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THE FIRST PART OF HENRY THE SIXTH

by William Shakespeare

Dramatis Personae

KING HENRY THE SIXTH

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, uncle to the King, and Protector

DUKE OF BEDFORD, uncle to the King, and Regent of France

THOMAS BEAUFORT, DUKE OF EXETER, great-uncle to the king

HENRY BEAUFORT, great-uncle to the King, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

and afterwards CARDINAL

JOHN BEAUFORT, EARL OF SOMERSET, afterwards Duke

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, son of Richard late Earl of Cambridge,

afterwards DUKE OF YORK

EARL OF WARWICK

EARL OF SALISBURY

EARL OF SUFFOLK

LORD TALBOT, afterwards EARL OF SHREWSBURY

JOHN TALBOT, his son

EDMUND MORTIMER, EARL OF MARCH

SIR JOHN FASTOLFE

SIR WILLIAM LUCY

SIR WILLIAM GLANSDALE

SIR THOMAS GARGRAVE

MAYOR of LONDON

WOODVILLE, Lieutenant of the Tower

VERNON, of the White Rose or York faction

BASSET, of the Red Rose or Lancaster faction

A LAWYER

GAOLERS, to Mortimer

CHARLES, Dauphin, and afterwards King of France

REIGNIER, DUKE OF ANJOU, and titular King of Naples

DUKE OF BURGUNDY

DUKE OF ALENCON

BASTARD OF ORLEANS

GOVERNOR OF PARIS

MASTER-GUNNER OF ORLEANS, and his SON

GENERAL OF THE FRENCH FORCES in Bordeaux

A FRENCH SERGEANT

A PORTER

AN OLD SHEPHERD, father to Joan la Pucelle

MARGARET, daughter to Reignier, afterwards married to

King Henry

COUNTESS OF AUVERGNE

JOAN LA PUCELLE, Commonly called JOAN OF ARC

Lords, Warders of the Tower, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers,
Messengers, English and French Attendants. Fiends appearing
to La Pucelle

SCENE:

England and France

The First Part of King Henry the Sixth

ACT I. SCENE 1.

Westminster Abbey

Dead March. Enter the funeral of KING HENRY THE
FIFTH, attended on by the DUKE OF BEDFORD,
Regent of France, the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Protector,
the DUKE OF EXETER, the EARL OF WARWICK,
the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

BEDFORD. Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to
night! Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

GLOUCESTER. England ne'er had a king until his time.
Virtue he had, deserving to command;
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams;
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;
His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
More dazzled and drove back his enemies
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.
What should I say? His deeds exceed all speech:
He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.

EXETER. We mourn in black; why mourn we not in blood?
Henry is dead and never shall revive.
Upon a wooden coffin we attend;
And death's dishonourable victory
We with our stately presence glorify,
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.
What! shall we curse the planets of mishap
That plotted thus our glory's overthrow?
Or shall we think the subtle-witted French
Conjurers and sorcerers, that, afraid of him,
By magic verses have contriv'd his end?

WINCHESTER. He was a king bless'd of the King of kings;
Unto the French the dreadful judgment-day
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.
The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought;
The Church's prayers made him so prosperous.

GLOUCESTER. The Church! Where is it? Had not churchmen

pray'd,

His thread of life had not so soon decay'd.

None do you like but an effeminate prince,

Whom like a school-boy you may overawe.

WINCHESTER. Gloucester, whate'er we like, thou art

Protector

And lookest to command the Prince and realm.

Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe

More than God or religious churchmen may.

GLOUCESTER. Name not religion, for thou lov'st the flesh;

And ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st,

Except it be to pray against thy foes.

BEDFORD. Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace;

Let's to the altar. Heralds, wait on us.

Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms,

Since arms avail not, now that Henry's dead.

Posterity, await for wretched years,

When at their mothers' moist'ned eyes babes shall suck,

Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears,

And none but women left to wail the dead.

HENRY the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke:

Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils,

Combat with adverse planets in the heavens.

A far more glorious star thy soul will make

Than Julius Caesar or bright

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER. My honourable lords, health to you all!

Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,

Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture:

Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans,

Paris, Guysors, Poictiers, are all quite lost.

BEDFORD. What say'st thou, man, before dead Henry's corse?

Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns
Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

GLOUCESTER. Is Paris lost? Is Rouen yielded up?

If Henry were recall'd to life again,
These news would cause him once more yield the ghost.

EXETER. How were they lost? What treachery was us'd?

MESSENGER. No treachery, but want of men and money.

Amongst the soldiers this is muttered
That here you maintain several factions;
And whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought,
You are disputing of your generals:
One would have ling'ring wars, with little cost;
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;
A third thinks, without expense at all,
By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.
Awake, awake, English nobility!
Let not sloth dim your honours, new-begot.
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms;
Of England's coat one half is cut away.

EXETER. Were our tears wanting to this funeral,
These tidings would call forth their flowing tides.

BEDFORD. Me they concern; Regent I am of France.

Give me my steeled coat; I'll fight for France.
Away with these disgraceful wailing robes!
Wounds will I lend the French instead of eyes,
To weep their intermissive miseries.

Enter a second MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER. Lords, view these letters full of bad
mischance.

France is revolted from the English quite,

Except some petty towns of no import.

The Dauphin Charles is crowned king in Rheims;

The Bastard of Orleans with him is join'd;

Reignier, Duke of Anjou, doth take his part;

The Duke of Alencon flieth to his side.

EXETER. The Dauphin crowned king! all fly to him!

O, whither shall we fly from this reproach?

GLOUCESTER. We will not fly but to our enemies' throats.

Bedford, if thou be slack I'll fight it out.

BEDFORD. Gloucester, why doubt'st thou of my forwardness?

An army have I muster'd in my thoughts,

Wherewith already France is overrun.

Enter a third MESSENGER

THIRD MESSENGER. My gracious lords, to add to your

laments,

Wherewith you now bedew King Henry's hearse,

I must inform you of a dismal fight

Betwixt the stout Lord Talbot and the French.

WINCHESTER. What! Wherein Talbot overcame? Is't so?

THIRD MESSENGER. O, no; wherein Lord Talbot was

o'erthrown.

The circumstance I'll tell you more at large.

The tenth of August last this dreadful lord,

Retiring from the siege of Orleans,

Having full scarce six thousand in his troop,

By three and twenty thousand of the French

Was round encompassed and set upon.

No leisure had he to enrank his men;

He wanted pikes to set before his archers;

Instead whereof sharp stakes pluck'd out of hedges

They pitched in the ground confusedly

To keep the horsemen off from breaking in.
More than three hours the fight continued;
Where valiant Talbot, above human thought,
Enacted wonders with his sword and lance:
Hundreds he sent to hell, and none durst stand him;
Here, there, and everywhere, enrag'd he slew
The French exclaim'd the devil was in arms;
All the whole army stood agaz'd on him.
His soldiers, spying his undaunted spirit,
'A Talbot! a Talbot!' cried out amain,
And rush'd into the bowels of the battle.
Here had the conquest fully been seal'd up
If Sir John Fastolfe had not play'd the coward.
He, being in the vaward plac'd behind
With purpose to relieve and follow them-
Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke;
Hence grew the general wreck and massacre.
Enclosed were they with their enemies.
A base Walloon, to win the Dauphin's grace,
Thrust Talbot with a spear into the back;
Whom all France, with their chief assembled strength,
Durst not presume to look once in the face.

BEDFORD. Is Talbot slain? Then I will slay myself,
For living idly here in pomp and ease,
Whilst such a worthy leader, wanting aid,
Unto his dastard foemen is betray'd.

THIRD MESSENGER. O no, he lives, but is took prisoner,
And Lord Scales with him, and Lord Hungerford;
Most of the rest slaughter'd or took likewise.

BEDFORD. His ransom there is none but I shall pay.
I'll hale the Dauphin headlong from his throne;
His crown shall be the ransom of my friend;
Four of their lords I'll change for one of ours.

Farewell, my masters; to my task will I;
Bonfires in France forthwith I am to make
To keep our great Saint George's feast withal.
Ten thousand soldiers with me I will take,
Whose bloody deeds shall make an Europe quake.

THIRD MESSENGER. So you had need; for Orleans is besieg'd;
The English army is grown weak and faint;
The Earl of Salisbury craveth supply
And hardly keeps his men from mutiny,
Since they, so few, watch such a multitude.

EXETER. Remember, lords, your oaths to Henry sworn,
Either to quell the Dauphin utterly,
Or bring him in obedience to your yoke.

BEDFORD. I do remember it, and here take my leave
To go about my preparation. Exit

GLOUCESTER. I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can
To view th' artillery and munition;
And then I will proclaim young Henry king. Exit

EXETER. To Eltham will I, where the young King is,
Being ordain'd his special governor;
And for his safety there I'll best devise. Exit

WINCHESTER. [Aside] Each hath his place and function to
attend:
I am left out; for me nothing remains.
But long I will not be Jack out of office.
The King from Eltham I intend to steal,
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal. Exeunt

SCENE 2.

France. Before Orleans

Sound a flourish. Enter CHARLES THE DAUPHIN, ALENCON,
and REIGNIER, marching with drum and soldiers

CHARLES. Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens

So in the earth, to this day is not known.

Late did he shine upon the English side;

Now we are victors, upon us he smiles.

What towns of any moment but we have?

At pleasure here we lie near Orleans;

Otherwhiles the famish'd English, like pale ghosts,

Faintly besiege us one hour in a month.

ALENCON. They want their porridge and their fat bull
beeves.

Either they must be dieted like mules

And have their provender tied to their mouths,

Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.

REIGNIER. Let's raise the siege. Why live we idly here?

Talbot is taken, whom we wont to fear;

Remaineth none but mad-brain'd Salisbury,

And he may well in fretting spend his gall

Nor men nor money hath he to make war.

CHARLES. Sound, sound alarum; we will rush on them.

Now for the honour of the forlorn French!

Him I forgive my death that killeth me,

When he sees me go back one foot or flee.

Exeunt

Here alarum. They are beaten hack by the English, with
great loss. Re-enter CHARLES, ALENCON, and REIGNIER

CHARLES. Who ever saw the like? What men have I!

Dogs! cowards! dastards! I would ne'er have fled

But that they left me midst my enemies.

REIGNIER. Salisbury is a desperate homicide;

He fighteth as one weary of his life.

The other lords, like lions wanting food,

Do rush upon us as their hungry prey.

ALENCON. Froissart, a countryman of ours, records

England all Olivers and Rowlands bred

During the time Edward the Third did reign.

More truly now may this be verified;

For none but Samsons and Goliases

It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!

Lean raw-bon'd rascals! Who would e'er suppose

They had such courage and audacity?

CHARLES. Let's leave this town; for they are hare-brain'd

slaves,

And hunger will enforce them to be more eager.

Of old I know them; rather with their teeth

The walls they'll tear down than forsake the siege.

REIGNIER. I think by some odd gimmicks or device

Their arms are set, like clocks, still to strike on;

Else ne'er could they hold out so as they do.

By my consent, we'll even let them alone.

ALENCON. Be it so.

Enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS

BASTARD. Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have news for him.

CHARLES. Bastard of Orleans, thrice welcome to us.

BASTARD. Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appall'd.

Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?

Be not dismay'd, for succour is at hand.

A holy maid hither with me I bring,

Which, by a vision sent to her from heaven,

Ordained is to raise this tedious siege

And drive the English forth the bounds of France.

The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,
Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome:
What's past and what's to come she can descry.
Speak, shall I call her in? Believe my words,
For they are certain and unfallible.

CHARLES. Go, call her in. [Exit BASTARD]

But first, to try her skill,
Reignier, stand thou as Dauphin in my place;
Question her proudly; let thy looks be stern;
By this means shall we sound what skill she hath.

Re-enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS with
JOAN LA PUCELLE

REIGNIER. Fair maid, is 't thou wilt do these wondrous feats?

PUCELLE. Reignier, is 't thou that thinkest to beguile me?

Where is the Dauphin? Come, come from behind;
I know thee well, though never seen before.
Be not amaz'd, there's nothing hid from me.
In private will I talk with thee apart.
Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile.

REIGNIER. She takes upon her bravely at first dash.

PUCELLE. Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,

My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.
Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleas'd
To shine on my contemptible estate.
Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs
And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,
God's Mother deigned to appear to me,
And in a vision full of majesty
Will'd me to leave my base vocation
And free my country from calamity
Her aid she promis'd and assur'd success.

In complete glory she reveal'd herself;
And whereas I was black and swart before,
With those clear rays which she infus'd on me
That beauty am I bless'd with which you may see.
Ask me what question thou canst possible,
And I will answer unpremeditated.
My courage try by combat if thou dar'st,
And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.
Resolve on this: thou shalt be fortunate
If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.

CHARLES. Thou hast astonish'd me with thy high terms.

Only this proof I'll of thy valour make
In single combat thou shalt buckle with me;
And if thou vanquishest, thy words are true;
Otherwise I renounce all confidence.

PUCELLE. I am prepar'd; here is my keen-edg'd sword,
Deck'd with five flower-de-luces on each side,
The which at Touraine, in Saint Katherine's churchyard,
Out of a great deal of old iron I chose forth.

CHARLES. Then come, o' God's name; I fear no woman.

PUCELLE. And while I live I'll ne'er fly from a man.

[Here they fight and JOAN LA PUCELLE overcomes]

CHARLES. Stay, stay thy hands; thou art an Amazon,
And fightest with the sword of Deborah.

PUCELLE. Christ's Mother helps me, else I were too weak.

CHARLES. Whoe'er helps thee, 'tis thou that must help me.

Impatiently I burn with thy desire;
My heart and hands thou hast at once subdu'd.
Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,
Let me thy servant and not sovereign be.
'Tis the French Dauphin sueth to thee thus.

PUCELLE. I must not yield to any rites of love,
For my profession's sacred from above.

When I have chased all thy foes from hence,

Then will I think upon a recompense.

CHARLES. Meantime look gracious on thy prostrate thrall.

REIGNIER. My lord, methinks, is very long in talk.

ALENCON. Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock;

Else ne'er could he so long protract his speech.

REIGNIER. Shall we disturb him, since he keeps no mean?

ALENCON. He may mean more than we poor men do know;

These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues.

REIGNIER. My lord, where are you? What devise you on?

Shall we give o'er Orleans, or no?

PUCELLE. Why, no, I say; distrustful recreants!

Fight till the last gasp; I will be your guard.

CHARLES. What she says I'll confirm; we'll fight it out.

PUCELLE. Assign'd am I to be the English scourge.

This night the siege assuredly I'll raise.

Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days,

Since I have entered into these wars.

Glory is like a circle in the water,

Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself

Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.

With Henry's death the English circle ends;

Dispersed are the glories it included.

Now am I like that proud insulting ship

Which Caesar and his fortune bare at once.

CHARLES. Was Mahomet inspired with a dove?

Thou with an eagle art inspired then.

Helen, the mother of great Constantine,

Nor yet Saint Philip's daughters were like thee.

Bright star of Venus, fall'n down on the earth,

How may I reverently worship thee enough?

ALENCON. Leave off delays, and let us raise the siege.

REIGNIER. Woman, do what thou canst to save our honours;

Drive them from Orleans, and be immortaliz'd.

CHARLES. Presently we'll try. Come, let's away about it.

No prophet will I trust if she prove false. Exeunt

SCENE 3.

London. Before the Tower gates

Enter the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, with his serving-men
in blue coats

GLOUCESTER. I am come to survey the Tower this day;
Since Henry's death, I fear, there is conveyance.
Where be these warders that they wait not here?
Open the gates; 'tis Gloucester that calls.

FIRST WARDER. [Within] Who's there that knocks so
imperiously?

FIRST SERVING-MAN. It is the noble Duke of Gloucester.

SECOND WARDER. [Within] Whoe'er he be, you may not be
let in.

FIRST SERVING-MAN. Villains, answer you so the Lord
Protector?

FIRST WARDER. [Within] The Lord protect him! so we
answer him.

We do no otherwise than we are will'd.

GLOUCESTER. Who willed you, or whose will stands but
mine?

There's none Protector of the realm but I.

Break up the gates, I'll be your warrantize.

Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

[GLOUCESTER'S men rush at the Tower gates, and

WOODVILLE the Lieutenant speaks within]

WOODVILLE. [Within] What noise is this? What traitors

have we here?

GLOUCESTER. Lieutenant, is it you whose voice I hear?

Open the gates; here's Gloucester that would enter.

WOODVILLE. [Within] Have patience, noble Duke, I may
not open;

The Cardinal of Winchester forbids.

From him I have express commandment

That thou nor none of thine shall be let in.

GLOUCESTER. Faint-hearted Woodville, prizest him fore me?

Arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate

Whom Henry, our late sovereign, ne'er could brook!

Thou art no friend to God or to the King.

Open the gates, or I'll shut thee out shortly.

SERVING-MEN. Open the gates unto the Lord Protector,

Or we'll burst them open, if that you come not quickly.

Enter to the PROTECTOR at the Tower gates WINCHESTER
and his men in tawny coats

WINCHESTER. How now, ambitious Humphry! What means
this?

GLOUCESTER. Peel'd priest, dost thou command me to be
shut out?

WINCHESTER. I do, thou most usurping proditor,
And not Protector of the King or realm.

GLOUCESTER. Stand back, thou manifest conspirator,
Thou that contrived'st to murder our dead lord;
Thou that giv'st whores indulgences to sin.
I'll canvass thee in thy broad cardinal's hat,
If thou proceed in this thy insolence.

WINCHESTER. Nay, stand thou back; I will not budge a foot.
This be Damascus; be thou cursed Cain,
To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.