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William Shakespeare
Excerpt
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FIRST PART OF
KING HENRY VI.

VOL. IV.

B

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

KING HENRY THE SIXTH.
 DUKE OF GLOSTER, *Uncle to the King, and Protector.*
 DUKE OF BEDFORD, *Uncle to the King, and Regent of France.*
 THOMAS BEAUFORT, *Duke of Exeter, great Uncle to the King.*
 HENRY BEAUFORT, *great Uncle to the King, Bishop of Winchester,*
and afterwards Cardinal.
 JOHN BEAUFORT, *Earl of Somerset, afterwards Duke.*
 RICHARD PLANTAGENET, *eldest Son of Richard, late Earl of*
Cambridge; afterwards Duke of York.
 EARL OF WARWICK.
 EARL OF SALISBURY.
 EARL OF SUFFOLK.
 LORD TALBOT, *afterwards Earl of Shrewsbury.*
 JOHN TALBOT, *his Son.*
 EDWARD MORTIMER, *Earl of March.*
 MORTIMER'S KEEPER, AND A LAWYER.
 SIR JOHN FASTOLFE.
 SIR WILLIAM LUCY.
 SIR WILLIAM GLANSDALE.
 SIR THOMAS GARGRAVE.
 MAYOR OF LONDON.
 WOODVILLE, *Lieutenant of the Tower.*
 VERNON, *of the White Rose, or York Faction.*
 BASSET, *of the Red Rose, or Lancaster Faction.*
 CHARLES, *Dauphin, and afterwards King of France.*
 REIGNIER, *Duke of Anjou, and titular King of Naples.*
 DUKE OF BURGUNDY.
 DUKE OF ALENÇON.
 GOVERNOR OF PARIS.
 BASTARD OF ORLEANS.
 MASTER-GUNNER OF ORLEANS, AND HIS SON.
 GENERAL OF THE FRENCH FORCES IN BOURDEAUX.
 A FRENCH SERGEANT.
 A PORTER.

MARGARET, *Daughter to Reignier, afterwards married to King*
Henry.
 COUNTESS OF AUVERGNE.
 JOAN LA PUCELLE, *commonly called Joan of Arc.*

Lords, Warders of the Tower, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers,
and several Attendants both on the English and French.

SCENE—Partly in England, and partly in France.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.—WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Dead march. Corpse of KING HENRY THE FIFTH discovered, lying in state; attended on by the DUKES OF BEDFORD, GLOSTER, and EXETER; the EARL OF WARWICK, the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, HERALDS, &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!
 Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
 England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

Gloster. England ne'er had a king until this 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 sparkling 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.

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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 magick verses¹ have contriv'd his end?

Winchester. He was a king bless'd of the King of kings.
 The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought:
 The church's prayers made him so prosperous.

Gloster. None do you like but an effeminate prince,
 Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe.

Winchester. Gloster, 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 religion or than churchmen may.

Gloster. Name not religion, for thou lov'st 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 nourish² 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!

¹ There was a notion long prevalent, that life might be taken away by metrical charms.

² Nurse was anciently so spelt.

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A far more glorious star thy soul will make,
 Than Julius Cæsar, 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, Poitiers, 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.

Gloster. Is Paris lost? is Rouën 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 us'd?

Messenger. No treachery; but want of men and money.
 Among the soldiers this is muttered,—
 That here you maintain several factions;
 And, whilst a field should be despatch'd and fought,
 You are disputing of your generals.
 One would have ling'ring wars with little cost;
 Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;
 A third man thinks, without expense at all,
 By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.
 Awake, awake, English nobility!
 Let not sloth dim your honours, 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 her 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 I will lend the French, instead of eyes,
 To weep their intermissive miseries.³

³ *i. e.* Their miseries which have had only a short intermission.

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Enter another MESSENGER.

2 *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 in Rheims;
 The bastard of Orleans with him is join'd;
 Reignier, duke of Anjou, doth take his part;
 The duke of Alençon fieth to his side.

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

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

Bedford. Gloster, why doubt'st thou of my forward-
 ness?
 An army have I muster'd in my thoughts,
 Wherewith already France is over-run.

Enter a third MESSENGER.

3 *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.

Winchester. What! wherein Talbot overcame? is't so?

3 *Messenger.* O, no; wherein lord Talbot was o'er-
 thrown;
 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;

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Where valiant Talbot, above human thought,
 Enacted wonders with his sword and lance.
 Hundreds he sent to death, and none durst stand him;
 Here, there, and every where, enrag'd he slew:
 The French exclaim'd, the devil was in arms;
 All the whole army stood agaz'd 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 sealed up,
 If sir John Fastolfe had not play'd the coward.
 He being in the vaward (plac'd 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 foe-men is betray'd.

3 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 ransome there is none but I shall pay:
 I'll hale the dauphin headlong from his throne,
 His crown shall be the ransome 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.

3 Messenger. So you had need; for Orleans is besieg'd;
 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 leave,
 To go about my preparation. [Exit.]

Gloster. 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.]

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 send,
 And sit at chiefest stern of public weal. [Exit.]

SCENE II.—FRANCE. *Before ORLEANS.*

*Enter CHARLES, with his Forces; ALENÇON, REIGNIER,
 and Others.*

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;
 Thewhiles, the famish'd English, like pale ghosts,
 Faintly besiege us one hour in a month.

Alençon. They want their porridge, and their fat bull-
 beeves:
 Either they must be dieted like mules,
 And have their provender tyed 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;

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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.*]

Alarums; Excursions; afterwards a Retreat.

Re-enter CHARLES, ALENÇON, REIGNIER, and Others.

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.⁴

Alençon. Froissard, 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 Goliasses,
 It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!
 Lean raw-bon'd rascals! who would e'er suppose
 They had such courage and audacity?

Charles. Let's leave this town; for they are harebrain'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 gimmals⁵ or device,
 Their arms are set, like clocks, still to strike on;
 Else ne'er could they hold out so, as they do.
 By my consent, we'll e'en let them alone.

Alençon. Be it so.

⁴ *i. e.* The prey for which they are hungry.

⁵ A gimmel is a piece of jointed work, where one piece moves within another; here it is taken at large for an engine.

Enter the BASTARD of ORLEANS.

Bastard. Where's the prince dauphin? I have news
for him.

Charles. Bastard⁶ of Orleans, thrice welcome to us.

Bastard. Methinks, your looks are sad, your cheer⁷
appall'd;

Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?

Be not dismay'd, for succour is at hand:

A holy maid hither with me I bring,

Which, by a vision sent 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.*] 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.

[*Retires.*]

Enter LA PUCELLE, BASTARD of ORLEANS, and Others.

Reignier. Fair maid, is't thou wilt do these wond'rous
feats?

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 amaz'd, there's nothing hid from me:

In private will I talk with thee apart:—

Stand back, you lords, and give us leave a while.

Reignier. She takes upon her bravely at first dash—

Pucelle. Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.

⁶ This was not in former times a term of reproach. ⁷ Countenance.