



Henry VI, Part I

Henry V of England has died, and a young Henry VI ascends to the throne. Charles, the Dauphin of France, is nurturing a rebellion across the Channel, and there are growing rifts among the nobles in England, notably between factions of York and Lancaster (which will fester and over time become the War of the Roses). Emboldened by the exploits of Joan la Pucelle (Joan of Arc), the French attack Talbot at Orleans and drive the English army toward the sea. Talbot, however, manages to retake Orleans by night in a surprise attack.

In England, Richard Plantagenet and the Duke of Somerset have a disagreement concerning the letter of a law. The two men ask others to show their support for their respective positions: those supporting Richard pick a white rose, and those supporting Somerset pick a red one. Richard seeks the counsel of his uncle, Edmund Mortimer, and comes away from the discussion convinced that the throne more rightfully belongs to the house of York than young King Henry. Winchester and Gloucester continue a feud of their own, in the meantime.

Back in France, Joan battles the English and drives them from Rouen, but an English counterattack gives it back. Talbot and Burgundy prepare for Henry VI's coronation in Paris. Joan asks Burgundy for a parley on the road to Paris, which the duke accepts; this leads to Joan convincing the Duke of Burgundy to switch over to the French side. Talbot, upon hearing of Burgundy's defection, marches his army against him, and Henry appoints Richard and the Duke of Somerset to reinforce Talbot in the battle. The bickering of Somerset and Richard, however, leads to delays in sending their troops. Talbot fights valiantly, but is slain in the combat when the additional soldiers never arrive.

Richard and Somerset set aside their differences long enough to capture Joan of Arc and burn her as a witch. In the meantime, Gloucester is trying to set up a match between Henry and the daughter of a French lord in order to force a peace between France and England. The Earl of Suffolk, however, introduces Margaret of Anjou to Henry in an attempt to get him to marry her. However, Suffolk has some designs of his own on Margaret, hoping to use her to control Henry. This leads to the action of Henry VI, Part II.

Dramatis Personae

King Henry the Sixth
Humphrey of Gloucester
Duke of Bedford
Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter
Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester
John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset
Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York
Earl of Warwick
Earl of Salisbury
Earl of Suffolk
Lord Talbot
John Talbot
Edmund Mortimer
Sir John Fastolf, *Sir William Lucy*
Sir William Glansdale, *Sir Thomas Gargrave*
Mayor of London
Woodvile
Vernon
Basset
Mortimer's Keepers
A Lawyer
Charles Dauphin, afterwards King of France
Reignier, Duke of Anjou
Duke of Burgundy
Duke of Alençon
Bastard of Orleans
Governor of Paris
Master-Gunner of Orleans and his son
General of French Forces in Bordeaux
A French Sergeant
A Porter
An Old Shepherd, father to Joan
Margaret
Countess of Auvergne
Joan la Pucelle (called Joan of Arc)
*Lords, Warders of the Tower, Herald*s
Officers, Soldiers, Messengers and Attendants
Fiends, to appear before Joan