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Henry VI, Part 2

William Shakespeare · *c. 1591 · original English text (Project Gutenberg #1501)*

As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, says Suffolk, procurator to marry Princess Margaret for the king. The hosted text is Shakespeare's English, Project Gutenberg #1501, the second part of the trilogy. For grades 10–12. Quote the play, not only the list of scenes. Keep "Majesty" as capitalized in this file.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What happens to England when a marriage, a protector, a rebel, and a duke with a claim all pull at once, and how should a school read this middle part as the civil wound opening, not as a string of quarrels only?

"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"

Act I, Scene I, London, the palace

Suffolk has married Margaret for Henry in Tours, and brings her home. Gloucester's protectorship, the queen's party, the fall of good Duke Humphrey, Jack Cade's rising, and York's claim all belong to this middle part. Teach it as the wound opening, for grades 10–12, with gravity. It is Part 2; Parts 1 and 3 stand on either side. Quote Suffolk's first speech, not the table of scenes.

KEY CHARACTERS

Suffolk
Who opens the play, procurator for the French marriage

Queen Margaret
Brought from France, already a force in the palace

Gloucester (Duke Humphrey)
The Protector whose fall is a public crime

York, and Jack Cade
A duke with a claim, and the rebel whose rising is both comic and a wound

A PROCURATOR'S CHARGE

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Suffolk, and a Marriage

ACT I, SCENE I

Suffolk reports his charge: he was to marry Princess Margaret for the king, as procurator, in the famous ancient city Tours, in presence of the Kings of France and Sicily. The marriage is already a political act.

- The first lines are exact. Keep "imperial Majesty" as this file capitalizes it.
- The place is London, the palace.
- This is PG #1501, Part 2. For grades 10–12.
- Quote the play, not the list of scenes.

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I, London, the palace

02

Gloucester, and a Fall

THE EARLY AND MIDDLE ACTS

Good Duke Humphrey is Protector, and he will not remain so. The palace quarrel of Part 1 has become a plot. A school should watch how a principled man is brought down.

- Teach the fall of Gloucester as a public crime, not as palace gossip only.
- Margaret and Suffolk are at the center of the new court.
- Gravity.
- 10–12.

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I

03

Jack Cade

THE RISING

A rebel named Jack Cade comes on, with followers whose trades the play names. The rising is comic in places, and it is also a wound in the commonwealth. Teach both, without making the poor a joke, and without blessing the violence.

- Cade is in the dramatis personae with Bevis, Holland, Dick the butcher, Smith the weaver.
- The rising belongs to York's larger game as well as to popular anger.
- Gravity, and some tact.
- Quote this file.

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I

04

York's Claim

THE LATER MOVEMENT

York's claim to the crown, already seeded, comes into the open. This part ends looking toward a war of kinsmen. Do not stop as if Cade were the whole play.

- This is the middle of a trilogy. Part 3 will be the war itself.
- Teach ambition and a disputed title with gravity.
- Keep York's name as the play uses it.
- 10–12.

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I

05

The Second of Three Parts

THE PLAY AS A WHOLE

Label this honestly as Part 2. It does not begin the story, and it does not end it.

- Catalogue 10–12.
- Original English, PG #1501.
- Suffolk's first speech is the right first quotation.
- Keep the capitalization "Majesty" when you quote this file.

> *"As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France, As procurator to your excellence, To marry Princess Margaret for your grace, So, in"*
>
> Act I, Scene I, London, the palace

A Political Marriage · A Protector Brought Down · A Rising · A Claimed Title · The Middle of Three

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. The play opens: "As by your high imperial Majesty I had in charge at my depart for France." Keep "Majesty" as capitalized in this file. Suffolk is speaking, in the London palace, of the marriage to Margaret at Tours.
2. This is Shakespeare, PG #1501, Henry VI, Part 2. For grades 10–12. Label the three parts honestly. Quote the play, not the list of scenes.
3. Gloucester's fall is a public crime, not palace gossip only.
4. Jack Cade's rising is comic in places and a wound in the commonwealth. Do not make the poor a joke, and do not bless the violence.
5. York's claim looks toward Part 3. This part does not end the story.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text (Project Gutenberg #1501), Project Gutenberg #1501, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/henry-vi-part-2/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.