

Henry VI – Part II

A Play By

William Shakespeare

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 dislike,
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 displeas'd 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?
Contemtuously 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 reputed 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
Unsounded 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 affianced!
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 liefest 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 louting 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 Murder

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 scoured 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 slyly 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 pinnace, 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 honester 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, an 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 hales 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 midst 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 promised 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