

1 Henry VI

5.1

*Sennet. Enter King Henry, the Dukes of Gloucester
and Exeter, [and others]*

KING HENRY (to Gloucester)

Have you perused the letters from the Pope,
The Emperor, and the Earl of Armagnac?

GLOUCESTER

I have, my lord, and their intent is this:
They humbly sue unto your excellence
To have a godly peace concluded of 5
Between the realms of England and of France.

KING HENRY

How doth your grace affect their motion?

GLOUCESTER

Well, my good lord, and as the only means
To stop effusion of our Christian blood
And 'stablish quietness on every side. 10

KING HENRY

Ay, marry, uncle; for I always thought
It was both impious and unnatural
That such immanity and bloody strife
Should reign among professors of one faith.

GLOUCESTER

Beside, my lord, the sooner to effect 15
And surer bind this knot of amity,
The Earl of Armagnac, near knit to Charles±±
A man of great authority in France±±
Proffers his only daughter to your grace
In marriage, with a large and sumptuous dowry. 20

KING HENRY

Marriage, uncle? Alas, my years are young,
And fitter is my study and my books
Than wanton dalliance with a paramour.
Yet call th'ambassadors,
[Exit one or more]

and as you please,

So let them have their answers every one. 25
I shall be well content with any choice

Tends to God's glory and my country's weal.
*Enter the Bishop of Winchester, now in cardinal's
habit, and three ambassadors, one a Papal Legate*

EXETER *(aside)*

What, is my lord of Winchester installed
And called unto a cardinal's degree?
Then I perceive that will be verified 30
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy:
'If once he come to be a cardinal,
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown.'

KING HENRY

My lords ambassadors, your several suits
Have been considered and debated on. 35
Your purpose is both good and reasonable,
And therefore are we certainly resolved
To draw conditions of a friendly peace,
Which by my lord of Winchester we mean
Shall be transported presently to France. 40

GLOUCESTER *[to ambassadors]*

And for the proffer of my lord your master,
I have informed his highness so at large
As, liking of the lady's virtuous gifts,
Her beauty, and the value of her dower,
He doth intend she shall be England's queen. 45

KING HENRY *[to ambassadors]*

In argument and proof of which contract
Bear her this jewel, pledge of my affection.
(To Gloucester) And so, my lord Protector, see them
guarded
And safely brought to Dover, wherein shipped,
Commit them to the fortune of the sea. 50
*Exeunt [severally] all but Winchester and
[Legate]*

WINCHESTER

Stay, my lord legate; you shall first receive
The sum of money which I promise
Should be delivered to his holiness
For clothing me in these grave ornaments.

LEGATE

I will attend upon your lordship's leisure. 55

[Exit]

WINCHESTER

Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
That nor in birth or for authority
The Bishop will be overborne by thee.
I'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,
Or sack this country with a mutiny.

[Exit]