

Henry VI, Part Three

Cast

King Henry V.....IDavid Tennant
Queen MargaretKelly Hunter
Earl of Warwick.....John Bowe
Duke of York..... Clive Merrison
Richard Plantagenet.....David Troughton
Edward PlantagenetStephen Boxer
George PlantagenetJohn McAndrew
Lady Grey.....Sonia Ritter
King Louis of FranceJonathan Tafler
Duke of Exeter.....Nigel Cooke
Duke of Somerset.....Michael N. Harbour
Earl of Westmoreland.....Mark Lambert
Earl of Northumberland.....Anthony Jackson
Lord Clifford.....Jamie Glover
Lord HastingsChristian Rodska
Lord Rivers.....Gavin Muir
Marquess of Montague.....Raymond Bowers
Earl of Oxford.....Nicholas Murchie
Earl of Rutland.....Jay Barrimore
Other parts played by: Alex Boyd-Williams, Carolyn Backhouse,
David Cardy, Alex Lowe and Nicholas Rowe

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. The Yorkists have defeated the Lancastrians. Somerset and Buckingham are dead and King Henry has escaped from the battle field. When Henry enters the Parliament and finds York on the throne, a violent argument ensues as to who has the strongest claim to power. Knowing his position to be weak, Henry makes York his heir. Clifford, Northumberland and Westmoreland leave in disgust and Queen Margaret is determined to rally forces to win back the throne for her son Prince Edward.

Scene 2. York is persuaded by his sons to break his oath to wait for Henry's death, and to claim the throne immediately. Margaret and the northern magnates approach with 20,000 men.

Scene 3. In battle, Clifford avenges his father's death by murdering York's young son Rutland.

Scene 4. York is captured and cruelly taunted by the Lancastrians. Margaret offers him a handkerchief stained with Rutland's blood; he turns on her in anguish and she and Clifford stab him to death.

ACT II

Scene 1. York's sons Edward and Richard see three suns in the sky, which then unite. Convinced that this is a good omen, Edward decides to bear the image on his shield. The brothers have just learnt of York's death when Warwick arrives with more news of defeat at Margaret's hands; undaunted, they are determined to drive Henry from the throne.

Scene 2. Warwick arrives at York to claim the throne for Edward.

Scene 3. Despite their failing fortunes in battle at Towton, Warwick, Edward, Richard and Clarence vow to fight to the death.

Scene 4. Richard fights with Clifford who flees when Warwick appears.

Scene 5. Henry is sent from the battle field by Margaret and Clifford and sits on a hill alone, musing sadly how much better life would be were he a “homely swain” tending his flock. He is devastated by the spectacle of a son who has killed his father in battle and a father who has slain his son: “O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds!” Margaret, Prince Edward and Exeter arrive urging Henry to flee, as the battle goes against them. Scene 6. Clifford is killed and the victorious Yorkists jeer at his dead body before leaving for Edward’s coronation in London. It is agreed that Warwick should arrange a match between Edward and Lady Bona, the French King’s sister-in-law; Richard is to become Duke of Gloucester and George, Duke of Clarence.

ACT III

Scene 1. Henry leaves his refuge in Scotland, longing to see England. He is captured by two gamekeepers who deny him allegiance, saying that their loyalty is with King Edward.

Scene 2. When Lady Grey comes to King Edward to reclaim her dead husband’s lands, he says he will restore them only if she give herself to him. Then, to the astonishment of his brothers, he decides to marry her. Once alone, Richard ponders bitterly on his misshapen body, concluding that since the joys of love cannot be his, he will pursue power at all costs.

Scene 3. Warwick arrives in France to find that Margaret has already prevailed upon Lewis to help the Lancastrians. He nonetheless manages to arrange a match between King Edward and Lady Bona. When news comes of the King’s marriage to Lady Grey, however, Warwick is outraged and switches his allegiance to Margaret, promising to marry his eldest daughter to Prince Edward.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Clarence is insulted by King Edward’s rash marriage and joins forces with the Lancastrians. Richard remains loyal to the King, “not for love of Edward but the crown.”

Scene 2. Warwick, newly arrived in England with French forces, greets Clarence warmly, promising him his second daughter’s hand in marriage.

Scene 3. Warwick takes King Edward prisoner in a surprise attack on his camp.

Scene 4. Edward’s queen, Elizabeth, tells her brother Lord Rivers of her husband’s arrest. Determined to save the child in her womb, she hurries to take sanctuary.

Scene 5. Richard helps his brother Edward to escape from captivity.

Scene 6. Henry is once again king but insists that Warwick and Clarence direct the government. Hearing of Edward’s flight to Burgundy, Somerset and Oxford resolve to send young Henry, Earl of Richmond (later Henry VII) into exile to protect him from the Yorkists.

Scene 7. Edward of York manages to enter York. He is reluctant to claim the throne until his forces are stronger, but is convinced by Montgomery and Hastings to go ahead with his campaign immediately.

Scene 8. Henry is taken prisoner by Edward, in London.

ACT V

Scene 1. Edward offers to pardon Warwick if he will open the gates of Coventry, but Warwick angrily reminds Edward that it was he who made him king. Arriving with his troops, Clarence rejoins the Yorkists.

Scene 2. Warwick is wounded in battle and lives only long enough to hear that Margaret approaches from France with strong forces.

Scene 3. Although Edward’s fortunes in battle are good, he is wary of Margaret.

Scene 4. Margaret and Prince Edward are captured at Tewkesbury.

Scene 5. Oxford and Somerset are to be executed. Prince Edward is killed by the Yorkists and although Margaret longs to die, she is taken away alive.

Scene 6. Richard murders Henry in the Tower of London.

Scene 7. Although King Edward is overjoyed at his victory and the birth of a son, Richard's vicious asides ("I'll blast his harvest") sound a note of foreboding.

Track list

Disk 1

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| Track 1 | Act I | Scene i |
| 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 |
| Track 7 | Act II | Scene iii |
| Track 8 | Act II | Scene iv |
| Track 9 | Act II | Scene v |

Disk 2

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|---------|---------|-----------|
| Track 1 | Act II | Scene vi |
| Track 2 | Act III | Scene i |
| Track 3 | Act III | Scene ii |
| Track 4 | Act III | Scene iii |
| Track 5 | Act IV | Scene i |
| Track 6 | Act IV | Scene ii |
| Track 7 | Act IV | Scene iii |
| Track 8 | Act IV | Scene iv |
| Track 9 | Act IV | Scene v |

Disk 3

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| Track 1 | Act IV | Scene vi |
| Track 2 | Act IV | Scene vii |
| Track 3 | Act IV | Scene viii |
| Track 4 | Act V | Scene i |
| Track 5 | Act V | Scene ii |
| Track 6 | Act V | Scene iii |
| Track 7 | Act V | Scene iv |
| Track 8 | Act V | Scene v |
| Track 9 | Act V | Scene vi |
| Track 10 | Act V | Scene vii |