

1 Henry VI

3.1

Flourish. Enter young King Henry, the Dukes of Exeter and Gloucester, the Bishop of Winchester; the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Suffolk [with red roses]; the Earl of Warwick and Richard Plantagenet [with white roses]. Gloucester offers to put up a bill; Winchester snatches it, tears it

WINCHESTER

Com'st thou with deep premeditated lines?
With written pamphlets studiously devised?
Humphrey of Gloucester, if thou canst accuse,
Or aught intend'st to lay unto my charge,
Do it without invention, suddenly, 5
As I with sudden and extemporal speech
Purpose to answer what thou canst object.

GLOUCESTER

Presumptuous priest, this place commands my
patience,
Or thou shouldst find thou hast dishonoured me.
Think not, although in writing I preferred 10
The manner of thy vile outrageous crimes,
That therefore I have forged, or am not able
Verbatim to rehearse the method of my pen.
No, prelate, such is thy audacious wickedness,
Thy lewd, pestiferous, and dissentious pranks, 15
As very infants prattle of thy pride.
Thou art a most pernicious usurer,
Froward by nature, enemy to peace,
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems
A man of thy profession and degree. 20
And for thy treachery, what's more manifest?±±
In that thou laid'st a trap to take my life,
As well at London Bridge as at the Tower.
Beside, I fear me, if thy thoughts were sifted,
The King thy sovereign is not quite exempt 25
From envious malice of thy swelling heart.

WINCHESTER

Gloucester, I do defy thee.±±Lords, vouchsafe
 To give me hearing what I shall reply.
 If I were covetous, ambitious, or perverse,
 As he will have me, how am I so poor? 30
 Or how haps it I seek not to advance
 Or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?
 And for dissension, who preferreth peace
 More than I do?±±except I be provoked.
 No, my good lords, it is not that offends; 35
 It is not that that hath incensed the Duke.
 It is because no one should sway but he,
 No one but he should be about the King±±
 And that engenders thunder in his breast
 And makes him roar these accusations forth. 40
 But he shall know I am as good±±
GLOUCESTER As good?±±
 Thou bastard of my grandfather.
WINCHESTER
 Ay, lordly sir; for what are you, I pray,
 But one imperious in another's throne? 45
GLOUCESTER
 Am I not Protector, saucy priest?
WINCHESTER
 And am not I a prelate of the Church?
GLOUCESTER
 Yes±±as an outlaw in a castle keeps
 And useth it to patronage his theft.
WINCHESTER
 Unreverent Gloucester.
GLOUCESTER Thou art reverend 50
 Touching thy spiritual function, not thy life.
WINCHESTER
 Rome shall remedy this.
[GLOUCESTER] Roam thither then.
[WARWICK] *(to Winchester)*
 My lord, it were your duty to forbear.
SOMERSET
 Ay, so the bishop be not overborne:
 Methinks my lord should be religious, 55
 And know the office that belongs to such.
WARWICK

Methinks his lordship should be humbler.
It fitteth not a prelate so to plead.

SOMERSET

Yes, when his holy state is touched so near.

WARWICK

State holy or unhallowed, what of that?
Is not his grace Protector to the King?

60

RICHARD PLANTAGENET (*aside*)

Plantagenet, I see, must hold his tongue,
Lest it be said, 'Speak, sirrah, when you should;
Must your bold verdict intertalk with lords?'
Else would I have a fling at Winchester.

65

KING HENRY

Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
The special watchmen of our English weal,
I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
To join your hearts in love and amity.
O what a scandal is it to our crown
That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell
Civil dissension is a viperous worm
That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.

70

A noise within

[SERVINGMEN] (*within*) Down with the tawny coats! 75

KING HENRY

What tumult's this?

WARWICK An uproar, I dare warrant,
Begun through malice of the Bishop's men.

A noise again

[SERVINGMEN] (*within*) Stones, stones!

Enter the Mayor of London

MAYOR

O my good lords, and virtuous Henry,
Pity the city of London, pity us!
The Bishop and the Duke of Gloucester's men,
Forbidden late to carry any weapon,
Have filled their pockets full of pebble stones
And, banding themselves in contrary parts,
Do pelt so fast at one another's pate
That many have their giddy brains knocked out.

80

85

Our windows are broke down in every street,
And we for fear compelled to shut our shops.
*Enter in skirmish, with bloody pates, Winchester's
Servingmen in tawny coats and Gloucester's in blue
coats*

KING HENRY

We charge you, on allegiance to ourself,
To hold your slaught'ring hands and keep the peace. 90
[The skirmish ceases]

Pray, Uncle Gloucester, mitigate this strife.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Nay, if we be forbidden stones, we'll
fall to it with our teeth.

SECOND SERVINGMAN

Do what ye dare, we are as resolute.
Skirmish again

GLOUCESTER

You of my household, leave this peevish broil, 95
And set this unaccustomed fight aside.

THIRD SERVINGMAN

My lord, we know your grace to be a man
Just and upright and, for your royal birth,
Inferior to none but to his majesty;
And ere that we will suffer such a prince, 100
So kind a father of the commonweal,
To be disgrace'd by an inkhorn mate,
We and our wives and children all will fight
And have our bodies slaughtered by thy foes.

FIRST SERVINGMAN

Ay, and the very parings of our nails 105
Shall pitch a field when we are dead.
They begin to skirmish again

GLOUCESTER

Stay, stay, I say!

An if you love me as you say you do,
Let me persuade you to forbear a while.

KING HENRY

O how this discord doth afflict my soul!
Can you, my lord of Winchester, behold 110
My sighs and tears, and will not once relent?
Who should be pitiful if you be not?
Or who should study to prefer a peace,
If holy churchmen take delight in broils?

WARWICK

Yield, my lord Protector; yield, Winchester±± 115
Except you mean with obstinate repulse
To slay your sovereign and destroy the realm.
You see what mischief±±and what murder, too±±
Hath been enacted through your enmity.
Then be at peace, except ye thirst for blood. 120

WINCHESTER

He shall submit, or I will never yield.

GLOUCESTER

Compassion on the King commands me stoop,
Or I would see his heart out ere the priest
Should ever get that privilege of me.

WARWICK

Behold, my lord of Winchester, the Duke 125
Hath banished moody discontented fury,
As by his smootheÁd brows it doth appear.
Why look you still so stern and tragical?

GLOUCESTER

Here, Winchester, I offer thee my hand.

KING HENRY *(to Winchester)*

Fie, Uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach 130
That malice was a great and grievous sin;
And will not you maintain the thing you teach,
But prove a chief offender in the same?

WARWICK

Sweet King! The Bishop hath a kindly gird.
For shame, my lord of Winchester, relent. 135
What, shall a child instruct you what to do?

WINCHESTER

Well, Duke of Gloucester, I will yield to thee
Love for thy love, and hand for hand I give.

GLOUCESTER *(aside)*

Ay, but I fear me with a hollow heart.
(To the others) See here, my friends and loving
countrymen, 140

This token serveth for a flag of truce
Betwixt ourselves and all our followers.
So help me God, as I dissemble not.

WINCHESTER

So help me God *(aside)* as I intend it not.

KING HENRY

O loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester, 145

How joyful am I made by this contract!

(To Servingmen) Away, my masters, trouble us no
more,

But join in friendship as your lords have done.

FIRST SERVINGMAN Content. I'll to the surgeon's.

SECOND SERVINGMAN And so will I. 150

THIRD SERVINGMAN And I will see what physic the tavern
affords.

Exeunt the Mayor and Servingmen

WARWICK

Accept this scroll, most gracious sovereign,

Which in the right of Richard Plantagenet

We do exhibit to your majesty. 155

GLOUCESTER

Well urged, my lord of Warwick±±for, sweet prince,

An if your grace mark every circumstance,

You have great reason to do Richard right,

Especially for those occasions

At Eltham Place I told your majesty. 160

KING HENRY

And those occasions, uncle, were of force.±±

Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is

That Richard be restoreÁd to his blood.

WARWICK

Let Richard be restoreÁd to his blood.

So shall his father's wrongs be recompensed. 165

WINCHESTER

As will the rest, so willeth Winchester.

KING HENRY

If Richard will be true, not that alone

But all the whole inheritance I give

That doth belong unto the house of York,

From whence you spring by lineal descent. 170

RICHARD PLANTAGENET

Thy humble servant vows obedience

And humble service till the point of death.

KING HENRY

Stoop then, and set your knee against my foot.

Richard kneels

And in requerdon of that duty done,
I gird thee with the valiant sword of York. 175
Rise, Richard, like a true Plantagenet,
And rise created princely Duke of York.

RICHARD DUKE OF YORK (*rising*)

And so thrive Richard, as thy foes may fall;
And as my duty springs, so perish they
That grudge one thought against your majesty. 180

ALL BUT RICHARD AND SOMERSET

Welcome, high prince, the mighty Duke of York!

SOMERSET (*aside*)

Perish, base prince, ignoble Duke of York!

GLOUCESTER

Now will it best avail your majesty
To cross the seas and to be crowned in France.
The presence of a king engenders love 185
Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends,
As it disanimates his enemies.

KING HENRY

When Gloucester says the word, King Henry goes,
For friendly counsel cuts off many foes.

GLOUCESTER

Your ships already are in readiness. 190
Sennet. Exeunt all but Exeter

EXETER

Ay, we may march in England or in France,
Not seeing what is likely to ensue.
This late dissension grown betwixt the peers
Burns under feigned ashes of forged love,
And will at last break out into a flame. 195
As festered members rot but by degree
Till bones and flesh and sinews fall away,
So will this base and envious discord breed.
And now I fear that fatal prophecy
Which, in the time of Henry named the Fifth, 200
Was in the mouth of every sucking babe:
That `Henry born at Monmouth should win all,
And Henry born at Windsor should lose all'±±
Which is so plain that Exeter doth wish
His days may finish, ere that hapless time. 205

Exit