

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11

William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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The Scene: partly in England, and partly in France

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

*KING HENRY *the Sixth*

*HUMPHREY, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, *uncle to the King,
and Protector*

*JOHN, DUKE OF BEDFORD, *uncle to the King, and
Regent of France*

*THOMAS BEAUFORT, DUKE OF EXETER, *great-uncle to
the King*

*HENRY BEAUFORT, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, *and
Cardinal, great-uncle to the King*

*DUKE OF SOMERSET

*RICHARD PLANTAGENET, *afterwards Duke of York,
son of Richard late Earl of Cambridge*

EARL OF WARWICK

*EARL OF SALISBURY

WILLIAM DE LA POLE, EARL OF SUFFOLK

LORD TALBOT, *afterwards Earl of Shrewsbury*

JOHN TALBOT, *his son*

*EDMUND MORTIMER, *Earl of March*

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

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*

A Lawyer. Mortimer's Gaolers

CHARLES, *Dauphin, afterwards King, of France*

*REIGNIER, *Duke of Anjou, and titular King of Naples*

DUKE OF BURGUNDY

DUKE OF ALENÇON

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[More information](#)**BASTARD OF ORLEANS***Governor of Paris**Master-Gunner of Orleans, and his Son**General of the French forces in Bordeaux**A French Sergeant. A Porter**An old Shepherd, father to Joan la Pucelle***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, Herald, Officers,
Soldiers, Messengers, and Attendants**Fiends appearing to La Pucelle*

For the characters starred see the Genealogical Table
at the end of Part II.

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THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI

[I. I.] *Westminster Abbey*

Dead March. Enter the Funeral of KING HENRY the Fifth, attended on by the DUKE OF BEDFORD, Regent of France; the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Protector; the DUKE OF EXETER, the EARL OF WARWICK, the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, and the DUKE OF SOMERSET, with Heralds, etc.

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 brandished sword did blind men with his beams: 10
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 conquer'd.

Exeter. We mourn in black: why mourn we not
in blood?
Henry is dead and never shall revive:

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6 THE FIRST PART OF 1.1.19

Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
 20 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?

Winchester. He was a king blessed of the King
 of kings.

Unto the French the dreadful judgement-day
 30 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 prayed,

His thread of life had not so soon decayed:
 None do you like but an effeminate prince,
 Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe.

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,
 40 More than God or religious churchmen may.

Gloucester. 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 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.

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I. I. 48 KING HENRY VI 7

Posterity, await for wretched years,
 When at their mothers' moist'ned 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 50
 †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, Rouen, Orleans, 60
 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 recalled 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, 70
 That here you maintain several factions,
 And whilst a field should be dispatched 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 thinks, without expense at all,

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8 THE FIRST PART OF 1.1.77

By guileful fair words peace may be obtained.

Awake, awake, English nobility!

Let not sloth dim your honours new-begot:

80 Cropped are the flower-de-luces in your arms;

Of England's coat one half is cut away. [*he goes*]

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 steeléd 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.

90 France is revolted from the English quite,

Except some petty towns of no import.

The Dauphin Charles is crownéd king in Rheims;

The Bastard of Orleans with him is joined;

Reignier, Duke of Anjou, doth take his part;

The Duke of Alençon flieth to his side. [*he goes*]

Exeter. The Dauphin crownéd 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.

100 *Bedford.* Gloucester, why doubt'st thou of
my forwardness?

An army have I mustered in my thoughts,

Wherewith already France is overrun.

Enter another Messenger

Messenger. My gracious lords, to add to your laments,

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1. 1. 104

KING HENRY VI

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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?

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, 110

Retiring from the siege of Orleans,

Having full scarce six thousand in his troop,

By three and twenty thousand of the French

Was round encompasséd and set upon.

No leisure had he to enrank his men;

He wanted pikes to set before his archers;

Instead whereof sharp stakes plucked out of hedges

They pitchéd in the ground confusedly,

To keep the horsemen off from breaking in.

More than three hours the fight continuéd; 120

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 everywhere, enraged he flew:

The French exclaimed 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 rushed into the bowels of the battle.

Here had the conquest fully been sealed up, 130

If Sir John Falstaff had not played 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 wrack and massacre;

Encloséd were they with their enemies:

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10 THE FIRST PART OF I. I. 137

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

140 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 betrayed.

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

Bedford. His ransom there is none but I shall pay:
I'll hale the Dauphin headlong from his throne:

150 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,

160 And hardly keeps his men from mutiny,
Since they, so few, watch such a multitude. [goe

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. [goes

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

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1.1.170

KING HENRY VI

11

Exeter. To Eltham will I, where the young king is, 170
Being ordained his special governor,

And for his safety there I'll best devise. [goes

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. [goes

[1.2.] *France. Before Orleans*

*Sound a Flourish. Enter CHARLES, ALENÇON, 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 famished 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

10

And have their provender tied to their mouths,

Or piteous they will look, like drownéd mice.

Reignier. Let's raise the siege: why live we idly here?

Talbot is taken, whom we wont to fear:

Remaineth none but mad-brained 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!