

Henry VI, Part Two

Cast

King Henry VI.....David Tennant
Queen Margaret.....Kelly Hunter
Duke of Gloucester.....Norman Rodway
Earl of Warwick.....John Bowe
Duke of York.....Clive Merrison
Duke of Suffolk.....Nigel Cooke
Duchess of Gloucester.....Isla Blair
Richard Plantagenet.....David Troughton
Edward Plantagenet.....Stephen Boxer
Jack Cade.....Kenneth Cranham
Lord Clifford.....Peter Marinker
Lord Say.....Mark Lambert
Bishop of Winchester.....Steve Hodson
Duke of Somerset.....Michael N. Harbour
Duke of Buckingham.....Christian Rodska
Earl of Salisbury.....Patrick O'Connell
Stafford.....Raymond Bowers
Young Clifford.....Jamie Glover
John Hume.....David Cardy
Margery Jourdain.....Jenny Howe
Other parts played by: Alex Boyd-Williams, Alan Cox, Paul Goodwin,
Alex Lowe and Colin Salmon

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. Old divisions besetting England resurface when the powerful nobles learn that Suffolk, who has returned from France with King Henry's bride Margaret, has ceded Anjou and Maine to her father. Henry, delighted, makes Suffolk a Duke; Gloucester, Warwick and Salisbury are, however, devastated at what they see as Suffolk's treachery. Gloucester leaves in anger, having been criticized by Winchester. Buckingham is quick to side with Winchester, but Somerset counsels caution about "the haughty cardinal." Salisbury and Warwick remain loyal to Gloucester, but York, who wants the crown for

himself, will support him only for as long as it serves his purposes.

Scene 2. Despite Gloucester's admonitions, his wife Eleanor will not relinquish her ambition for the crown. She arranges with Hume for conjurors to reveal the future to her. Hume, however, has been employed by Suffolk and the Cardinal "to undermine" her.

Scene 3. Suffolk reassures Margaret that he has planned the downfall of their enemies and "one by one we'll weed them all at last./And you yourself shall steer the happy helm." Henry cannot decide who should be his regent in France. The Queen and her allies accuse Gloucester of incompetence and extravagance. He leaves in anger and Margaret strikes Eleanor, claiming to have mistaken her for a serving woman.

Scene 4. Spirits reveal to Eleanor that Henry will be deposed by a duke, that Suffolk will die by water and that Somerset should avoid castles. York and Buckingham arrest Eleanor for treason.

ACT II

Scene 1. To Henry's distress the Cardinal and Gloucester are wrangling again. A blind man, said to have been miraculously cured, is brought to court and revealed as a fraud. Gloucester rejects Eleanor for dishonoring his name.

Scene 2. Warwick and Salisbury hail York as "England's king."

Scene 3. Eleanor is banished, and the conjurors are sentenced to death. Henry ends Gloucester's time of office as Protector, saluting him affectionately.

Scene 4. As Eleanor performs her public penance, she angrily reproaches Gloucester for taking her shame so meekly. She warns him against his enemies, but he is adamant that being "loyal, true, and crimeless" he cannot be harmed.

ACT III

Scene 1. Despite a vicious attack on Gloucester by Margaret and others, Henry remains convinced of his virtue. Having heard that all Henry's French territories are lost, Suffolk arrests Gloucester, claiming that he is responsible for the loss. Gloucester leaves in dignified despair, insisting on his innocence: "good King Henry, thy decay I fear." Henry is loyal to him but powerless and goes from the parliament distraught. Margaret derides Henry's "foolish pity" and all decide that Gloucester must die. The Cardinal offers to provide the executioner. York agrees to go to Ireland to suppress an uprising. Privately delighted to have the army he lacked, he describes himself as "the starved snake,/Who, cherished in your breasts, will sting your hearts." He plans to have a Kentishman called Cade foment an insurrection thus revealing public approval for the Yorkist claim.

Scene 2. Two murderers report to Suffolk that they have killed Gloucester. Hearing of the death, Henry faints and recoils from Suffolk. Warwick reports that the commons are hot for revenge, believing the duke to have been murdered by Suffolk and the Cardinal. Henry banishes Suffolk, despite Margaret's opposition. As Margaret and Suffolk part in anguish, she assures him that she will achieve his repeal or follow him into exile.

Scene 3. Henry, Warwick and Salisbury attend the Cardinal's deathbed, as he raves guiltily about Gloucester.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Suffolk is murdered by pirates.

Scene 2. Cade, claiming to be Richard II's heir, starts his rebellion in Blackheath. He promises cheap food and good ale for all. A clerk is hanged for literacy and numeracy. Despite attempts to stop them, the rebels sweep on, incited by Cade to take Lord Say's head for treason.

Scene 3. The Stafford brothers are killed and Cade rewards the butcher for his bloodthirsty exploits.

Scene 4. Margaret mourns Suffolk's death, and news comes that Cade has London Bridge. Henry leaves for Warwickshire.

Scene 5. The Lord Mayor sends to the Tower for help in defending the City.

Scene 6. A soldier is murdered for failing to address Cade as Lord Mortimer.

Scene 7. Despite Say's eloquent appeal for mercy, Cade has him beheaded.

Scene 8. When Clifford and Buckingham arrive with offer of pardons from the King, the mob is easily swayed and Cade flees.

Scene 9. Henry learns of Cade's defeat and then of York's return from Ireland; he comes with a powerful army intending to remove Somerset for treachery. Henry likens his state to a ship "that, having 'scaped a tempest,/Is straitway calmed, and boarded with a pirate." He sends Somerset to the Tower for his protection.

Scene 10. Cade escapes to Kent and, desperate for food, enters the garden of Alexander Iden. They fight and Cade dies.

ACT V

Scene 1. York arrives to "pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head". He assures Buckingham that his army is for the removal of Somerset and promptly disbands it, having learnt that he is already in the Tower. Upon seeing Margaret with Somerset, however, York denounces Henry as unfit for power and, supported by Warwick and Salisbury, claims the crown.

Scene 2. The conflict flares up into battle at St. Albans. Warwick kills Clifford, whose son vows revenge. Somerset is killed by York's son Richard, near the Castle alehouse. The King and Queen flee to London.

Scene 3. Warwick, York and Salisbury are jubilant at their victory.

Track list

Disc 1

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| Track 2 | Act I | Scene ii |
| Track 3 | Act I | Scene iii |
| Track 4 | Act I | Scene iv |
| Track 5 | Act II | Scene i |
| Track 6 | Act II | Scene ii |
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Disk 2

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| Track 1 | Act III | Scene i |
| Track 2 | Act III | Scene ii |
| Track 3 | Act III | Scene iii |
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| Track 5 | Act IV | Scene ii |

Disk 3

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| Track 1 | Act IV | Scene iii |
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| Track 3 | Act IV | Scene v |
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