful pity must be laid aside.
To whom do lions cast their gentle looks?
Not to the beast that would usurp their den.
Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?
Not his that spoils her young before her face.
Who 'scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?
Not he that sets his foot upon her back.
The smallest worm will turn being trodden on,
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.
Ambitious York doth level at thy crown,
Thou smiling while he knit his angry brows:
He, but a duke, would have his son a king,
And raise his issue, like a loving sire;
Thou, being a king, blest with a goodly son,
Didst yield consent to disinherit him,

Which argued thee a most unloving father.
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them, even with those wings
Which sometime they have used with fearful flight,
Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,
Offer their own lives in their young's defence?
For shame, my liege, make them your precedent!
Were it not pity that this goodly boy
Should lose his birthright by his father's fault,
And long hereafter say unto his child,
'What my great-grandfather and his grandsire got
My careless father fondly gave away'?
Ah, what a shame were this! Look on the boy;
And let his manly face, which promiseth
Successful fortune, steel thy melting heart
To hold thine own and leave thine own with him.

KING HENRY VI

Full well hath Clifford play'd the orator,
Inferring arguments of mighty force.
But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill-got had ever bad success?
And happy always was it for that son
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind;
And would my father had left me no more!
For all the rest is held at such a rate
As brings a thousand-fold more care to keep
Than in possession and jot of pleasure.
Ah, cousin York! would thy best friends did know
How it doth grieve me that thy head is here!

QUEEN MARGARET

My lord, cheer up your spirits: our foes are nigh,
And this soft courage makes your followers faint.
You promised knighthood to our forward son:
Unsheathe your sword, and dub him presently.
Edward, kneel down.

KING HENRY VI

Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight;
And learn this lesson, draw thy sword in right.

PRINCE

My gracious father, by your kingly leave,
I'll draw it as apparent to the crown,
And in that quarrel use it to the death.

CLIFFORD

Why, that is spoken like a toward prince.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

Royal commanders, be in readiness:
For with a band of thirty thousand men
Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York;
And in the towns, as they do march along,
Proclaims him king, and many fly to him:
Darraign your battle, for they are at hand.

CLIFFORD

I would your highness would depart the field:
The queen hath best success when you are absent.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.

KING HENRY VI

Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Be it with resolution then to fight.

PRINCE EDWARD

My royal father, cheer these noble lords
And hearten those that fight in your defence:
Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry 'Saint George!'

March. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, and Soldiers

EDWARD

Now, perjured Henry! wilt thou kneel for grace,
And set thy diadem upon my head;
Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?

QUEEN MARGARET

Go, rate thy minions, proud insulting boy!
Becomes it thee to be thus bold in terms
Before thy sovereign and thy lawful king?

EDWARD

I am his king, and he should bow his knee;
I was adopted heir by his consent:
Since when, his oath is broke; for, as I hear,
You, that are king, though he do wear the crown,
Have caused him, by new act of parliament,
To blot out me, and put his own son in.

CLIFFORD

And reason too:
Who should succeed the father but the son?

RICHARD

Are you there, butcher? O, I cannot speak!

CLIFFORD

Ay, crook-back, here I stand to answer thee,
Or any he the proudest of thy sort.

RICHARD

'Twas you that kill'd young Rutland, was it not?

CLIFFORD

Ay, and old York, and yet not satisfied.

RICHARD

For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.

WARWICK

What say'st thou, Henry, wilt thou yield the crown?

QUEEN MARGARET

Why, how now, long-tongued Warwick! dare you speak?
When you and I met at Saint Alban's last,
Your legs did better service than your hands.

WARWICK

Then 'twas my turn to fly, and now 'tis thine.

CLIFFORD

You said so much before, and yet you fled.

WARWICK

'Twas not your valour, Clifford, drove me thence.

NORTHUMBERLAND

No, nor your manhood that durst make you stay.

RICHARD

Northumberland, I hold thee reverently.
Break off the parley; for scarce I can refrain
The execution of my big-swoln heart
Upon that Clifford, that cruel child-killer.

CLIFFORD

I slew thy father, call'st thou him a child?

RICHARD

Ay, like a dastard and a treacherous coward,
As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland;
But ere sunset I'll make thee curse the deed.

KING HENRY VI

Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET

Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

KING HENRY VI

I prithee, give no limits to my tongue:
I am a king, and privileged to speak.

CLIFFORD

My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here
Cannot be cured by words; therefore be still.

RICHARD

Then, executioner, unsheathe thy sword:
By him that made us all, I am resolved
that Clifford's manhood lies upon his tongue.

EDWARD

Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?
A thousand men have broke their fasts to-day,
That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.

WARWICK

If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;
For York in justice puts his armour on.

PRINCE EDWARD

If that be right which Warwick says is right,
There is no wrong, but every thing is right.

RICHARD

Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands;
For, well I wot, thou hast thy mother's tongue.

QUEEN MARGARET

But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam;
But like a foul mis-shapen stigmatic,
Mark'd by the destinies to be avoided,
As venom toads, or lizards' dreadful stings.

RICHARD

Iron of Naples hid with English guilt,
Whose father bears the title of a king,--
As if a channel should be call'd the sea,--
Shamest thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,
To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?

EDWARD

A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns,
To make this shameless callet know herself.
Helen of Greece was fairer far than thou,
Although thy husband may be Menelaus;
And ne'er was Agamemnon's brother wrong'd
By that false woman, as this king by thee.

His father revell'd in the heart of France,
And tamed the king, and made the dauphin stoop;
And had he match'd according to his state,
He might have kept that glory to this day;
But when he took a beggar to his bed,
And graced thy poor sire with his bridal-day,
Even then that sunshine brew'd a shower for him,
That wash'd his father's fortunes forth of France,
And heap'd sedition on his crown at home.
For what hath broach'd this tumult but thy pride?
Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept;
And we, in pity of the gentle king,
Had slipp'd our claim until another age.

GEORGE

But when we saw our sunshine made thy spring,
And that thy summer bred us no increase,
We set the axe to thy usurping root;
And though the edge hath something hit ourselves,
Yet, know thou, since we have begun to strike,
We'll never leave till we have hewn thee down,
Or bathed thy growing with our heated bloods.

EDWARD

And, in this resolution, I defy thee;
Not willing any longer conference,
Since thou deniest the gentle king to speak.
Sound trumpets! let our bloody colours wave!
And either victory, or else a grave.

QUEEN MARGARET

Stay, Edward.

EDWARD

No, wrangling woman, we'll no longer stay:
These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A field of battle between Towton and Saxton, in Yorkshire.

Alarum. Excursions. Enter WARWICK

WARWICK

Forspent with toil, as runners with a race,
I lay me down a little while to breathe;
For strokes received, and many blows repaid,
Have robb'd my strong-knit sinews of their strength,
And spite of spite needs must I rest awhile.

Enter EDWARD, running

EDWARD

Smile, gentle heaven! or strike, ungentle death!
For this world frowns, and Edward's sun is clouded.

WARWICK

How now, my lord! what hap? what hope of good?

Enter GEORGE

GEORGE

Our hap is loss, our hope but sad despair;
Our ranks are broke, and ruin follows us:
What counsel give you? whither shall we fly?

EDWARD

Bootless is flight, they follow us with wings;
And weak we are and cannot shun pursuit.

Enter RICHARD

RICHARD

Ah, Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself?
Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,
Broach'd with the steely point of Clifford's lance;
And in the very pangs of death he cried,
Like to a dismal clangour heard from far,
'Warwick, revenge! brother, revenge my death!'
So, underneath the belly of their steeds,
That stain'd their fetlocks in his smoking blood,
The noble gentleman gave up the ghost.

WARWICK

Then let the earth be drunken with our blood:
I'll kill my horse, because I will not fly.
Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage;

And look upon, as if the tragedy
Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors?
Here on my knee I vow to God above,
I'll never pause again, never stand still,
Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.

EDWARD

O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine;
And in this vow do chain my soul to thine!
And, ere my knee rise from the earth's cold face,
I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to thee,
Thou setter up and plucker down of kings,
Beseeching thee, if with they will it stands
That to my foes this body must be prey,
Yet that thy brazen gates of heaven may ope,
And give sweet passage to my sinful soul!
Now, lords, take leave until we meet again,
Where'er it be, in heaven or in earth.

RICHARD

Brother, give me thy hand; and, gentle Warwick,
Let me embrace thee in my weary arms:
I, that did never weep, now melt with woe
That winter should cut off our spring-time so.

WARWICK

Away, away! Once more, sweet lords farewell.

GEORGE

Yet let us all together to our troops,
And give them leave to fly that will not stay;
And call them pillars that will stand to us;
And, if we thrive, promise them such rewards
As victors wear at the Olympian games:
This may plant courage in their quailing breasts;
For yet is hope of life and victory.
Forslow no longer, make we hence amain.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

Excursions. Enter RICHARD and CLIFFORD

RICHARD

Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone:
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

CLIFFORD

Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone:
This is the hand that stabb'd thy father York;
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother
To execute the like upon thyself;
And so, have at thee!

They fight. WARWICK comes; CLIFFORD flies

RICHARD

Nay Warwick, single out some other chase;
For I myself will hunt this wolf to death.

Exeunt

SCENE V. Another part of the field.

Alarum. Enter KING HENRY VI alone

KING HENRY VI

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;
Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea
Forced to retire by fury of the wind:
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
Now one the better, then another best;
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered:
So is the equal of this fell war.
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead! if God's good will were so;
For what is in this world but grief and woe?
O God! methinks it were a happy life,

To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete;
How many hours bring about the day;
How many days will finish up the year;
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock;
So many hours must I take my rest;
So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean:
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O, yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle.
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

Alarum. Enter a Son that has killed his father, dragging in the dead body

Son

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.
This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight,
May be possessed with some store of crowns;
And I, that haply take them from him now,
May yet ere night yield both my life and them
To some man else, as this dead man doth me.
Who's this? O God! it is my father's face,
Whom in this conflict I unwares have kill'd.
O heavy times, begetting such events!
From London by the king was I press'd forth;
My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,
Came on the part of York, press'd by his master;

And I, who at his hands received my life, him
Have by my hands of life bereaved him.
Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did!
And pardon, father, for I knew not thee!
My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks;
And no more words till they have flow'd their fill.

KING HENRY VI

O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.
Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
Be blind with tears, and break o'ercharged with grief.

Enter a Father that has killed his son, bringing in the body

Father

Thou that so stoutly hast resisted me,
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold:
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.
But let me see: is this our foeman's face?
Ah, no, no, no, it is mine only son!
Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,
Throw up thine eye! see, see what showers arise,
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart,
Upon thy words, that kill mine eye and heart!
O, pity, God, this miserable age!
What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous and unnatural,
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

KING HENRY VI

Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!
O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds!
O pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses:
The one his purple blood right well resembles;
The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth:
Wither one rose, and let the other flourish;
If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.

Son

How will my mother for a father's death
Take on with me and ne'er be satisfied!

Father

How will my wife for slaughter of my son
Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfied!

KING HENRY VI

How will the country for these woful chances
Misthink the king and not be satisfied!

Son

Was ever son so rued a father's death?

Father

Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?

KING HENRY VI

Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?
Much is your sorrow; mine ten times so much.

Son

I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.

Exit with the body

Father

These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,
For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go;
My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;
And so obsequious will thy father be,
Even for the loss of thee, having no more,
As Priam was for all his valiant sons.
I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,
For I have murdered where I should not kill.

Exit with the body

KING HENRY VI

Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,
Here sits a king more woful than you are.

Alarums: excursions. Enter QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, and EXETER

PRINCE EDWARD

Fly, father, fly! for all your friends are fled,
And Warwick rages like a chafed bull:
Away! for death doth hold us in pursuit.

QUEEN MARGARET

Mount you, my lord; towards Berwick post amain:
Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds
Having the fearful flying hare in sight,
With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,
And bloody steel grasp'd in their ireful hands,
Are at our backs; and therefore hence amain.

EXETER

Away! for vengeance comes along with them:
Nay, stay not to expostulate, make speed;
Or else come after: I'll away before.

KING HENRY VI

Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter:
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go
Whither the queen intends. Forward; away!

Exeunt

SCENE VI. Another part of the field.

A loud alarum. Enter CLIFFORD, wounded

CLIFFORD

Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies,
Which, whiles it lasted, gave King Henry light.
O Lancaster, I fear thy overthrow
More than my body's parting with my soul!
My love and fear glued many friends to thee;
And, now I fall, thy tough commixture melts.
Impairing Henry, strengthening misproud York,
The common people swarm like summer flies;
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?
And who shines now but Henry's enemies?
O Phoebus, hadst thou never given consent
That Phaethon should cheque thy fiery steeds,
Thy burning car never had scorch'd the earth!
And, Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do,

Or as thy father and his father did,
Giving no ground unto the house of York,
They never then had sprung like summer flies;
I and ten thousand in this luckless realm
Had left no mourning widows for our death;
And thou this day hadst kept thy chair in peace.
For what doth cherish weeds but gentle air?
And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?
Bootless are complaints, and cureless are my wounds;
No way to fly, nor strength to hold out flight:
The foe is merciless, and will not pity;
For at their hands I have deserved no pity.
The air hath got into my deadly wounds,
And much effuse of blood doth make me faint.
Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest;
I stabb'd your fathers' bosoms, split my breast.

He faints

Alarum and retreat. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, and Soldiers

EDWARD

Now breathe we, lords: good fortune bids us pause,
And smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.
Some troops pursue the bloody-minded queen,
That led calm Henry, though he were a king,
As doth a sail, fill'd with a fretting gust,
Command an argosy to stem the waves.
But think you, lords, that Clifford fled with them?

WARWICK

No, 'tis impossible he should escape,
For, though before his face I speak the words
Your brother Richard mark'd him for the grave:
And wheresoe'er he is, he's surely dead.

CLIFFORD groans, and dies

EDWARD

Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?

RICHARD

A deadly groan, like life and death's departing.

EDWARD

See who it is: and, now the battle's ended,
If friend or foe, let him be gently used.

RICHARD

Revoke that doom of mercy, for 'tis Clifford;
Who not contented that he lopp'd the branch
In hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth,
But set his murdering knife unto the root
From whence that tender spray did sweetly spring,
I mean our princely father, Duke of York.

WARWICK

From off the gates of York fetch down the head,
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there;
Instead whereof let this supply the room:
Measure for measure must be answered.

EDWARD

Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,
That nothing sung but death to us and ours:
Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound,
And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.

WARWICK

I think his understanding is bereft.
Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?
Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,
And he nor sees nor hears us what we say.

RICHARD

O, would he did! and so perhaps he doth:
'Tis but his policy to counterfeit,
Because he would avoid such bitter taunts
Which in the time of death he gave our father.

GEORGE

If so thou think'st, vex him with eager words.

RICHARD

Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

EDWARD

Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

WARWICK

Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.

GEORGE

While we devise fell tortures for thy faults.

RICHARD

Thou didst love York, and I am son to York.

EDWARD

Thou pitied'st Rutland; I will pity thee.

GEORGE

Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?

WARWICK

They mock thee, Clifford: swear as thou wast wont.

RICHARD

What, not an oath? nay, then the world goes hard
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.
I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,
If this right hand would buy two hour's life,
That I in all despite might rail at him,
This hand should chop it off, and with the
issuing blood
Stifle the villain whose unstanch'd thirst
York and young Rutland could not satisfy.

WARWICK

Ay, but he's dead: off with the traitor's head,
And rear it in the place your father's stands.
And now to London with triumphant march,
There to be crowned England's royal king:
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen:
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together;
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread
The scatter'd foe that hopes to rise again;
For though they cannot greatly sting to hurt,

Yet look to have them buzz to offend thine ears.
First will I see the coronation;
And then to Brittany I'll cross the sea,
To effect this marriage, so it please my lord.

EDWARD

Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
And never will I undertake the thing
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester,
And George, of Clarence: Warwick, as ourself,
Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best.

RICHARD

Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester;
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.

WARWICK

Tut, that's a foolish observation:
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London,
To see these honours in possession.

Exeunt

ACT III

SCENE I. A forest in the north of England.

Enter two Keepers, with cross-bows in their hands

First Keeper

Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves;
For through this laund anon the deer will come;
And in this covert will we make our stand,
Culling the principal of all the deer.

Second Keeper

I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot.

First Keeper

That cannot be; the noise of thy cross-bow
Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best:

And, for the time shall not seem tedious,
I'll tell thee what befell me on a day
In this self-place where now we mean to stand.

Second Keeper

Here comes a man; let's stay till he be past.

Enter KING HENRY VI, disguised, with a prayerbook

KING HENRY VI

From Scotland am I stol'n, even of pure love,
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.
No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine;
Thy place is fill'd, thy sceptre wrung from thee,
Thy balm wash'd off wherewith thou wast anointed:
No bending knee will call thee Caesar now,
No humble suitors press to speak for right,
No, not a man comes for redress of thee;
For how can I help them, and not myself?

First Keeper

Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee:
This is the quondam king; let's seize upon him.

KING HENRY VI

Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,
For wise men say it is the wisest course.

Second Keeper

Why linger we? let us lay hands upon him.

First Keeper

Forbear awhile; we'll hear a little more.

KING HENRY VI

My queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone, to crave the French king's sister
To wife for Edward: if this news be true,
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost;
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account then Margaret may win him;

For she's a woman to be pitied much:
Her sighs will make a battery in his breast;
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart;
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn;
And Nero will be tainted with remorse,
To hear and see her complaints, her brinish tears.
Ay, but she's come to beg, Warwick to give;
She, on his left side, craving aid for Henry,
He, on his right, asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps, and says her Henry is deposed;
He smiles, and says his Edward is install'd;
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more;
Whiles Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,
And in conclusion wins the king from her,
With promise of his sister, and what else,
To strengthen and support King Edward's place.
O Margaret, thus 'twill be; and thou, poor soul,
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn!

Second Keeper

Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens?

KING HENRY VI

More than I seem, and less than I was born to:
A man at least, for less I should not be;
And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

Second Keeper

Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

KING HENRY VI

Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.

Second Keeper

But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

KING HENRY VI

My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen: my crown is called content:
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

Second Keeper

Well, if you be a king crown'd with content,
Your crown content and you must be contented
To go along with us; for as we think,
You are the king King Edward hath deposed;
And we his subjects sworn in all allegiance
Will apprehend you as his enemy.

KING HENRY VI

But did you never swear, and break an oath?

Second Keeper

No, never such an oath; nor will not now.

KING HENRY VI

Where did you dwell when I was King of England?

Second Keeper

Here in this country, where we now remain.

KING HENRY VI

I was anointed king at nine months old;
My father and my grandfather were kings,
And you were sworn true subjects unto me:
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?

First Keeper

No;
For we were subjects but while you were king.

KING HENRY VI

Why, am I dead? do I not breathe a man?
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear!
Look, as I blow this feather from my face,
And as the air blows it to me again,
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,
And yielding to another when it blows,
Commanded always by the greater gust;
Such is the lightness of you common men.
But do not break your oaths; for of that sin
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.
Go where you will, the king shall be commanded;
And be you kings, command, and I'll obey.

First Keeper

We are true subjects to the king, King Edward.

KING HENRY VI

So would you be again to Henry,
If he were seated as King Edward is.

First Keeper

We charge you, in God's name, and the king's,
To go with us unto the officers.

KING HENRY VI

In God's name, lead; your king's name be obey'd:
And what God will, that let your king perform;
And what he will, I humbly yield unto.

Exeunt

SCENE II. London. The palace.

Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and LADY GREY

KING EDWARD IV

Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Alban's field
This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain,
His lands then seized on by the conqueror:
Her suit is now to repossess those lands;
Which we in justice cannot well deny,
Because in quarrel of the house of York
The worthy gentleman did lose his life.

GLOUCESTER

Your highness shall do well to grant her suit;
It were dishonour to deny it her.

KING EDWARD IV

It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Yea, is it so?
I see the lady hath a thing to grant,
Before the king will grant her humble suit.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] He knows the game: how true
he keeps the wind!

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Silence!

KING EDWARD IV

Widow, we will consider of your suit;
And come some other time to know our mind.

LADY GREY

Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay:
May it please your highness to resolve me now;
And what your pleasure is, shall satisfy me.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Ay, widow? then I'll warrant
you all your lands,
An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.
Fight closer, or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I fear her not, unless she
chance to fall.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] God forbid that! for he'll
take vantages.

KING EDWARD IV

How many children hast thou, widow? tell me.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I think he means to beg a
child of her.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Nay, whip me then: he'll rather
give her two.

LADY GREY

Three, my most gracious lord.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] You shall have four, if you'll be ruled by him.

KING EDWARD IV

'Twere pity they should lose their father's lands.

LADY GREY

Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it then.

KING EDWARD IV

Lords, give us leave: I'll try this widow's wit.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave,
Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch.

GLOUCESTER and CLARENCE retire

KING EDWARD IV

Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?

LADY GREY

Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.

KING EDWARD IV

And would you not do much to do them good?

LADY GREY

To do them good, I would sustain some harm.

KING EDWARD IV

Then get your husband's lands, to do them good.

LADY GREY

Therefore I came unto your majesty.

KING EDWARD IV

I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.

LADY GREY

So shall you bind me to your highness' service.

KING EDWARD IV

What service wilt thou do me, if I give them?

LADY GREY

What you command, that rests in me to do.

KING EDWARD IV

But you will take exceptions to my boon.

LADY GREY

No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.

KING EDWARD IV

Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.

LADY GREY

Why, then I will do what your grace commands.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] He plies her hard; and much rain wears the marble.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] As red as fire! nay, then her wax must melt.

LADY GREY

Why stops my lord, shall I not hear my task?

KING EDWARD IV

An easy task; 'tis but to love a king.

LADY GREY

That's soon perform'd, because I am a subject.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

LADY GREY

I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] The match is made; she seals it
with a curtsy.

KING EDWARD IV

But stay thee, 'tis the fruits of love I mean.

LADY GREY

The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

KING EDWARD IV

Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.
What love, think'st thou, I sue so much to get?

LADY GREY

My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;
That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

KING EDWARD IV

No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

LADY GREY

Why, then you mean not as I thought you did.

KING EDWARD IV

But now you partly may perceive my mind.

LADY GREY

My mind will never grant what I perceive
Your highness aims at, if I aim aright.

KING EDWARD IV

To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

LADY GREY

To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

LADY GREY

Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower;
For by that loss I will not purchase them.

KING EDWARD IV

Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.

LADY GREY

Herein your highness wrongs both them and me.
But, mighty lord, this merry inclination
Accords not with the sadness of my suit:
Please you dismiss me either with 'ay' or 'no.'

KING EDWARD IV

Ay, if thou wilt say 'ay' to my request;
No if thou dost say 'no' to my demand.

LADY GREY

Then, no, my lord. My suit is at an end.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] The widow likes him not, she
knits her brows.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] He is the bluntest wooer in
Christendom.

KING EDWARD IV

[Aside] Her looks do argue her replete with modesty;
Her words do show her wit incomparable;
All her perfections challenge sovereignty:
One way or other, she is for a king;
And she shall be my love, or else my queen.--
Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?

LADY GREY

'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord:
I am a subject fit to jest withal,
But far unfit to be a sovereign.

KING EDWARD IV

Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee
I speak no more than what my soul intends;
And that is, to enjoy thee for my love.

LADY GREY

And that is more than I will yield unto:
I know I am too mean to be your queen,
And yet too good to be your concubine.

KING EDWARD IV

You cavil, widow: I did mean, my queen.

LADY GREY

'Twill grieve your grace my sons should call you father.

KING EDWARD IV

No more than when my daughters call thee mother.
Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;
And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,
Have other some: why, 'tis a happy thing
To be the father unto many sons.
Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] The ghostly father now hath done
his shrift.

CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] When he was made a shriver,
'twas for shift.

KING EDWARD IV

Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

GLOUCESTER

The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

KING EDWARD IV

You'll think it strange if I should marry her.

CLARENCE

To whom, my lord?

KING EDWARD IV

Why, Clarence, to myself.

GLOUCESTER

That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

CLARENCE

That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.

GLOUCESTER

By so much is the wonder in extremes.

KING EDWARD IV

Well, jest on, brothers: I can tell you both
Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

Enter a Nobleman

Nobleman

My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken,
And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.

KING EDWARD IV

See that he be convey'd unto the Tower:

And go we, brothers, to the man that took him,
To question of his apprehension.
Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honourably.

Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all,
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,
To cross me from the golden time I look for!
And yet, between my soul's desire and me--
The lustful Edward's title buried--
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,
And all the unlook'd for issue of their bodies,
To take their rooms, ere I can place myself:
A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say, I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
What other pleasure can the world afford?
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
And deck my body in gay ornaments,
And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
O miserable thought! and more unlikely
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!
Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,

But to command, to cheque, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home:
And I,--like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way;
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out,--
Torment myself to catch the English crown:
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

Exit

SCENE III. France. KING LEWIS XI's palace.

Flourish. Enter KING LEWIS XI, his sister BONA, his Admiral, called BOURBON, PRINCE EDWARD, QUEEN MARGARET, and OXFORD. KING LEWIS XI sits, and riseth up again

KING LEWIS XI

Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret,
Sit down with us: it ill befits thy state
And birth, that thou shouldst stand while Lewis doth sit.

QUEEN MARGARET

No, mighty King of France: now Margaret
Must strike her sail and learn awhile to serve
Where kings command. I was, I must confess,
Great Albion's queen in former golden days:
But now mischance hath trod my title down,

And with dishonour laid me on the ground;
Where I must take like seat unto my fortune,
And to my humble seat conform myself.

KING LEWIS XI

Why, say, fair queen, whence springs this deep despair?

QUEEN MARGARET

From such a cause as fills mine eyes with tears
And stops my tongue, while heart is drown'd in cares.

KING LEWIS XI

Whate'er it be, be thou still like thyself,
And sit thee by our side:

Seats her by him

Yield not thy neck
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.
Be plain, Queen Margaret, and tell thy grief;
It shall be eased, if France can yield relief.

QUEEN MARGARET

Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak.
Now, therefore, be it known to noble Lewis,
That Henry, sole possessor of my love,
Is of a king become a banish'd man,
And forced to live in Scotland a forlorn;
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York
Usurps the regal title and the seat
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,
With this my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir,
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid;
And if thou fail us, all our hope is done:
Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help;
Our people and our peers are both misled,
Our treasures seized, our soldiers put to flight,
And, as thou seest, ourselves in heavy plight.

KING LEWIS XI

Renowned queen, with patience calm the storm,
While we bethink a means to break it off.

QUEEN MARGARET

The more we stay, the stronger grows our foe.

KING LEWIS XI

The more I stay, the more I'll succor thee.

QUEEN MARGARET

O, but impatience waiteth on true sorrow.
And see where comes the breeder of my sorrow!

Enter WARWICK

KING LEWIS XI

What's he approacheth boldly to our presence?

QUEEN MARGARET

Our Earl of Warwick, Edward's greatest friend.

KING LEWIS XI

Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings thee to France?

He descends. She ariseth

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, now begins a second storm to rise;
For this is he that moves both wind and tide.

WARWICK

From worthy Edward, King of Albion,
My lord and sovereign, and thy vowed friend,
I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,
First, to do greetings to thy royal person;
And then to crave a league of amity;
And lastly, to confirm that amity
With a nuptial knot, if thou vouchsafe to grant
That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,
To England's king in lawful marriage.

QUEEN MARGARET

[Aside] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.

WARWICK

[To BONA] And, gracious madam, in our king's behalf,
I am commanded, with your leave and favour,
Humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue
To tell the passion of my sovereign's heart;
Where fame, late entering at his heedful ears,
Hath placed thy beauty's image and thy virtue.

QUEEN MARGARET

King Lewis and Lady Bona, hear me speak,
Before you answer Warwick. His demand
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity;
For how can tyrants safely govern home,
Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?
To prove him tyrant this reason may suffice,
That Henry liveth still: but were he dead,
Yet here Prince Edward stands, King Henry's son.
Look, therefore, Lewis, that by this league and marriage
Thou draw not on thy danger and dishonour;
For though usurpers sway the rule awhile,
Yet heavens are just, and time suppresseth wrongs.

WARWICK

Injurious Margaret!

PRINCE EDWARD

And why not queen?

WARWICK

Because thy father Henry did usurp;
And thou no more are prince than she is queen.

OXFORD

Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,
Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;
And, after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth,
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,
Who by his prowess conquered all France:
From these our Henry lineally descends.

WARWICK

Oxford, how haps it, in this smooth discourse,
You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost
All that which Henry Fifth had gotten?
Methinks these peers of France should smile at that.
But for the rest, you tell a pedigree
Of threescore and two years; a silly time
To make prescription for a kingdom's worth.

OXFORD

Why, Warwick, canst thou speak against thy liege,
Whom thou obeyed'st thirty and six years,
And not bewray thy treason with a blush?

WARWICK

Can Oxford, that did ever fence the right,
Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?
For shame! leave Henry, and call Edward king.

OXFORD

Call him my king by whose injurious doom
My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,
Was done to death? and more than so, my father,
Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years,
When nature brought him to the door of death?
No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,
This arm upholds the house of Lancaster.

WARWICK

And I the house of York.

KING LEWIS XI

Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford,
Vouchsafe, at our request, to stand aside,
While I use further conference with Warwick.

They stand aloof

QUEEN MARGARET

Heavens grant that Warwick's words bewitch him not!

KING LEWIS XI

Now Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,
Is Edward your true king? for I were loath

To link with him that were not lawful chosen.

WARWICK

Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honour.

KING LEWIS XI

But is he gracious in the people's eye?

WARWICK

The more that Henry was unfortunate.

KING LEWIS XI

Then further, all dissembling set aside,
Tell me for truth the measure of his love
Unto our sister Bona.

WARWICK

Such it seems
As may beseem a monarch like himself.
Myself have often heard him say and swear
That this his love was an eternal plant,
Whereof the root was fix'd in virtue's ground,
The leaves and fruit maintain'd with beauty's sun,
Exempt from envy, but not from disdain,
Unless the Lady Bona quit his pain.

KING LEWIS XI

Now, sister, let us hear your firm resolve.

BONA

Your grant, or your denial, shall be mine:

To WARWICK

Yet I confess that often ere this day,
When I have heard your king's desert recounted,
Mine ear hath tempted judgment to desire.

KING LEWIS XI

Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's;
And now forthwith shall articles be drawn
Touching the jointure that your king must make,

Which with her dowry shall be counterpoised.
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

PRINCE EDWARD

To Edward, but not to the English king.

QUEEN MARGARET

Deceitful Warwick! it was thy device
By this alliance to make void my suit:
Before thy coming Lewis was Henry's friend.

KING LEWIS XI

And still is friend to him and Margaret:
But if your title to the crown be weak,
As may appear by Edward's good success,
Then 'tis but reason that I be released
From giving aid which late I promised.
Yet shall you have all kindness at my hand
That your estate requires and mine can yield.

WARWICK

Henry now lives in Scotland at his ease,
Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.
And as for you yourself, our quondam queen,
You have a father able to maintain you;
And better 'twere you troubled him than France.

QUEEN MARGARET

Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick, peace,
Proud setter up and puller down of kings!
I will not hence, till, with my talk and tears,
Both full of truth, I make King Lewis behold
Thy sly conveyance and thy lord's false love;
For both of you are birds of selfsame feather.

Post blows a horn within

KING LEWIS XI

Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

Enter a Post

Post

[To WARWICK] My lord ambassador, these letters are for you,
Sent from your brother, Marquess Montague:

To KING LEWIS XI

These from our king unto your majesty:

To QUEEN MARGARET

And, madam, these for you; from whom I know not.

They all read their letters

OXFORD

I like it well that our fair queen and mistress
Smiles at her news, while Warwick frowns at his.

PRINCE EDWARD

Nay, mark how Lewis stamps, as he were nettled:
I hope all's for the best.

KING LEWIS XI

Warwick, what are thy news? and yours, fair queen?

QUEEN MARGARET

Mine, such as fill my heart with unhop'd joys.

WARWICK

Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

KING LEWIS XI

What! has your king married the Lady Grey!
And now, to soothe your forgery and his,
Sends me a paper to persuade me patience?
Is this the alliance that he seeks with France?
Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

QUEEN MARGARET

I told your majesty as much before:
This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.

WARWICK

King Lewis, I here protest, in sight of heaven,
And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss,
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's,
No more my king, for he dishonours me,
But most himself, if he could see his shame.
Did I forget that by the house of York
My father came untimely to his death?
Did I let pass the abuse done to my niece?
Did I impale him with the regal crown?
Did I put Henry from his native right?
And am I guerdon'd at the last with shame?
Shame on himself! for my desert is honour:
And to repair my honour lost for him,
I here renounce him and return to Henry.
My noble queen, let former grudges pass,
And henceforth I am thy true servitor:
I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona,
And replant Henry in his former state.

QUEEN MARGARET

Warwick, these words have turn'd my hate to love;
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,
And joy that thou becomest King Henry's friend.

WARWICK

So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,
That, if King Lewis vouchsafe to furnish us
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,
I'll undertake to land them on our coast
And force the tyrant from his seat by war.
'Tis not his new-made bride shall succor him:
And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me,
He's very likely now to fall from him,
For matching more for wanton lust than honour,
Or than for strength and safety of our country.

BONA

Dear brother, how shall Bona be revenged
But by thy help to this distressed queen?

QUEEN MARGARET

Renowned prince, how shall poor Henry live,
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?

BONA

My quarrel and this English queen's are one.

WARWICK

And mine, fair lady Bona, joins with yours.

KING LEWIS XI

And mine with hers, and thine, and Margaret's.
Therefore at last I firmly am resolved
You shall have aid.

QUEEN MARGARET

Let me give humble thanks for all at once.

KING LEWIS XI

Then, England's messenger, return in post,
And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers
To revel it with him and his new bride:
Thou seest what's past, go fear thy king withal.

BONA

Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake.

QUEEN MARGARET

Tell him, my mourning weeds are laid aside,
And I am ready to put armour on.

WARWICK

Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.
There's thy reward: be gone.

Exit Post

KING LEWIS XI

But, Warwick,
Thou and Oxford, with five thousand men,
Shall cross the seas, and bid false Edward battle;
And, as occasion serves, this noble queen
And prince shall follow with a fresh supply.
Yet, ere thou go, but answer me one doubt,

What pledge have we of thy firm loyalty?

WARWICK

This shall assure my constant loyalty,
That if our queen and this young prince agree,
I'll join mine eldest daughter and my joy
To him forthwith in holy wedlock bands.

QUEEN MARGARET

Yes, I agree, and thank you for your motion.
Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,
Therefore delay not, give thy hand to Warwick;
And, with thy hand, thy faith irrevocable,
That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.

PRINCE EDWARD

Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it;
And here, to pledge my vow, I give my hand.

He gives his hand to WARWICK

KING LEWIS XI

Why stay we now? These soldiers shall be levied,
And thou, Lord Bourbon, our high admiral,
Shalt waft them over with our royal fleet.
I long till Edward fall by war's mischance,
For mocking marriage with a dame of France.

Exeunt all but WARWICK

WARWICK

I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe:
Matter of marriage was the charge he gave me,
But dreadful war shall answer his demand.
Had he none else to make a stale but me?
Then none but I shall turn his jest to sorrow.
I was the chief that raised him to the crown,
And I'll be chief to bring him down again:
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery.

Exit

ACT IV

SCENE I. London. The palace.

Enter GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, SOMERSET, and MONTAGUE

GLOUCESTER

Now tell me, brother Clarence, what think you
Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?
Hath not our brother made a worthy choice?

CLARENCE

Alas, you know, 'tis far from hence to France;
How could he stay till Warwick made return?

SOMERSET

My lords, forbear this talk; here comes the king.

GLOUCESTER

And his well-chosen bride.

CLARENCE

I mind to tell him plainly what I think.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, attended; QUEEN ELIZABETH, PEMBROKE, STAFFORD, HASTINGS, and others

KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice,
That you stand pensive, as half malcontent?

CLARENCE

As well as Lewis of France, or the Earl of Warwick,
Which are so weak of courage and in judgment
That they'll take no offence at our abuse.

KING EDWARD IV

Suppose they take offence without a cause,
They are but Lewis and Warwick: I am Edward,
Your king and Warwick's, and must have my will.

GLOUCESTER

And shall have your will, because our king:
Yet hasty marriage seldom proveth well.

KING EDWARD IV

Yea, brother Richard, are you offended too?

GLOUCESTER

Not I:
No, God forbid that I should wish them sever'd
Whom God hath join'd together; ay, and 'twere pity
To sunder them that yoke so well together.

KING EDWARD IV

Setting your scorns and your mislike aside,
Tell me some reason why the Lady Grey
Should not become my wife and England's queen.
And you too, Somerset and Montague,
Speak freely what you think.

CLARENCE

Then this is mine opinion: that King Lewis
Becomes your enemy, for mocking him
About the marriage of the Lady Bona.

GLOUCESTER

And Warwick, doing what you gave in charge,
Is now dishonoured by this new marriage.

KING EDWARD IV

What if both Lewis and Warwick be appeased
By such invention as I can devise?

MONTAGUE

Yet, to have join'd with France in such alliance
Would more have strengthen'd this our commonwealth
'Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage.

HASTINGS

Why, knows not Montague that of itself
England is safe, if true within itself?

MONTAGUE

But the safer when 'tis back'd with France.

HASTINGS

'Tis better using France than trusting France:
Let us be back'd with God and with the seas
Which He hath given for fence impregnable,
And with their helps only defend ourselves;
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.

CLARENCE

For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves
To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.

KING EDWARD IV

Ay, what of that? it was my will and grant;
And for this once my will shall stand for law.

GLOUCESTER

And yet methinks your grace hath not done well,
To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales
Unto the brother of your loving bride;
She better would have fitted me or Clarence:
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

CLARENCE

Or else you would not have bestow'd the heir
Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son,
And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.

KING EDWARD IV

Alas, poor Clarence! is it for a wife
That thou art malcontent? I will provide thee.

CLARENCE

In choosing for yourself, you show'd your judgment,
Which being shallow, you give me leave
To play the broker in mine own behalf;
And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.

KING EDWARD IV

Leave me, or tarry, Edward will be king,
And not be tied unto his brother's will.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

My lords, before it pleased his majesty
To raise my state to title of a queen,
Do me but right, and you must all confess
That I was not ignoble of descent;
And meaner than myself have had like fortune.
But as this title honours me and mine,
So your dislike, to whom I would be pleasing,
Doth cloud my joys with danger and with sorrow.

KING EDWARD IV

My love, forbear to fawn upon their frowns:
What danger or what sorrow can befall thee,
So long as Edward is thy constant friend,
And their true sovereign, whom they must obey?
Nay, whom they shall obey, and love thee too,
Unless they seek for hatred at my hands;
Which if they do, yet will I keep thee safe,
And they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] I hear, yet say not much, but think the more.

Enter a Post

KING EDWARD IV

Now, messenger, what letters or what news
From France?

Post

My sovereign liege, no letters; and few words,
But such as I, without your special pardon,
Dare not relate.

KING EDWARD IV

Go to, we pardon thee: therefore, in brief,
Tell me their words as near as thou canst guess them.
What answer makes King Lewis unto our letters?

Post

At my depart, these were his very words:
'Go tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers

To revel it with him and his new bride.'

KING EDWARD IV

Is Lewis so brave? belike he thinks me Henry.
But what said Lady Bona to my marriage?

Post

These were her words, utter'd with mad disdain:
'Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake.'

KING EDWARD IV

I blame not her, she could say little less;
She had the wrong. But what said Henry's queen?
For I have heard that she was there in place.

Post

'Tell him,' quoth she, 'my mourning weeds are done,
And I am ready to put armour on.'

KING EDWARD IV

Belike she minds to play the Amazon.
But what said Warwick to these injuries?

Post

He, more incensed against your majesty
Than all the rest, discharged me with these words:
'Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.'

KING EDWARD IV

Ha! durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?
Well I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd:
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.
But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?

Post

Ay, gracious sovereign; they are so link'd in
friendship
That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.

CLARENCE

Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.
Now, brother king, farewell, and sit you fast,
For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter;
That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage
I may not prove inferior to yourself.
You that love me and Warwick, follow me.

Exit CLARENCE, and SOMERSET follows

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] Not I:
My thoughts aim at a further matter; I
Stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown.

KING EDWARD IV

Clarence and Somerset both gone to Warwick!
Yet am I arm'd against the worst can happen;
And haste is needful in this desperate case.
Pembroke and Stafford, you in our behalf
Go levy men, and make prepare for war;
They are already, or quickly will be landed:
Myself in person will straight follow you.

Exeunt PEMBROKE and STAFFORD

But, ere I go, Hastings and Montague,
Resolve my doubt. You twain, of all the rest,
Are near to Warwick by blood and by alliance:
Tell me if you love Warwick more than me?
If it be so, then both depart to him;
I rather wish you foes than hollow friends:
But if you mind to hold your true obedience,
Give me assurance with some friendly vow,
That I may never have you in suspect.

MONTAGUE

So God help Montague as he proves true!

HASTINGS

And Hastings as he favours Edward's cause!

KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, so! then am I sure of victory.
Now therefore let us hence; and lose no hour,
Till we meet Warwick with his foreign power.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A plain in Warwickshire.

Enter WARWICK and OXFORD, with French soldiers

WARWICK

Trust me, my lord, all hitherto goes well;
The common people by numbers swarm to us.

Enter CLARENCE and SOMERSET

But see where Somerset and Clarence come!
Speak suddenly, my lords, are we all friends?

CLARENCE

Fear not that, my lord.

WARWICK

Then, gentle Clarence, welcome unto Warwick;
And welcome, Somerset: I hold it cowardice
To rest mistrustful where a noble heart
Hath pawn'd an open hand in sign of love;
Else might I think that Clarence, Edward's brother,
Were but a feigned friend to our proceedings:
But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be thine.
And now what rests but, in night's coverture,
Thy brother being carelessly encamp'd,
His soldiers lurking in the towns about,
And but attended by a simple guard,
We may surprise and take him at our pleasure?
Our scouts have found the adventure very easy:
That as Ulysses and stout Diomed
With sleight and manhood stole to Rhesus' tents,
And brought from thence the Thracian fatal steeds,
So we, well cover'd with the night's black mantle,
At unawares may beat down Edward's guard
And seize himself; I say not, slaughter him,
For I intend but only to surprise him.
You that will follow me to this attempt,

Applaud the name of Henry with your leader.

They all cry, 'Henry!'

Why, then, let's on our way in silent sort:
For Warwick and his friends, God and Saint George!

Exeunt

SCENE III. Edward's camp, near Warwick.

Enter three Watchmen, to guard KING EDWARD IV's tent

First Watchman

Come on, my masters, each man take his stand:
The king by this is set him down to sleep.

Second Watchman

What, will he not to bed?

First Watchman

Why, no; for he hath made a solemn vow
Never to lie and take his natural rest
Till Warwick or himself be quite suppress'd.

Second Watchman

To-morrow then belike shall be the day,
If Warwick be so near as men report.

Third Watchman

But say, I pray, what nobleman is that
That with the king here resteth in his tent?

First Watchman

'Tis the Lord Hastings, the king's chiefest friend.

Third Watchman

O, is it so? But why commands the king
That his chief followers lodge in towns about him,
While he himself keeps in the cold field?

Second Watchman

'Tis the more honour, because more dangerous.

Third Watchman

Ay, but give me worship and quietness;
I like it better than a dangerous honour.
If Warwick knew in what estate he stands,
'Tis to be doubted he would waken him.

First Watchman

Unless our halberds did shut up his passage.

Second Watchman

Ay, wherefore else guard we his royal tent,
But to defend his person from night-foes?

Enter WARWICK, CLARENCE, OXFORD, SOMERSET, and French soldiers, silent all

WARWICK

This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.
Courage, my masters! honour now or never!
But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

First Watchman

Who goes there?

Second Watchman

Stay, or thou diest!

WARWICK and the rest cry all, 'Warwick! Warwick!' and set upon the Guard, who fly, crying, 'Arm! arm!' WARWICK and the rest following them

The drum playing and trumpet sounding, reenter WARWICK, SOMERSET, and the rest, bringing KING EDWARD IV out in his gown, sitting in a chair. RICHARD and HASTINGS fly over the stage

SOMERSET

What are they that fly there?

WARWICK

Richard and Hastings: let them go; here is The duke.

KING EDWARD IV

The duke! Why, Warwick, when we parted,
Thou call'dst me king.

WARWICK

Ay, but the case is alter'd:
When you disgraced me in my embassy,
Then I degraded you from being king,
And come now to create you Duke of York.
Alas! how should you govern any kingdom,
That know not how to use ambassadors,
Nor how to be contented with one wife,
Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,
Nor how to study for the people's welfare,
Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies?

KING EDWARD IV

Yea, brother of Clarence, are thou here too?
Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.
Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance,
Of thee thyself and all thy complices,
Edward will always bear himself as king:
Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

WARWICK

Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king:

Takes off his crown

But Henry now shall wear the English crown,
And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow.
My Lord of Somerset, at my request,
See that forthwith Duke Edward be convey'd
Unto my brother, Archbishop of York.
When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows,
I'll follow you, and tell what answer
Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him.
Now, for a while farewell, good Duke of York.

They lead him out forcibly

KING EDWARD IV

What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

Exit, guarded

OXFORD

What now remains, my lords, for us to do
But march to London with our soldiers?

WARWICK

Ay, that's the first thing that we have to do;
To free King Henry from imprisonment
And see him seated in the regal throne.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. London. The palace.

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and RIVERS

RIVERS

Madam, what makes you in this sudden change?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Why brother Rivers, are you yet to learn
What late misfortune is befall'n King Edward?

RIVERS

What! loss of some pitch'd battle against Warwick?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

No, but the loss of his own royal person.

RIVERS

Then is my sovereign slain?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ay, almost slain, for he is taken prisoner,
Either betray'd by falsehood of his guard
Or by his foe surprised at unawares:
And, as I further have to understand,
Is new committed to the Bishop of York,
Fell Warwick's brother and by that our foe.

RIVERS

These news I must confess are full of grief;

Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may:
Warwick may lose, that now hath won the day.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Till then fair hope must hinder life's decay.
And I the rather wean me from despair
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb:
This is it that makes me bridle passion
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross;
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,
Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
King Edward's fruit, true heir to the English crown.

RIVERS

But, madam, where is Warwick then become?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I am inform'd that he comes towards London,
To set the crown once more on Henry's head:
Guess thou the rest; King Edward's friends must down,
But, to prevent the tyrant's violence,--
For trust not him that hath once broken faith,--
I'll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary,
To save at least the heir of Edward's right:
There shall I rest secure from force and fraud.
Come, therefore, let us fly while we may fly:
If Warwick take us we are sure to die.

Exeunt

SCENE V. A park near Middleham Castle In Yorkshire.

Enter GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and STANLEY

GLOUCESTER

Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,
Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither,
Into this chiefest thicket of the park.
Thus stands the case: you know our king, my brother,
Is prisoner to the bishop here, at whose hands
He hath good usage and great liberty,
And, often but attended with weak guard,
Comes hunting this way to disport himself.
I have advertised him by secret means
That if about this hour he make his way
Under the colour of his usual game,

He shall here find his friends with horse and men
To set him free from his captivity.

Enter KING EDWARD IV and a Huntsman with him

Huntsman

This way, my lord; for this way lies the game.

KING EDWARD IV

Nay, this way, man: see where the huntsmen stand.
Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Stand you thus close, to steal the bishop's deer?

GLOUCESTER

Brother, the time and case requireth haste:
Your horse stands ready at the park-corner.

KING EDWARD IV

But whither shall we then?

HASTINGS

To Lynn, my lord,
And ship from thence to Flanders.

GLOUCESTER

Well guess'd, believe me; for that was my meaning.

KING EDWARD IV

Stanley, I will requite thy forwardness.

GLOUCESTER

But wherefore stay we? 'tis no time to talk.

KING EDWARD IV

Huntsman, what say'st thou? wilt thou go along?

Huntsman

Better do so than tarry and be hang'd.

GLOUCESTER

Come then, away; let's ha' no more ado.

KING EDWARD IV

Bishop, farewell: shield thee from Warwick's frown;
And pray that I may repossess the crown.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. London. The Tower.

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, CLARENCE, WARWICK, SOMERSET, HENRY OF RICHMOND, OXFORD, MONTAGUE, and Lieutenant of the Tower

KING HENRY VI

Master lieutenant, now that God and friends
Have shaken Edward from the regal seat,
And turn'd my captive state to liberty,
My fear to hope, my sorrows unto joys,
At our enlargement what are thy due fees?

Lieutenant

Subjects may challenge nothing of their sovereigns;
But if an humble prayer may prevail,
I then crave pardon of your majesty.

KING HENRY VI

For what, lieutenant? for well using me?
Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure;
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds
Conceive when after many moody thoughts
At last by notes of household harmony
They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;
He was the author, thou the instrument.
Therefore, that I may conquer fortune's spite
By living low, where fortune cannot hurt me,
And that the people of this blessed land
May not be punish'd with my thwarting stars,
Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,
I here resign my government to thee,
For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds.

WARWICK

Your grace hath still been famed for virtuous;

And now may seem as wise as virtuous,
By spying and avoiding fortune's malice,
For few men rightly temper with the stars:
Yet in this one thing let me blame your grace,
For choosing me when Clarence is in place.

CLARENCE

No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway,
To whom the heavens in thy nativity
Adjudged an olive branch and laurel crown,
As likely to be blest in peace and war;
And therefore I yield thee my free consent.

WARWICK

And I choose Clarence only for protector.

KING HENRY VI

Warwick and Clarence give me both your hands:
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,
That no dissension hinder government:
I make you both protectors of this land,
While I myself will lead a private life
And in devotion spend my latter days,
To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise.

WARWICK

What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?

CLARENCE

That he consents, if Warwick yield consent;
For on thy fortune I repose myself.

WARWICK

Why, then, though loath, yet must I be content:
We'll yoke together, like a double shadow
To Henry's body, and supply his place;
I mean, in bearing weight of government,
While he enjoys the honour and his ease.
And, Clarence, now then it is more than needful
Forthwith that Edward be pronounced a traitor,
And all his lands and goods be confiscate.

CLARENCE

What else? and that succession be determined.

WARWICK

Ay, therein Clarence shall not want his part.

KING HENRY VI

But, with the first of all your chief affairs,
Let me entreat, for I command no more,
That Margaret your queen and my son Edward
Be sent for, to return from France with speed;
For, till I see them here, by doubtful fear
My joy of liberty is half eclipsed.

CLARENCE

It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed.

KING HENRY VI

My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that,
Of whom you seem to have so tender care?

SOMERSET

My liege, it is young Henry, earl of Richmond.

KING HENRY VI

Come hither, England's hope.

Lays his hand on his head

If secret powers
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
His looks are full of peaceful majesty,
His head by nature framed to wear a crown,
His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself
Likely in time to bless a regal throne.
Make much of him, my lords, for this is he
Must help you more than you are hurt by me.

Enter a Post

WARWICK

What news, my friend?

Post

That Edward is escaped from your brother,
And fled, as he hears since, to Burgundy.

WARWICK

Unsavoury news! but how made he escape?

Post

He was convey'd by Richard Duke of Gloucester
And the Lord Hastings, who attended him
In secret ambush on the forest side
And from the bishop's huntsmen rescued him;
For hunting was his daily exercise.

WARWICK

My brother was too careless of his charge.
But let us hence, my sovereign, to provide
A salve for any sore that may betide.

Exeunt all but SOMERSET, HENRY OF RICHMOND, and OXFORD

SOMERSET

My lord, I like not of this flight of Edward's;
For doubtless Burgundy will yield him help,
And we shall have more wars before 't be long.
As Henry's late presaging prophecy
Did glad my heart with hope of this young Richmond,
So doth my heart misgive me, in these conflicts
What may befall him, to his harm and ours:
Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst,
Forthwith we'll send him hence to Brittany,
Till storms be past of civil enmity.

OXFORD

Ay, for if Edward repossess the crown,
'Tis like that Richmond with the rest shall down.

SOMERSET

It shall be so; he shall to Brittany.
Come, therefore, let's about it speedily.

Exeunt

SCENE VII. Before York.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and Soldiers

KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Yet thus far fortune maketh us amends,
And says that once more I shall interchange
My waned state for Henry's regal crown.
Well have we pass'd and now repass'd the seas
And brought desired help from Burgundy:
What then remains, we being thus arrived
From Ravenspurgh haven before the gates of York,
But that we enter, as into our dukedom?

GLOUCESTER

The gates made fast! Brother, I like not this;
For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.

KING EDWARD IV

Tush, man, abodements must not now affright us:
By fair or foul means we must enter in,
For hither will our friends repair to us.

HASTINGS

My liege, I'll knock once more to summon them.

Enter, on the walls, the Mayor of York, and his Brethren

Mayor

My lords, we were forewarned of your coming,
And shut the gates for safety of ourselves;
For now we owe allegiance unto Henry.

KING EDWARD IV

But, master mayor, if Henry be your king,
Yet Edward at the least is Duke of York.

Mayor

True, my good lord; I know you for no less.

KING EDWARD IV

Why, and I challenge nothing but my dukedom,
As being well content with that alone.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] But when the fox hath once got in his nose,
He'll soon find means to make the body follow.

HASTINGS

Why, master mayor, why stand you in a doubt?
Open the gates; we are King Henry's friends.

Mayor

Ay, say you so? the gates shall then be open'd.

They descend

GLOUCESTER

A wise stout captain, and soon persuaded!

HASTINGS

The good old man would fain that all were well,
So 'twere not 'long of him; but being enter'd,
I doubt not, I, but we shall soon persuade
Both him and all his brothers unto reason.

Enter the Mayor and two Aldermen, below

KING EDWARD IV

So, master mayor: these gates must not be shut
But in the night or in the time of war.
What! fear not, man, but yield me up the keys;

Takes his keys

For Edward will defend the town and thee,
And all those friends that deign to follow me.

March. Enter MONTGOMERY, with drum and soldiers

GLOUCESTER

Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery,
Our trusty friend, unless I be deceived.

KING EDWARD IV

Welcome, Sir John! But why come you in arms?

MONTAGUE

To help King Edward in his time of storm,
As every loyal subject ought to do.

KING EDWARD IV

Thanks, good Montgomery; but we now forget
Our title to the crown and only claim
Our dukedom till God please to send the rest.

MONTAGUE

Then fare you well, for I will hence again:
I came to serve a king and not a duke.
Drummer, strike up, and let us march away.

The drum begins to march

KING EDWARD IV

Nay, stay, Sir John, awhile, and we'll debate
By what safe means the crown may be recover'd.

MONTAGUE

What talk you of debating? in few words,
If you'll not here proclaim yourself our king,
I'll leave you to your fortune and be gone
To keep them back that come to succor you:
Why shall we fight, if you pretend no title?

GLOUCESTER

Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?

KING EDWARD IV

When we grow stronger, then we'll make our claim:
Till then, 'tis wisdom to conceal our meaning.

HASTINGS

Away with scrupulous wit! now arms must rule.

GLOUCESTER

And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.
Brother, we will proclaim you out of hand:
The bruit thereof will bring you many friends.

KING EDWARD IV

Then be it as you will; for 'tis my right,
And Henry but usurps the diadem.

MONTAGUE

Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself;
And now will I be Edward's champion.

HASTINGS

Sound trumpet; Edward shall be here proclaim'd:
Come, fellow-soldier, make thou proclamation.

Flourish

Soldier

Edward the Fourth, by the grace of God, king of
England and France, and lord of Ireland, & c.

MONTAGUE

And whosoe'er gainsays King Edward's right,
By this I challenge him to single fight.

Throws down his gauntlet

All

Long live Edward the Fourth!

KING EDWARD IV

Thanks, brave Montgomery; and thanks unto you all:
If fortune serve me, I'll requite this kindness.
Now, for this night, let's harbour here in York;
And when the morning sun shall raise his car
Above the border of this horizon,
We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates;
For well I wot that Henry is no soldier.
Ah, froward Clarence! how evil it beseems thee
To flatter Henry and forsake thy brother!
Yet, as we may, we'll meet both thee and Warwick.
Come on, brave soldiers: doubt not of the day,

And, that once gotten, doubt not of large pay.

Exeunt

SCENE VIII. London. The palace.

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, WARWICK, MONTAGUE, CLARENCE, EXETER, and OXFORD

WARWICK

What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders,
Hath pass'd in safety through the narrow seas,
And with his troops doth march amain to London;
And many giddy people flock to him.

KING HENRY VI

Let's levy men, and beat him back again.

CLARENCE

A little fire is quickly trodden out;
Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench.

WARWICK

In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war;
Those will I muster up: and thou, son Clarence,
Shalt stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk, and in Kent,
The knights and gentlemen to come with thee:
Thou, brother Montague, in Buckingham,
Northampton and in Leicestershire, shalt find
Men well inclined to hear what thou command'st:
And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well beloved,
In Oxfordshire shalt muster up thy friends.
My sovereign, with the loving citizens,
Like to his island girt in with the ocean,
Or modest Dian circled with her nymphs,
Shall rest in London till we come to him.
Fair lords, take leave and stand not to reply.
Farewell, my sovereign.

KING HENRY VI

Farewell, my Hector, and my Troy's true hope.

CLARENCE

In sign of truth, I kiss your highness' hand.

KING HENRY VI

Well-minded Clarence, be thou fortunate!

MONTAGUE

Comfort, my lord; and so I take my leave.

OXFORD

And thus I seal my truth, and bid adieu.

KING HENRY VI

Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague,
And all at once, once more a happy farewell.

WARWICK

Farewell, sweet lords: let's meet at Coventry.

Exeunt all but KING HENRY VI and EXETER

KING HENRY VI

Here at the palace I will rest awhile.
Cousin of Exeter, what thinks your lordship?
Methinks the power that Edward hath in field
Should not be able to encounter mine.

EXETER

The doubt is that he will seduce the rest.

KING HENRY VI

That's not my fear; my meed hath got me fame:
I have not stopp'd mine ears to their demands,
Nor posted off their suits with slow delays;
My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,
My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;
I have not been desirous of their wealth,
Nor much oppress'd them with great subsidies.
Nor forward of revenge, though they much err'd:
Then why should they love Edward more than me?
No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace:
And when the lion fawns upon the lamb,

The lamb will never cease to follow him.

Shout within. 'A Lancaster! A Lancaster!'

EXETER

Hark, hark, my lord! what shouts are these?

Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers

KING EDWARD IV

Seize on the shame-faced Henry, bear him hence;
And once again proclaim us King of England.
You are the fount that makes small brooks to flow:
Now stops thy spring; my sea shall suck them dry,
And swell so much the higher by their ebb.
Hence with him to the Tower; let him not speak.

Exeunt some with KING HENRY VI

And, lords, towards Coventry bend we our course
Where peremptory Warwick now remains:
The sun shines hot; and, if we use delay,
Cold biting winter mars our hoped-for hay.

GLOUCESTER

Away betimes, before his forces join,
And take the great-grown traitor unawares:
Brave warriors, march amain towards Coventry.

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. Coventry.

Enter WARWICK, the Mayor of Coventry, two Messengers, and others upon the walls

WARWICK

Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford?
How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?

First Messenger

By this at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

WARWICK

How far off is our brother Montague?
Where is the post that came from Montague?

Second Messenger

By this at Daintry, with a puissant troop.

Enter SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE

WARWICK

Say, Somerville, what says my loving son?
And, by thy guess, how nigh is Clarence now?

SOMERSET

At Southam I did leave him with his forces,
And do expect him here some two hours hence.

Drum heard

WARWICK

Then Clarence is at hand, I hear his drum.

SOMERSET

It is not his, my lord; here Southam lies:
The drum your honour hears marcheth from Warwick.

WARWICK

Who should that be? belike, unlook'd-for friends.

SOMERSET

They are at hand, and you shall quickly know.

March: flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers

KING EDWARD IV

Go, trumpet, to the walls, and sound a parle.

GLOUCESTER

See how the surly Warwick mans the wall!

WARWICK

O unbid spite! is sportful Edward come?
Where slept our scouts, or how are they seduced,
That we could hear no news of his repair?

KING EDWARD IV

Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,
Speak gentle words and humbly bend thy knee,
Call Edward king and at his hands beg mercy?
And he shall pardon thee these outrages.

WARWICK

Nay, rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,
Confess who set thee up and pluck'd thee own,
Call Warwick patron and be penitent?
And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.

GLOUCESTER

I thought, at least, he would have said the king;
Or did he make the jest against his will?

WARWICK

Is not a dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?

GLOUCESTER

Ay, by my faith, for a poor earl to give:
I'll do thee service for so good a gift.

WARWICK

'Twas I that gave the kingdom to thy brother.

KING EDWARD IV

Why then 'tis mine, if but by Warwick's gift.

WARWICK

Thou art no Atlas for so great a weight:
And weakling, Warwick takes his gift again;
And Henry is my king, Warwick his subject.

KING EDWARD IV

But Warwick's king is Edward's prisoner:
And, gallant Warwick, do but answer this:

What is the body when the head is off?

GLOUCESTER

Alas, that Warwick had no more forecast,
But, whiles he thought to steal the single ten,
The king was slily finger'd from the deck!
You left poor Henry at the Bishop's palace,
And, ten to one, you'll meet him in the Tower.

EDWARD

'Tis even so; yet you are Warwick still.

GLOUCESTER

Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down:
Nay, when? strike now, or else the iron cools.

WARWICK

I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,
And with the other fling it at thy face,
Than bear so low a sail, to strike to thee.

KING EDWARD IV

Sail how thou canst, have wind and tide thy friend,
This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair
Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,
Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood,
'Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more.'

Enter OXFORD, with drum and colours

WARWICK

O cheerful colours! see where Oxford comes!

OXFORD

Oxford, Oxford, for Lancaster!

He and his forces enter the city

GLOUCESTER

The gates are open, let us enter too.

KING EDWARD IV

So other foes may set upon our backs.
Stand we in good array; for they no doubt
Will issue out again and bid us battle:
If not, the city being but of small defence,
We'll quickly rouse the traitors in the same.

WARWICK

O, welcome, Oxford! for we want thy help.

Enter MONTAGUE with drum and colours

MONTAGUE

Montague, Montague, for Lancaster!

He and his forces enter the city

GLOUCESTER

Thou and thy brother both shall buy this treason
Even with the dearest blood your bodies bear.

KING EDWARD IV

The harder match'd, the greater victory:
My mind presageth happy gain and conquest.

Enter SOMERSET, with drum and colours

SOMERSET

Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!

He and his forces enter the city

GLOUCESTER

Two of thy name, both Dukes of Somerset,
Have sold their lives unto the house of York;
And thou shalt be the third if this sword hold.

Enter CLARENCE, with drum and colours

WARWICK

And lo, where George of Clarence sweeps along,
Of force enough to bid his brother battle;
With whom an upright zeal to right prevails
More than the nature of a brother's love!

Come, Clarence, come; thou wilt, if Warwick call.

CLARENCE

Father of Warwick, know you what this means?

Taking his red rose out of his hat

Look here, I throw my infamy at thee
I will not ruinate my father's house,
Who gave his blood to lime the stones together,
And set up Lancaster. Why, throw'st thou, Warwick,
That Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, unnatural,
To bend the fatal instruments of war
Against his brother and his lawful king?
Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath:
To keep that oath were more impiety
Than Jephthah's, when he sacrificed his daughter.
I am so sorry for my trespass made
That, to deserve well at my brother's hands,
I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe,
With resolution, wheresoe'er I meet thee--
As I will meet thee, if thou stir abroad--
To plague thee for thy foul misleading me.
And so, proud-hearted Warwick, I defy thee,
And to my brother turn my blushing cheeks.
Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends:
And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults,
For I will henceforth be no more unconstant.

KING EDWARD IV

Now welcome more, and ten times more beloved,
Than if thou never hadst deserved our hate.

GLOUCESTER

Welcome, good Clarence; this is brotherlike.

WARWICK

O passing traitor, perjured and unjust!

KING EDWARD IV

What, Warwick, wilt thou leave the town and fight?
Or shall we beat the stones about thine ears?

WARWICK

Alas, I am not coop'd here for defence!
I will away towards Barnet presently,
And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou darest.

KING EDWARD IV

Yes, Warwick, Edward dares, and leads the way.
Lords, to the field; Saint George and victory!

Exeunt King Edward and his company. March. Warwick and his company follow

SCENE II. A field of battle near Barnet.

Alarum and excursions. Enter KING EDWARD IV, bringing forth WARWICK wounded

KING EDWARD IV

So, lie thou there: die thou, and die our fear;
For Warwick was a bug that fear'd us all.
Now, Montague, sit fast; I seek for thee,
That Warwick's bones may keep thine company.

Exit

WARWICK

Ah, who is nigh? come to me, friend or foe,
And tell me who is victor, York or Warwick?
Why ask I that? my mangled body shows,
My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart shows.
That I must yield my body to the earth
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.
Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,
Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree
And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.
These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil,
Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,
To search the secret treasons of the world:
The wrinkles in my brows, now filled with blood,
Were liken'd oft to kingly sepulchres;
For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?
And who durst mine when Warwick bent his brow?
Lo, now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had.
Even now forsake me, and of all my lands
Is nothing left me but my body's length.
Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?
And, live we how we can, yet die we must.

Enter OXFORD and SOMERSET

SOMERSET

Ah, Warwick, Warwick! wert thou as we are.
We might recover all our loss again;
The queen from France hath brought a puissant power:
Even now we heard the news: ah, could'st thou fly!

WARWICK

Why, then I would not fly. Ah, Montague,
If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand.
And with thy lips keep in my soul awhile!
Thou lovest me not; for, brother, if thou didst,
Thy tears would wash this cold congealed blood
That glues my lips and will not let me speak.
Come quickly, Montague, or I am dead.

SOMERSET

Ah, Warwick! Montague hath breathed his last;
And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,
And said 'Commend me to my valiant brother.'
And more he would have said, and more he spoke,
Which sounded like a clamour in a vault,
That might not be distinguished; but at last
I well might hear, delivered with a groan,
'O, farewell, Warwick!'

WARWICK

Sweet rest his soul! Fly, lords, and save yourselves;
For Warwick bids you all farewell to meet in heaven.

Dies

OXFORD

Away, away, to meet the queen's great power!

Here they bear away his body. Exeunt

SCENE III. Another part of the field.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV in triumph; with GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest

KING EDWARD IV

Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,
And we are graced with wreaths of victory.
But, in the midst of this bright-shining day,
I spy a black, suspicious, threatening cloud,
That will encounter with our glorious sun,
Ere he attain his easeful western bed:
I mean, my lords, those powers that the queen
Hath raised in Gallia have arrived our coast
And, as we hear, march on to fight with us.

CLARENCE

A little gale will soon disperse that cloud
And blow it to the source from whence it came:
The very beams will dry those vapours up,
For every cloud engenders not a storm.

GLOUCESTER

The queen is valued thirty thousand strong,
And Somerset, with Oxford fled to her:
If she have time to breathe be well assured
Her faction will be full as strong as ours.

KING EDWARD IV

We are advertised by our loving friends
That they do hold their course toward Tewksbury:
We, having now the best at Barnet field,
Will thither straight, for willingness rids way;
And, as we march, our strength will be augmented
In every county as we go along.
Strike up the drum; cry 'Courage!' and away.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. Plains near Tewksbury.

March. Enter QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, SOMERSET, OXFORD, and soldiers

QUEEN MARGARET

Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
What though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?
Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet that he
Should leave the helm and like a fearful lad
With tearful eyes add water to the sea

And give more strength to that which hath too much,
Whiles, in his moan, the ship splits on the rock,
Which industry and courage might have saved?
Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this!
Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that?
And Montague our topmost; what of him?
Our slaughter'd friends the tackles; what of these?
Why, is not Oxford here another anchor?
And Somerset another goodly mast?
The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?
And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I
For once allow'd the skilful pilot's charge?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course, though the rough wind say no,
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wreck.
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but ruthless sea?
What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?
All these the enemies to our poor bark.
Say you can swim; alas, 'tis but a while!
Tread on the sand; why, there you quickly sink:
Bestride the rock; the tide will wash you off,
Or else you famish; that's a threefold death.
This speak I, lords, to let you understand,
If case some one of you would fly from us,
That there's no hoped-for mercy with the brothers
More than with ruthless waves, with sands and rocks.
Why, courage then! what cannot be avoided
'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear.

PRINCE EDWARD

Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
Infuse his breast with magnanimity
And make him, naked, foil a man at arms.
I speak not this as doubting any here
For did I but suspect a fearful man
He should have leave to go away betimes,
Lest in our need he might infect another
And make him of like spirit to himself.
If any such be here--as God forbid!--
Let him depart before we need his help.

OXFORD

Women and children of so high a courage,
And warriors faint! why, 'twere perpetual shame.
O brave young prince! thy famous grandfather

Doth live again in thee: long mayst thou live
To bear his image and renew his glories!

SOMERSET

And he that will not fight for such a hope.
Go home to bed, and like the owl by day,
If he arise, be mock'd and wonder'd at.

QUEEN MARGARET

Thanks, gentle Somerset; sweet Oxford, thanks.

PRINCE EDWARD

And take his thanks that yet hath nothing else.

Enter a Messenger

Messenger

Prepare you, lords, for Edward is at hand.
Ready to fight; therefore be resolute.

OXFORD

I thought no less: it is his policy
To haste thus fast, to find us unprovided.

SOMERSET

But he's deceived; we are in readiness.

QUEEN MARGARET

This cheers my heart, to see your forwardness.

OXFORD

Here pitch our battle; hence we will not budge.

Flourish and march. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and soldiers

KING EDWARD IV

Brave followers, yonder stands the thorny wood,
Which, by the heavens' assistance and your strength,
Must by the roots be hewn up yet ere night.
I need not add more fuel to your fire,
For well I wot ye blaze to burn them out

Give signal to the fight, and to it, lords!

QUEEN MARGARET

Lords, knights, and gentlemen, what I should say
My tears gainsay; for every word I speak,
Ye see, I drink the water of mine eyes.
Therefore, no more but this: Henry, your sovereign,
Is prisoner to the foe; his state usurp'd,
His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,
His statutes cancell'd and his treasure spent;
And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.
You fight in justice: then, in God's name, lords,
Be valiant and give signal to the fight.

Alarum. Retreat. Excursions. Exeunt

SCENE V. Another part of the field.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and soldiers; with QUEEN MARGARET, OXFORD, and SOMERSET, prisoners

KING EDWARD IV

Now here a period of tumultuous broils.
Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight:
For Somerset, off with his guilty head.
Go, bear them hence; I will not hear them speak.

OXFORD

For my part, I'll not trouble thee with words.

SOMERSET

Nor I, but stoop with patience to my fortune.

Exeunt Oxford and Somerset, guarded

QUEEN MARGARET

So part we sadly in this troublous world,
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.

KING EDWARD IV

Is proclamation made, that who finds Edward
Shall have a high reward, and he his life?

GLOUCESTER

It is: and lo, where youthful Edward comes!

Enter soldiers, with PRINCE EDWARD

KING EDWARD IV

Bring forth the gallant, let us hear him speak.
What! can so young a thorn begin to prick?
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
And all the trouble thou hast turn'd me to?

PRINCE EDWARD

Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York!
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,
Whilst I propose the selfsame words to thee,
Which traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, that thy father had been so resolved!

GLOUCESTER

That you might still have worn the petticoat,
And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster.

PRINCE EDWARD

Let AEsop fable in a winter's night;
His currish riddles sort not with this place.

GLOUCESTER

By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word.

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.

GLOUCESTER

For God's sake, take away this captive scold.

PRINCE EDWARD

Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather.

KING EDWARD IV

Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.

CLARENCE

Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert.

PRINCE EDWARD

I know my duty; you are all undutiful:
Lascivious Edward, and thou perjured George,
And thou mis-shapen Dick, I tell ye all
I am your better, traitors as ye are:
And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.

KING EDWARD IV

Take that, thou likeness of this railer here.

Stabs him

GLOUCESTER

Sprawl'st thou? take that, to end thy agony.

Stabs him

CLARENCE

And there's for twitting me with perjury.

Stabs him

QUEEN MARGARET

O, kill me too!

GLOUCESTER

Marry, and shall.

Offers to kill her

KING EDWARD IV

Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done too much.

GLOUCESTER

Why should she live, to fill the world with words?

KING EDWARD IV

What, doth she swoon? use means for her recovery.

GLOUCESTER

Clarence, excuse me to the king my brother;
I'll hence to London on a serious matter:
Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news.

CLARENCE

What? what?

GLOUCESTER

The Tower, the Tower.

Exit

QUEEN MARGARET

O Ned, sweet Ned! speak to thy mother, boy!
Canst thou not speak? O traitors! murderers!
They that stabb'd Caesar shed no blood at all,
Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,
If this foul deed were by to equal it:
He was a man; this, in respect, a child:
And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst, and if I speak:
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.
Butchers and villains! bloody cannibals!
How sweet a plant have you untimely cropp'd!
You have no children, butchers! if you had,
The thought of them would have stirr'd up remorse:
But if you ever chance to have a child,
Look in his youth to have him so cut off
As, deathmen, you have rid this sweet young prince!

KING EDWARD IV

Away with her; go, bear her hence perforce.

QUEEN MARGARET

Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here,
Here sheathe thy sword, I'll pardon thee my death:

What, wilt thou not? then, Clarence, do it thou.

CLARENCE

By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

QUEEN MARGARET

Good Clarence, do; sweet Clarence, do thou do it.

CLARENCE

Didst thou not hear me swear I would not do it?

QUEEN MARGARET

Ay, but thou usest to forswear thyself:
'Twas sin before, but now 'tis charity.
What, wilt thou not? Where is that devil's butcher,
Hard-favour'd Richard? Richard, where art thou?
Thou art not here: murder is thy alms-deed;
Petitioners for blood thou ne'er put'st back.

KING EDWARD IV

Away, I say; I charge ye, bear her hence.

QUEEN MARGARET

So come to you and yours, as to this Prince!

Exit, led out forcibly

KING EDWARD IV

Where's Richard gone?

CLARENCE

To London, all in post; and, as I guess,
To make a bloody supper in the Tower.

KING EDWARD IV

He's sudden, if a thing comes in his head.
Now march we hence: discharge the common sort
With pay and thanks, and let's away to London
And see our gentle queen how well she fares:
By this, I hope, she hath a son for me.

Exeunt

SCENE VI. London. The Tower.

Enter KING HENRY VI and GLOUCESTER, with the Lieutenant, on the walls

GLOUCESTER

Good day, my lord. What, at your book so hard?

KING HENRY VI

Ay, my good lord:--my lord, I should say rather;
'Tis sin to flatter; 'good' was little better:
'Good Gloucester' and 'good devil' were alike,
And both preposterous; therefore, not 'good lord.'

GLOUCESTER

Sirrah, leave us to ourselves: we must confer.

Exit Lieutenant

KING HENRY VI

So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;
So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece
And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.
What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?

GLOUCESTER

Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

KING HENRY VI

The bird that hath been limed in a bush,
With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush;
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,
Have now the fatal object in my eye
Where my poor young was limed, was caught and kill'd.

GLOUCESTER

Why, what a peevish fool was that of Crete,
That taught his son the office of a fowl!
An yet, for all his wings, the fool was drown'd.

KING HENRY VI

I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;
The sun that sear'd the wings of my sweet boy
Thy brother Edward, and thyself the sea
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.
Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words!
My breast can better brook thy dagger's point
Than can my ears that tragic history.
But wherefore dost thou come? is't for my life?

GLOUCESTER

Think'st thou I am an executioner?

KING HENRY VI

A persecutor, I am sure, thou art:
If murdering innocents be executing,
Why, then thou art an executioner.

GLOUCESTER

Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.

KING HENRY VI

Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume,
Thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine.
And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand,
Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,
And many an old man's sigh and many a widow's,
And many an orphan's water-standing eye--
Men for their sons, wives for their husbands,
And orphans for their parents timeless death--
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.
The owl shriek'd at thy birth,--an evil sign;
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,
And chattering pies in dismal discords sung.
Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
And, yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
To signify thou camest to bite the world:
And, if the rest be true which I have heard,
Thou camest--

GLOUCESTER

I'll hear no more: die, prophet in thy speech:

Stabs him

For this amongst the rest, was I ordain'd.

KING HENRY VI

Ay, and for much more slaughter after this.
God forgive my sins, and pardon thee!

Dies

GLOUCESTER

What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death!
O, may such purple tears be alway shed
From those that wish the downfall of our house!
If any spark of life be yet remaining,
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither:

Stabs him again

I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.
Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;
For I have often heard my mother say
I came into the world with my legs forward:
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,
And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?
The midwife wonder'd and the women cried
'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'
And so I was; which plainly signified
That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
I have no brother, I am like no brother;
And this word 'love,' which graybeards call divine,
Be resident in men like one another
And not in me: I am myself alone.
Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light:
But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;
For I will buz abroad such prophecies
That Edward shall be fearful of his life,
And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.
King Henry and the prince his son are gone:
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest,
Counting myself but bad till I be best.
I'll throw thy body in another room

And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

Exit, with the body

SCENE VII. London. The palace.

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, QUEEN ELIZABETH, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, a Nurse with the young Prince, and Attendants

KING EDWARD IV

Once more we sit in England's royal throne,
Re-purchased with the blood of enemies.
What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,
Have we mow'd down, in tops of all their pride!
Three Dukes of Somerset, threefold renown'd
For hardy and undoubted champions;
Two Cliffords, as the father and the son,
And two Northumberlands; two braver men
Ne'er spurr'd their coursers at the trumpet's sound;
With them, the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague,
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion
And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.
Thus have we swept suspicion from our seat
And made our footstool of security.
Come hither, Bess, and let me kiss my boy.
Young Ned, for thee, thine uncles and myself
Have in our armours watch'd the winter's night,
Went all afoot in summer's scalding heat,
That thou mightst repossess the crown in peace;
And of our labours thou shalt reap the gain.

GLOUCESTER

[Aside] I'll blast his harvest, if your head were laid;
For yet I am not look'd on in the world.
This shoulder was ordain'd so thick to heave;
And heave it shall some weight, or break my back:
Work thou the way,--and thou shalt execute.

KING EDWARD IV

Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely queen;
And kiss your princely nephew, brothers both.

CLARENCE

The duty that I owe unto your majesty
I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thanks, noble Clarence; worthy brother, thanks.

GLOUCESTER

And, that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st,
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.

Aside

And cried 'all hail!' when as he meant all harm.

KING EDWARD IV

Now am I seated as my soul delights,
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.

CLARENCE

What will your grace have done with Margaret?
Reignier, her father, to the king of France
Hath pawn'd the Sicils and Jerusalem,
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.

KING EDWARD IV

Away with her, and waft her hence to France.
And now what rests but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?
Sound drums and trumpets! farewell sour annoy!
For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy.

Exeunt

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