King Henry VI, Part 3 Study Guide

King Henry VI, Part 3 by William Shakespeare

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Contents

Introduction

Henry VI, Part Three begins with a debate between King Henry and York over which of them is the rightful king of England. The argument has its origins in the reign of Henry's grandfather, King Henry IV, a Lancastrian who came to power by usurping Richard II, grandson and direct heir of King Edward III. (Shakespeare's tetralogy of plays *Richard II, Henry IV, Pan One* and *Two,* and *Henry V* dramatizes the ascendancy of the Lancastrians.) York can prove that his family tree follows a more direct line to King Edward III's throne than Henry's does; consequently, York has the right to rule England, while Henry, whose grandfather became king by force, should simply be the duke of Lancaster. This contention between the supporters of York (Yorkists whose emblem is the white rose) and the supporters of King Henry (Lancastrians whose emblem is the red rose) is what the Wars of the Roses are all about. In I.i.134, Henry admits to himself that his title to the throne is weak. So in I.i. 194-200, he entails the crown to York and to his heirs "for ever," on condition that he be allowed to remain king during his lifetime, and that the Wars of the Roses be ended. York accepts this deal, declaring, "Now York and Lancaster are reconcil'd" (I.i.204).

Unfortunately, an end to the wars is not as simple as York and King Henry suggest. The contention began in *Henry VI, Part One.* The fighting has been long, bitter, and very bloody. Both Clifford and Northumberland, for example, lost fathers in the fight against the Yorkists in *Henry VI, Part Two.* In *Henry VI, Part Three,* "They seek revenge, and therefore will not yield" even though Henry and York announce that the conflict is over (I.i.190). Later, Clifford gets his revenge by brutally killing first York's young son Rutland and next York himself (I.iii and I.iv). The result is that York's remaining sons vow to avenge themselves on Clifford. When they find him already slain on the battlefield, they feed their rage by jeering at Clifford's dead body, chopping off his head, and putting it in place of their father's head on the gates of the town of York thereby exacting "measure for measure" (II.vi.46-86).

Thus in *Henry VI, Part Three,* the fighting has gone well past its original purpose until what mat ters most is retribution (or, as Gloucester puts it after killing King Henry: "may such purple tears [of blood] be always shed / From those that wish the downfall of our house!" [V.vi.64-65]). To make matters worse, the two sides are evenly matched so that as Henry observes in II.v.1-13, neither side is "conqueror nor conquered," and the fighting drags on while Yorkists and Lancastrians take turns at winning or losing, and while fathers inadvertently kill their sons, and sons accidentally kill their fathers after they are drafted into the fighting on opposite sides.

This chaotic legacy of civil war is familiar to audiences today in, for example, the aftermath of fighting between the Hutus and Tutsis of east Cen tral Africa and between the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians of the former Yugoslavia. In both modern conflicts, innocent people have been brutalized, neighbors have betrayed neighbors, and the original political and ethnic reasons for the wars have been overshadowed by mass suffering as well as by the bitter, personal need for retribution and reparation which seems impossible to satisfy.

Another element contributing to the acrimony of the Wars of the Roses is that it is essentially a family feud. King Henry and York are distant relatives, as are many of the noblemen arrayed on either side. Toward the end of the play, as the seemingly endless war turns increasingly chaotic, the feuding also occurs within each camp. In IV.i, for example, George, the duke of Clarence, becomes outraged when his brother, the newly crowned Yorkist King Edward, imprudently marries Lady Grey; Clarence is further incensed when Edward gives special treatment to his new wife's relatives at the expense of his own brothers. In retaliation, Clarence joins the Lancastrians. (His defection is temporary, lasting only until V.i.81," but it comes back to haunt him later when his wicked and ambitious brother Gloucester uses this early disloyalty against him in Shakespeare's sequel, *Richard III.)* Today, most family feuds do not precipitate warfare; however, they can result in violence, and they frequently stretch over generations, engulfing grandparents, cousins, and siblings in resentment long after the original argument is forgotten, making family gatherings impossible or, at best, unpleasant.

Plot Summary

Act I

York and his followers have won the first battle of Saint Albons, sending King Henry VI and his Lancastrian supporters to London in retreat. But York arrives in London first and, encouraged by his sons Edward and Richard as well as by Warwick, defiantly seats himself in King Henry's throne in Parliament. (York's claim to the throne, and the origins of the civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses, which were fought between the Yorkists whose symbol is a white rose and the Lancastrians whose symbol is a red rose are covered in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part One* and *Two.)* King Henry arrives with his supporters, and after debating with York over whose right it is to rule England, Henry finally promises to resign the crown to York and his heirs, provided that the civil war ends and that Henry is allowed to remain king during his lifetime. York agrees to these conditions and returns home to his castle, but Margaret, Henry's queen, is outraged that their son, Prince Edward, has been disinherited. Backed by Henry's disgruntled supporters, Margaret vows to continue fighting. Meanwhile at home in Yorkshire, York's sons convince him to disregard his oath to Henry, and to insist on being crowned king immediately. Margaret appears outside York's castle with a formidable army. Close by, her Lancastrian supporter Clifford drags York's youngest son, Rutland, away from his tutor and kills him in revenge for the death of his own father, old Lord Clifford (old Clifford is killed by York in *Henry VI, Pan Two).* Later, Margaret and Clifford capture, humiliate, and execute York, then place his head on a spike on his castle gates.

Act II

York's sons Edward and Richard hear that their father has been killed and that Warwick's troops have retreated before Margaret's army. As the old est son, Edward inherits his father's claim to the throne, and he, Richard, and Warwick vow to wage a counterattack. The two sides Yorkist and Lancastrian meet each other on the field and trade insults. The war rages on, with each side winning and losing battles. King Henry is ordered away from the fighting by Margaret and Clifford, who claim that his passiveness disheartens his army. Seated alone on a molehill, Henry dreams of trading his kingship for the simple life of a shepherd. He witnesses the horrors of civil war: a son grieving over the body of his father whom he has inadvertently killed in battle, and a father grieving over the body of his son whom he has likewise killed. After much fighting the Yorkists claim victory and the Lancastrians retreat. Clifford dies from an arrow in his neck, and York's three remaining sons (Edward, George, and Richard) taunt their enemy's dead body. Warwick arranges for Edward's coronation in London; afterwards, Warwick will go to France to contract a marriage between Edward and Lady Bona, the French king's sister-in-law.

Act III

Homesick, Henry sneaks back to England from exile in Scotland, but is captured by two gamekeepers who are loyal to Edward because he is now king. Meanwhile, newly crowned King Edward IV lusts after Lady Grey. When she refuses to become his mistress, he decides to marry her□despite his planned engagement to Lady Bona and much to the amazement of his brothers George (who is now duke of Clarence) and Richard (now duke of Gloucester). Left alone, Gloucester (Richard, duke of Gloucester) muses over this imprudent marriage and reveals his own wicked ambitions to be king. In France, Margaret and her son, Edward (the prince of Wales), beg the French king, Lewis XI, for help in their struggle to reinstate Henry VI as king of England. They are interrupted by Warwick, who has arrived with his offer of marriage between Lady Bona and King Edward IV and an alliance between France and England. This offer appeals to Lewis, and he rejects Margaret's request for aid, until a messenger appears with news of Edward IV's mar riage to Lady Grey. Humiliated by King Edward's behavior, Warwick vows to abandon him and join forces with Margaret. Angry at King Edward's slight to his sister-in-law, Lewis agrees to aid Margaret and Warwick.

Act IV

In England, King Edward and his new wife, Lady Grey (now Queen Elizabeth), meet with disapproval from their supporters. Several of them, including Edward's brother Clarence (George, duke of Clarence), leave to join forces with Margaret and Warwick. When fighting breaks out, Edward is captured by Warwick, who takes his crown and goes to free Henry and recrown him. Hearing of Edward's capture, a pregnant Queen Elizabeth flees to sanctuary. Meanwhile, Gloucester frees his brother Edward, and together they recruit troops from Hol land. The recently released King Henry discusses strategy with Warwick and Clarence, to whom he has resigned government control. Shortly after ward, King Edward appears, arrests Henry, and sends him back to prison in the Tower of London.

Act V

As Warwick awaits reinforcements, King Edward and Gloucester appear with their troops, and the two sides taunt each other. Clarence arrives in support of Warwick but after conferring with Gloucester, rejoins his brother Edward's cause in stead. As Warwick's reinforcements arrive, the two sides agree to meet again on the battlefield. The battle rages, and Warwick is mortally wounded by King Edward. In spite of this loss, Margaret's forces begin to regroup, but Margaret and her son, Prince Edward of Wales, are captured. The defiant prince of Wales is stabbed and killed by King Edward and his two brothers. His grieving mother, Margaret, begs to be killed as well, but is led away under guard, eventually to be banished to France where she was born. Gloucester, meanwhile, goes to the Tower to assassinate King Henry. Before he dies, Henry prophesies that many people will "rue the hour" that Gloucester was born, and in fact, Gloucester has already begun to plot against his brother, Clarence (Gloucester's

infamous rise and fall is presented in Shakespeare's *Richard III).* As the play closes, King Edward celebrates his victory and rejoices in his newborn son.

Characters

Aldermen:

These characters, many of whom are without speaking parts, contribute to the regal, martial, and bureaucratic atmosphere of the play.

Attendants:

These characters, many of whom are without speaking parts, contribute to the regal, martial, and bureaucratic atmosphere of the play.

Bona (Lady Bona):

She is the sister-in-law to King Lewis XI of France. In III.iii, Warwick tries to arrange a mar riage between Lady Bona and the newly crowned King Edward IV, thus hoping to form an alliance between France and England against the Lancastrians. This plan, however, is thwarted by Edward's precipitous marriage to Lady Grey. Stung by this insult, Lady Bona asks King Lewis to ally himself with Margaret against Edward, and, in revenge, hopes for the death of Edward's new wife (III.iii.212-13, 227-28).

Bourbon:

He is the high admiral of King Lewis XI of France. Although he is listed in the stage directions of Ill.iii, Bourbon has no speaking role. After Ed ward IV snubs Lady Bona by marrying Lady Grey, Lewis orders Lord Bourbon to ship a contingent of soldiers to England in support of Margaret and Warwick's fight against King Edward (III.iii.252-53).

Clarence (George, Duke of Clarence):

As one of York's four sons, George, duke of Clarence, is younger brother to Edward IV and older brother to Gloucester and Rutland. In *Henry VI, Part Three* he is listed by his first name until II.vi.104, when, in anticipation of his own coronation, Edward grants George the title of the duke of Clarence. As long as his father is alive, Clarence is staunchly loyal to him and thus to the Yorkist cause; however, he is impatient with his brother Edward's unwise marriage to Lady Grey, and is offended when Edward arranges advantageous marriages for Lady Grey's relatives but not for his own brothers (IV.i.47-58). As a result, Clarence breaks with Edward and joins Warwick and Margaret's cause (IV.i.118-23). His reward is Warwick's younger daughter in marriage (IV.ii.12). In V.i.81-102, Clarence switches sides once more, leaving his new father-in-law, Warwick, with the declaration, "I will not ruinate my [own] father's house," and apologizing to his

brother King Edward for his temporary disloyalty. Along with his brothers, Clarence stabs and kills King Henry's son, Edward, the prince of Wales (V.v.40). Clarence later appears in Shakespeare's sequel, *Richard III,* where he finally pays for his moment of betrayal when his scheming brother, Richard of Gloucester, uses it to turn King Edward against him.

Clifford (Lord Clifford, formerly known as Young Clifford):

He is a supporter of the Lancastrian King Henry VI. At the close of *Henry VI, Part Two* his father (who is also known as Lord Clifford) is killed in combat by York. Thus in *Henry VI, Part Three,* the younger Clifford is consumed with thoughts of revenge. Vowing to kill York and all his relatives, Clifford begins by murdering York's young son, Rutland (I.iii). In I.iv, he participates with Margaret in the humiliation and execution of York himself. Described by his enemies as a "butcher" who is "unrelenting" and "bloody," Clifford dies from an arrow in his neck in II.vi, but not before prophe sying that his death will leave the timid King Henry vulnerable to his enemies. When York's remaining sons discover Clifford's body, they taunt it with insults, hoping that Clifford is in fact still alive and able to hear them. Afterwards, they chop off his head and put it on the gates of York in place of their father's head (which had been set there earlier by Margaret and Clifford), thus answering "measure for measure" and underlining the play's theme of revenge (II.vi.46-86).

Edmund (Edmund, Earl of Rutland):

See Rutland

Edward (Edward, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV of England):

He is the oldest son of Richard Plantagenet, duke of York; thus when his father is killed at the close of I.iv, Edward inherits his title, York, as well as his claim to the throne of England. It has been noted that one of the play's themes is the opportunistic making and breaking of oaths, and as early as I.ii, Edward reflects this theme when, along with his brother Richard of Gloucester, he encourages his father to disregard his promise to King Henry by proclaiming himself king immediately rather than allowing Henry to reign until his death. Edward insists that "for a kingdom any oath may be broken: I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year" (I.ii.16-17). Accordingly, in IV.vii, after he has been ousted by Warwick, Edward breaks his oath to the mayor of York that he will be loyal to Henry and satisfied with the title, duke of York; instead, at the urging of his supporters, he reconfirms his title as King Edward.

Edward's distinguishing trait is lasciviousness. In I.iv.74, Queen Margaret describes him as "wan ton," and in II.i.41-42, his brother Richard jokes about his fondness for

"breeders" (women). Once he is king, Edward's lust gets the better of him when he marries Lady Grey, thereby snubbing Warwick's efforts to arrange a diplomatic marriage between him and the French king's sister-in-law, Lady Bona, and causing the embarrassed Warwick to rebel against him (III.iii). By the close of the play, Edward has regained his title as king, and celebrates with "stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows, / Such as befits the pleasure of the court" (V.vii.43-44). He appears again as king in *Richard III.*

Edward (Prince Edward of Wales):

He is the young son and heir of King Henry VI and Queen Margaret. Throughout the play, he is more assertive, regal, and warlike than his father is. When Henry entails the throne of England to York and his heirs, Edward protests: "Father, you cannot disinherit me. / If you be king, why should I not succeed?" (I.i.226-27). When Margaret goes to war with York to regain her son's inheritance, the prince of Wales fights alongside her. Lancastrians such as the Earl of Oxford describe Edward as a "brave young prince" and are heartened that he resembles his "famous grandfather," King Henry V, rather than his timid father, Henry VI (V.iv.52-53). Prince Edward does not hesitate to let the Yorkists know what he thinks of them. He calls King Edward a "traitor" and demands that he resign the throne (V.v.18-21). He refers to King Edward's brothers as "perjur'd George" and "misshapen Dick," declaring, "I am your better, traitors as ye are" (V.v.34-36). The Yorkists consider the prince a "malapert" carbon copy of his mother, Margaret (V.v.32, 38). Prince Edward is stabbed to death by King Edward and his brothers in V.v.

Elizabeth (Queen Elizabeth, formerly Lady Grey):

Originally Lady Grey, she is a widow who becomes the wife of King Edward IV. In III.ii, Elizabeth arouses Edward's lust when, as Lady Grey, she comes to the palace asking for the return of her husband's lands which were confiscated upon his death in battle. Edward marries her after trying unsuccessfully to make her his mistress. This impulsive marriage sets off a series of events. It infuriates the king's staunch ally, Warwick, who is in the process of arranging a much more advanta geous union between Edward and the French king's sister-in-law, Lady Bona. As a result, Warwick deserts Edward and joins forces with Margaret. The marriage also insults Bona and thus the French king, Lewis, who in retaliation supplies Margaret and Warwick with troops. Edward's favoritism to his new wife's relatives antagonizes his brother, Clarence, causing him to join with Warwick and Margaret in revenge. Finally, King Edward's announcement of his planned marriage to Elizabeth provokes a soliloquy from his brother, Richard, duke of Gloucester, which reveals his scheming nature and his ruthless determination to become king. (A soliloquy is a speech delivered by a character when he or she is alone. It is meant to reveal the character's mood, plans, or private opinions.) In IV.iv we learn that Queen Elizabeth has become pregnant; by the close of the play, she has given birth to King Edward's heir, "young Ned," or Edward (V.vii.16), who will be murdered by his ambitious uncle Gloucester in the last play of the tetralogy, *Richard III.*

Exeter (Duke of Exeter):

He is a supporter of the Lancastrian King Henry VI. In Li Exeter reproaches York for sitting on King Henry's throne, but shortly afterwards, as York and Henry debate over who should rule England, Exeter realizes that York has the stronger claim. Nevertheless, he remains loyal to Henry, and is with him in IV.viii, when Henry is taken away to prison for the last time.

Father (who has killed his son):

He is a soldier in the Wars of the Roses who appears onstage in II.v.79-93 with the body of an opponent he has killed. When he searches the body for gold, he discovers to his sorrow that the man he has killed is his own son. This episode demonstrates the horror of civil war, where neighbors and relatives often find themselves fighting on opposite sides. It also shows how the common people of England are being sacrificed to the quarrels of the nobility, and that it hardly matters who wins as long as the fighting stops. As King Henry puts it after witnessing the father's grief, "Wither one rose, and let the other flourish; / If you contend, a thousand lives must wither" (II.v.101-02).

French King:

See Lewis

George (afterwards George, Duke of Clarence):

See Clarence

Gloucester (Richard, Duke of Gloucester):

Richard of Gloucester is a son of York (Richard Plantagenet); a younger brother to both Edward (afterwards, King Edward IV) and George, duke of Clarence; and an older brother to Edmund, Earl of Rutland. He is also a fierce defender of his father's claim to the throne: in I.i.10-16, after the first battle of Saint Albons, Edward and Montague present their bloodied swords as proof that they have killed Lancastrians; Richard, however, displays his victim's severed head. After York's death, Richard receives the dukedom of Gloucester from his oldest brother in anticipation of Edward's coronation; thenceforth, he is usually referred to as Gloucester. Gloucester has a malformed back and a withered arm; his enemies call him "crook-back" (I.iv.75; II.ii.96; V.v.29).

Although he appears as early as *Henry VI, Part Two,* Gloucester's villainy is not described until the middle *of Henry VI, Part Three,* after his father has died and his brother, the newly crowned King Edward IV, has unwisely chosen to marry Lady Grey. The likelihood that Edward will now produce an heir provokes Richard in III.ii.124-95 to

soliloquize about his desire to rule England even though his chances of succession are slight. (A soliloquy is a speech delivered by a character when he or she is alone. It is meant to reveal the character's mood, plans, or private opinions.) Blaming his "misshap'd trunk" for his wicked intentions, Gloucester de clares that he will scheme, lie, and murder to become king. By the end of the play, he has already disposed of two people who precede him in the line of succession: Henry VI and his son, Edward, prince of Wales. He disposes of the rest in the play which comes last in the Wars of the Roses tetralogy and which also bears his name, *Richard HI.*

Grey (Lady Grey, afterwards Queen Elizabeth):

See Elizabeth

Hastings (Lord Hastings):

Described in IV.iii.11 as "the King's chiefest friend," Lord Hastings supports King Edward IV against Warwick. In IV.i.39-46, he defends Edward's marriage to Elizabeth. As Warwick's brother-in-law, Hastings is asked by Edward to reaffirm his loyalty after Warwick changes sides, and he does so readily (IV.i. 144). In IV.iii, Lord Hastings and Gloucester are able to escape when Warwick captures Edward in his tent. In IV.v, Hastings helps Gloucester free King Edward from his imprisonment, and later in IV.vii, he and Gloucester convince Edward to proclaim himself once more as king, despite Edward's vow to the mayor of York that he is loyal to Henry. Lord Hastings also appears in *Richard HI.*

Henry (Henry, Earl of Richmond):

See Richmond

Henry (King Henry VI of England):

He is the Lancastrian King of England, the husband of Margaret, and the father of Edward, prince of Wales. His career as a youthful, reluctant, and ineffectual king unfolds in *Henry VI, Part One* and *Two.* At the beginning *of Henry VI, Part Three,* Henry enters the Parliament House and finds his rival, York, seated on his throne. After a brief debate, during which he acknowledges to himself that his claim to the throne is weak, Henry resigns his kingdom to York and his heirs, but reserves the right to be king as long as he lives. Henry's supporters are incensed at this capitulation. Calling him "faint-hearted and degenerate," they hope that Henry will be "overcome" in "dreadful war," or "live in peace abandon'd and despis'd" (I.i. 183, 187-88).

To a certain extent, both of these curses are fulfilled. When Margaret renews the Lancastrian battle against the Yorkists, her central goals are to "ruin" them and to regain her son's inheritance (I.i.247-55). Supporters such as Clifford and, later, Warwick fight

the Yorkists for personal revenge. Meanwhile, Henry serves as a figurehead who is otherwise ignored or despised. As Margaret and Clifford prepare in II.ii.67-75 for the battle of Towton, they ask Henry to leave the field. When Henry resolves to stay, his supporter Northumberland retorts, "Be it with resolution then to fight" (II.ii.77). Left alone and seated on a molehill as the fighting rages around him, Henry delivers his famous speech in which he reveals his peace-loving simplicity (II.v. 1-54). Filled with pity, he deplores the ruinous effect of war on people's lives as he witnesses the agony of the son who has killed his father and the father who has killed his son (II.v.55-124). Henry has been described as saintly, and he can be credited with admitting that his rule has been disastrous to his people (although he blames this more on his fate, or "thwarting stars," than on himself [IV.vi.21-22]). But he can also be self pitying (II.v. 123-24), and as he hands his inherit ance to York in I.i, and his governmental powers to Warwick and Clarence in IV.vi, he demonstrates that he prefers the title of king to the authority of kingship. Henry VI is murdered by Gloucester in V.vi.

Huntsman:

He keeps watch over the captured King Edward in IV.v, but in fact functions more as an attendant than as a guard, not resisting when Gloucester frees Edward, and even agreeing to go along with them, lightly observing that it is "better [to] do so than tarry and be hang'd" (IV.v.26).

Keepers:

They are two gamekeepers who apprehend the homesick King Henry in a forest in northern England as he sneaks across the border from his exile in Scotland for a glimpse of the country he so recently ruled. Although he is disguised, the keepers recognize Henry because he talks as if he were a king (III.i.59), so they capture him and deliver him to King Edward. Part of their function in the play is to demonstrate the "lightness," or fickleness, of the common people of England, who, according to Henry, willingly swear their allegiance to whomever happens to be in power at the time (III.i.89).

Lady Bona:

See Bona

Lady Grey (Lady Grey, afterwards Queen Elizabeth):

See Elizabeth

Lewis (King Lewis XI of France):

He is the king of France and the brother-in-law of Lady Bona. In III.iii, his promise to help Marga ret reinstate the exiled King Henry is broken once Warwick arrives with a more expedient proposal: marriage between Bona and King Edward and thus an alliance between England and France. However, when news arrives of Edward's insult to Bona through his impulsive marriage to Lady Grey, Lewis vows revenge against King Edward and offers aid to Margaret and her new ally, Warwick. The ease with which Lewis forms, dissolves, and renews his promises underlines the play's theme of opportunistic oath-making and breaking.

Lieutenant (of the Tower):

He is a guard at the Tower of London, where King Henry is imprisoned each time he is captured. When Henry is freed from prison by Warwick, the Lieutenant asks to be pardoned for being the king's jailer (IV.vi.6-8). After Henry is jailed once more by Edward, the lieutenant makes another appearance (V.vi), only to be sent away by Gloucester, who is there to assassinate Henry in his prison cell.

Margaret (Queen Margaret):

Daughter of the French duke of Anjou, she is the wife of Lancastrian King Henry VI and the mother of Prince Edward of Wales. Margaret appears in all four plays of Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses tetralogy *(Henry VI, Part One, Two,* and *Three,* and *Richard III).* In *Henry VI, Part Three,* she is disgusted with Henry's passiveness and eager to protect her son's rights. When Henry entails his kingdom to York and his heirs (Li. 194-200), the outraged Margaret declares that he has not only disinherited his son from being king but also signed his own death warrant, arguing that York and his sons are too ambitious simply to wait until Henry dies of natural causes. Calling her husband a "timorous wretch" (I.i.231), Margaret levies an army and goes to fight the Yorkists herself, seeking as well to wreak vengeance on York for taking her son's inheritance. In I.iv, she captures and brutally torments York before killing him. When the Lancastrians suffer defeat and Henry is exiled to Scotland, Margaret seeks help from King Lewis of France and joins forces with Warwick after he is humiliated by King Edward. She is captured on the battlefield by Edward and his brothers, watches in grief as they kill her son, and is finally banished to France.

Margaret's Lancastrian allies depend on her strength of purpose: In I.i.182, after Henry entails away his throne, an outraged Clifford leaves to "tell the Queen these news," knowing that she will act. They also admire her courage on the battlefield (V.iv.39,50). Margaret's Yorkist enemies condemn her ruthlessness, calling her the "She-wolf of France" and "a tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide," and suggesting that her son, Prince Edward, is illegitimate (I.iv.111, 137; II.ii.133-34).

Marquess of Montague:

See Montague

Mayor (of Coventry):

He accompanies Warwick on the walls of Coventry as Warwick waits for his allies against King Edward (V.i). Unlike the mayor of York, the mayor of Coventry does not speak in the play.

Mayor (of York):

Responding to Henry's brief reinstatement as king, the mayor of York locks the gates of the city against King Edward, explaining that "now we owe allegiance unto Henry" (IV.vii.19). Edward persuades the mayor to open the gates by arguing that he, too, is loyal to King Henry, and is simply returning home to claim his title as duke of York. However once inside the city and at the urging of his followers, Edward declares himself king, and the mayor does not object. Throughout the play, as one side or the other gains the upper hand in the Wars of the Roses, common people such as the mayor are faced with shifting their loyalty to those in power.

Messengers:

Most of the messengers in the play deliver news of the location and number of troops to the Yorkists or Lancastrians; however, the messenger in II.i.50-67 gives York's sons Edward and Richard a vivid description of their father's humiliation and death at the hands of Margaret and Clifford.

Montague (Marquess of Montague):

He is a brother of Warwick and a supporter of York. (Montague is referred to as York's brother during Act I of the play, but this is an error; for the rest of the play, he is correctly described as Warwick's brother.) After York's death, Montague re mains loyal to the Yorkist cause until King Edward embarrasses Warwick and spoils the chance for an Anglo/French alliance by marrying Lady Grey (Elizabeth) instead of Bona. When questioned by King Edward in IV.i. 135-43, Montague swears his continued allegiance; however, by IV.vi, he has joined with his brother, Warwick, to help Margaret reinstate King Henry VI. In V.ii.39-47, Somerset informs the dying Warwick that his brother Montague has been killed in battle.

Montgomery (Sir John Montgomery):

He is a supporter of Edward IV. His first entrance occurs after Edward has been toppled from the throne by Warwick. In IV. vii.40-75, Montgom ery arrives in the town of York, ready with soldiers "to help King Edward in his time of storm, / As every loyal subject ought to do." When at first, Edward tells him that he is not prepared to reclaim his title as king, Montgomery replies that he will withdraw his support and warn off anyone else from supporting him as well, arguing that there is no point in defending Edward if he refuses to be king. When Edward relents and announces himself king, Montgomery declares, "Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself, / And now will I be Edward's champion" (IV.vii.67-68). Among other things, this incident reflects the variety of reactions that the nobility and the common people have when faced with the shifts in power during the Wars of the Roses.

Mortimer (Sir Hugh Mortimer):

He is an uncle and supporter of Richard, duke of York, as well as the brother of Sir John Mortimer. Although he does not speak in the play, he appears with his brother in I.ii.62, ready to fight Queen Margaret's army. In I.iv.2, we learn that Sir Hugh Mortimer and his brother were killed in battle while rescuing their nephew York□we hear this news from York himself, shortly before he is humiliated and killed by Margaret and Clifford.

Mortimer (Sir John Mortimer):

He is an uncle and supporter of Richard, duke of York, as well as the brother of Sir Hugh Mortimer. He appears with his brother in I.ii.62-65, declaring his readiness to "meet [Queen Margaret's army] in the field" rather than submit to a siege. We are told in I.iv.2 that Sir John Mortimer and his brother were killed in battle while rescuing their nephew York□ we hear this news from York himself, shortly before he is humiliated and killed by Margaret and Clifford.

Nobleman:

This unnamed nobleman appears briefly in III.ii.118-19 to inform King Edward that King Henry has been captured while trying to reenter England from his exile in Scotland.

Norfolk (Duke of Norfolk):

He is a loyal Yorkist, supporting first York and then York's son Edward in their fight for the crown. Norfolk appears briefly in the play, speaking only a few lines.

Northumberland (Earl of Northumberland):

He is a loyal Lancastrian and a supporter of Henry VI. When Henry entails his crown to York and his heirs, Northumberland angrily leaves the stage along with Clifford and Westmerland, exclaiming "Be thou a prey unto the house of York, / And die in bands for this unmanly deed!" (I.i.185-86). All the same, York's humiliation at Margaret's hands and his grief at the death of Rutland move Northumberland to tears, and in contrast with the play's theme of vengeance, Northumberland asserts: "Had [York] been slaughter-man to all my kin, /1 should not for my life but weep with him" (I.iv.169-70). At the end of the play he is listed among those who died during the wars (V.vii.8).

Oxford (Earl of Oxford):

He is a Lancastrian supporter of Henry VI, appearing with Margaret when she seeks aid from the French King Lewis in III.iii, and fighting alongside Margaret and Warwick against King Edward. In IV.vi, Oxford and Somerset take custody of young Richmond□"England's hope" and future king□and send him to Brittany where he will be safe from the civil wars with the Yorkists. Oxford is captured by Edward at the battle of Tewkesbury and imprisoned (V.iv-v). He appears in *Richard III* as a supporter of Richmond (Henry VII).

Pembroke (Earl of Pembroke):

He is a supporter of Edward IV. In IV.i. 130-31, Pembroke and Lord Stafford are instructed by King Edward to levy troops against the rebellious War wick. Like Stafford, Pembroke never speaks in the play.

Plantagenet (Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York):

Appearing in all three parts of *Henry VI,* York is a distant relative of King Henry (the two men share the surname, Plantagenet) and a claimant to the English throne. He is also father to the future King Edward IV as well as to George of Clarence, Richard of Gloucester, and Edmund of Rutland. Fresh from victory at the first battle of Saint Albons (which occurred in *Henry VI, Part Two),* York seats himself on Henry's throne in Parliament in I.i of *Henry VI, Part Three* and asserts his right to rule□a claim which even some of Henry's supporters admit is just. Henry's ally Clifford, however, articulates the play's theme of vengeance when he vows that, right or wrong, he will defend Henry's claim rather trian "kneel to him [York] that slew my father!" (I.i. 162). , York is captured by Margaret and Clifford in I.iv and forced to undergo a humiliating mock coronation, complete with paper crown, before he is executed. Margaret also presents him with a handkerchief soaked in the blood of his youngest son, Rutland. York's ensuing grief-filled speech moves one Lancastrian adversary□Northumberland□to tears. Clifford and Margaret's vengeful killing of York is answered later by vengeance from York's sons.

Posts:

These are express messengers. In III.iii. 163-66, a Post delivers letters to Lewis XI, Warwick, and Margaret informing them of King Edward's marriage to Lady Grey. The result is that an embarrassed Warwick, an insulted Lewis, and a triumphant Margaret join forces against Edward. The same Post returns their angry challenges to Edward in IV.i.86-149, causing Clarence's defection. In IV.vi.78-85, a Post informs Warwick that King Edward has escaped imprisonment, ushering in the play's final defeat of Warwick and the Lancastrians.

Richard (afterwards Richard, Duke of Gloucester):

See Gloucester

Richard (Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York):

See Plantagenet

Somerset (Duke of Somerset):

He is a follower of Edward IV but, along with Clarence, joins Warwick after Edward IV imprudently marries Lady Grey (Elizabeth). In IV.vi, he has the young Lancastrian, Richmond (future king of England), under his protection, and he enlists the help of Oxford to send the child to Brittany where he will be safe from King Edward IV. Somerset is captured at the battle of Tewkesbury by King Ed ward and executed for his defection (V.iv-v).

Richmond (Henry, Earl of Richmond):

He is a child who makes his one and only entrance in IV.vi, under the protection of the duke of Somerset. Although Richmond never speaks, he is noticed by King Henry, who has just been released from prison by his new ally, Warwick. Calling the child "England's hope," King Henry accurately predicts that the Lancastrian Richmond will someday be king (IV. vi.68). In fact, Richmond appears as an adult in Shakespeare's sequel, *Richard III,* where he defeats and kills the corrupt King Richard (formerly Richard, duke of Gloucester) at Bosworth Field□in the final battle of the Wars of the Roses□ and unites the country under his leadership as Henry VII.

Rivers (Lord Rivers):

He is Queen Elizabeth's brother. Rivers ap pears briefly in IV.iv, to be told by Elizabeth that her husband Edward IV has been captured by Warwick, and that she is pregnant

with "King Edward's fruit, true heir to th' English crown." Rivers then flees with his sister to sanctuary. He appears again in *Richard III.*

Rutland (Edmund, Earl of Rutland):

He is the youngest son of Richard, duke of York. Rutland becomes a victim of the civil wars' ferocity and vengeance when in I.iii, Clifford takes the child from his tutor and murders him to avenge the death of his father, old Lord Clifford, who was killed by York in *Henry VI, Part Two.* In I.iv.78-90, Margaret taunts York with a handkerchief that has been dipped in Rutland's blood.

Soldiers:

These characters, many of whom are without speaking parts, contribute to the regal, martial, and bureaucratic atmosphere of the play.

Somervile (Sir John Somervile):

He is one of Warwick's allies in his fight against King Edward IV. In V.i, Somervile informs Warwick of the location and progress of his gather ing forces, and he witnesses alongside Warwick the unwelcome arrival of King Edward and his troops.

Son (who has killed his father):

He is a soldier in the Wars of the Roses who appears onstage in II.v.55-78, dragging the body of an opponent he has killed. When he searches the body for money, he discovers to his dismay that the man he has killed is his own father. This episode demonstrates the horror of civil war, where neighbors and relatives often find themselves fighting on opposite sides. It also shows how the common people of England are being sacrificed to the quarrels of the nobility, or as the witnessing King Henry puts it, "Whiles lions war and battle for their dens, / Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity" (II.v.74-75).

Stafford (Lord Stafford):

He is a supporter of King Edward IV. Stafford speaks no lines in the play, but in IV.i. 130-31, he and his fellow nobleman the Earl of Pembroke are ordered by King Edward to levy soldiers for battle against Warwick, who has deserted Edward and joined forces with Margaret.

Stanley (Sir William Stanley):

He is a supporter of Edward IV and, along with Hastings and Gloucester, frees Edward from captivity in IV.v.

Tutor:

He is a chaplain as well as the tutor of York's young son Edmund, Earl of Rutland. When Clifford appears in I.iii seeking revenge, the tutor wants to stay and protect his young charge, but Clifford has him dragged away, declaring that his connection with the Church will save him, but not Rutland. The tutor's presence in this scene draws attention to Rutland's youthfulness and thus to Clifford's ex treme brutality for killing a child.

Warwick (Earl of Warwick):

He is York's staunchest ally, first appearing as his supporter in *Henry VI, Part Two.* In *Henry VI, Part Three,* Warwick defends and advises York during his bid to replace Henry VI as king. After York is killed by Margaret and Clifford, Warwick encourages York's oldest son, Edward, to declare himself king. With Edward's consent, Warwick arranges a diplomatically astute marriage between Edward and Lady Bona, sister-in-law to French King Lewis XI. However, Warwick is embarrassed in the middle of these negotiations by news of Edward's rash marriage to Lady Grey (III.iii.164-198); outraged at being treated so dishonorably, Warwick joins with Margaret and Lewis to depose Edward and reinstate Henry VI. Warwick is defeated and killed by King Edward in V.ii.

During the time that one or the other has his support, first Edward and later Henry confer signifi cant powers on Warwick: in II.vi. 104-05, Edward decrees that "Warwick, as ourself, / Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best," arid in IV.vi.41, King Henry makes Warwick co-Protector of the realm, along with Clarence. At one point, Margaret calls Warwick the "proud setter-up and puller-down of kings" (III.iii.157). Warwick himself sums up his career as he is dying: "For who liv'd king, but I could dig his grave? / And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow?" (V.ii.21-22).

Watchmen:

They guard King Edward IV's tent at night as he waits to do battle with Warwick. The conversation between the three of them provides useful introductory information to IV.iii: namely, that Ed ward will not go to bed until either he or his enemy Warwick is defeated, and that Warwick is close at hand with his army. The watchmen are comical because shortly after they boast about their duties as guards, Warwick and his men chase them off and capture King Edward in his tent.

Westmerland (Earl of Westmerland):

He is a supporter of Henry VI. When Henry entails his throne to York, Westmerland calls him "base, fearful, and despairing," and leaves the stage in disgust, declaring "I cannot stay to hear these articles" (I.i.178, 180, 183-84).

York (Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York):

See Plantagenet

Further Study

Baker, Herschel. Introduction to *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2,* and *3,* by William Shakespeare. In the *Riverside Shakespeare,* edited by G. Blakemore Evans, 587-95. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.

Baker provides a discussion of all three plays, as well as a useful family tree of the descendants of King Edward III. He calls *Henry VI, Part Three* "a play of battles, each more savage than the last," and describes Shakespeare's characterization of Richard of Gloucester as a "new advance" in the playwright's skills. x

Bergeron, David M. "The Play-within-the Play in *3 Henry VI." Tennessee Studies in Literature* 22 (1977): 37-45.

Bergeron demonstrates how the inclusion of theatrical details makes I.iv, II.v, III.i, and III.ii function to a certain extent as plays within *Henry VI, Part Three.*

Bevington, David. Introduction to *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth,* by William Shakespeare. In *The Complete Works of Shakespeare,* edited by David Bevington, 584-85. Updated 4th ed. New York: Longman, 1997.

Treating *Henry VI, Part Three* as "a play in its own right," Bevington examines the themes of revenge and oath-breaking, comments on the absence of heroes in the play, and focuses upon the dominance of Richard of Gloucester.

Kelly, Faye L. "Oaths in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* Plays." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24 (Autumn 1973): 357-71.

Kelly discusses the frequency with which oaths are made and broken in each of the *Henry VI* plays, and she points out that in *Henry VI, Part Three,* broken vows are used to highlight the chaos which occurs when lawful succession and group allegiances are cast aside.

Manheim, Michael. "Silence in the *Henry VI* Plays." *Educational Theatre Journal* 29 (March 1977): 70-76.

Manheim views King Henry's silence in a positive light, arguing that it is a sign of his honesty and humanity□traits lacked by other, noisier, characters in the play. Manheim draws on I.i in *Henry VI, Part Three* to support his discussion.

Norvell, Betty G. "The Dramatic Portrait of Margaret in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* Plays." *West Virginia Association of College English Teachers. Bulletin* 8 (Spring 1983): 38-44.

Norvell argues that Margaret is a complex character with a variety of roles, such as lover, Machiavellian, mother, and military leader.

Sanders, Norman. Introduction to *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth,* by William Shakespeare, edited by Norman Sanders, 7-37. The New Penguin Shakespeare. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981.

Sanders discusses the interconnected issues of family vengeance and civil war that occur in the play, and how these issues undermine and alter the system of royal succession. Sanders also examines the dominance of Richard, duke of Gloucester, in the play, glancing ahead to Gloucester's title role in Shakespeare's *Richard III.*

Swayne, Mattie. "Shakespeare's King Henry VI as a Pacifist." *College English* 3 (1941): 143-49.

Swayne contends that we are meant to admire Henry VI for his focus on peaceful, private virtues rather than condemn him for his shortcomings when it comes to government and the battlefield.

Utterback, Raymond V. "Public Men, Private Wills, and Kingship in *Henry VI, Part III." Renaissance Papers* (1978): 47-54.

Utterback argues that the debate in I.i reveals the contradictions that the warring sides share when it comes to private attitudes toward and public precepts of kingship.

Watson, Donald G. "The Dark Comedy of the *Henry VI* Plays." *Thalia* 1 (Autumn 1978): 11-21.

Watson looks at the three parts of *Henry VI* and at *Richard III,* and contends that in each of these plays, dark comedy forces us to rethink our own ideas concerning the relationship between politics and morality.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Shakespeare for Students (SfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

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The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

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The titles for each volume of SfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

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- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
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- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

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- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
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□Night.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

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Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Shakespeare for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

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Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Shakespeare for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

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