Henry VI, Part 3
William Shakespeare

Henry VI, Part 3

Henry VI, Part 3 or The Third Part of Henry the Sixt (often written as 3 Henry VI) is a history play by William Shakespeare believed to have been written in 1591, and set during the lifetime of King Henry VI of England. Whereas 1 Henry VI deals with the loss of England's French territories and the political machinations leading up to the Wars of the Roses, and 2 Henry VI focuses on the King's inability to quell the bickering of his nobles, and the inevitability of armed conflict, 3 Henry VI deals primarily with the horrors of that conflict, as the once ordered nation is thrown into chaos and barbarism as families break down and moral codes are subverted in the pursuit of revenge and power.

Among Shakespeare's history plays Henry VI Part 3 and Richard II contain the only intances in which a living monarch is displaced. However, unlike Richard who fell because of his misunderstanding of the limits of his sovereignty, the demise of Henry was due to his total incapacity to exercise his sovereign power. The inability of the king to deal with the brutal realities of regal life is dramatically displayed in Act 2 Scene 5 where Henry witnesses the agonies of the father who has killed his son and the son who has killed his father, and sadly acknowledges that this civil strife has been caused by the King's ineptitude. The crowning indignity comes in Act 3 Scene 1 where the king in hiding is easily detected and trapped by two rustics who triumphantly prepare to lead him before the man who has deposed him, Edward IV. Henry's death comes at the hands of the brother of Edward, the vicious and rampantly ambitious Richard, who later rises to the heights of supreme tyranny in Richard III. After Henry's son and heir, Edward, is murdered, also by the future Richard III, and Henry's most influential supporter, the Earl of Warwick, dies, the House of Lancaster lies in ruins.

Henry VI, Part 3 features the longest soliloquy in all of Shakespeare (3.2.124−195), and has more battle scenes (four on stage, one reported) than any other of Shakespeare's plays.
(Summary from Wikipedia with addition by Algy Pug)

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