



Henry VI, Part II

Picking up from the closing action of Part II, Suffolk introduces Margaret to Henry, who elevates Suffolk from an earl to a duke. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester is unhappy with Margaret's lack of dowry, and much less with Henry giving up two fiefs to France in the process. Suffolk sets plots into motion against Gloucester, who is perhaps the only honest supporter of Henry at this point; he sets up Gloucester's wife to be arrested for witchcraft. Meanwhile, York lurks in the background, convinced of his legitimate claim to Henry's throne.

Gloucester is eventually arrested on charges invented by his enemies. These he manages to fend off, but the king still orders that he go to trial. During this process, York is sent to Ireland to quell a revolt; while in Ireland, York will leave it to a henchman, Jack Cade, to muster support among the populace for York to depose Henry. If Cade succeeds, York has an army at his back to use against Henry when he returns from Ireland. In the meantime, Gloucester is murdered at Suffolk's behest. Henry in turn banishes Suffolk under heavy pressure from the populace. Margaret, who has carried on an affair with Suffolk, pleads on his behalf to no avail. Suffolk is en route to France when he is captured by pirates and summarily put to death.

Cade's rebellion gathers support, and he marches on London; Henry stages a retreat before him. Buckingham, however, confronts his force with an army and pardons to all who abandon Cade. Cade must now flee, and after a five-day flight without food, is killed while foraging in a private garden. In the wake of this failed uprising, York returns from Ireland—and demands that the king arrest Somerset before his men lay down their arms. The king does so, but Margaret frees him just as quickly, leading York to declare war on King Henry; York will take the crown by force if necessary. At the Battle of St. Albans, Richard, son of York, slays Somerset. The Yorkists then set out in pursuit of the fleeing Henry and Margaret, leading into Henry VI, Part III.

Dramatis Personae

King Henry the Sixth
Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester
Cardinal Beaufort
Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York
Edward, Earl of March
Richard, Duke of Gloucester
Duke of Somerset
Duke of Suffolk
Duke of Buckingham
Lord Clifford
Young Clifford
Earl of Salisbury
Earl of Warwick
Lord Scales
Lord Say
Sir Humphrey Stafford
Sir John Stanley
Sir William Vaux
Matthew Goffe
Walter Whitmore
A Sea Captain, Master, and Master's Mate
Two Gentlemen, prisoners with Suffolk
John Hume and John Southwell
Bolingbroke
Thomas Horner
Peter
Clerk of Chatham
Mayor of St. Alban's
Simpcox
Jack Cade
George Bevis, John Holland
Dick the Butcher, Smith the Weaver, Michael, etc.
Alexander Iden
Two Murderers
Margaret, Queen of King Henry
Margery Jourdain
Wife of Simpcox
Lords, Ladies, and Attendants
Herald, Petitioner, Aldermen
A Beadle, Sheriff, and Officers
Citizens, Prentices, Falconers, Guards, Soldiers, Messengers, etc.
A Spirit