CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Henry VI, Part 3

William Shakespeare · *c. 1591 · original English text (Project Gutenberg #1502)*

I wonder how the King escaped our hands, says Warwick, as the third part opens in the Parliament House and the war of kinsmen is already in motion. The hosted text is Shakespeare's English, Project Gutenberg #1502. For grades 10–12. Teach with gravity. No gore on the map. Quote the play, not only the list of scenes. Keep "King" as capitalized in this file.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What happens when a civil war is fought among kinsmen, and how should a school read this last part—the paper crown, the murdered children, the rising of Richard—without turning cruelty into a spectacle?

"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."

Act I, Scene I, London, the Parliament House

The war that Parts 1 and 2 prepared is now fought. York, Margaret, Warwick, the young princes, and Richard of Gloucester all belong to this last part. There are scenes of great cruelty. Teach them with gravity, for grades 10–12, and put no gore on the map. The play is the close of a trilogy, and the door into Richard III. Quote Warwick's first line, not the table of scenes.

KEY CHARACTERS

Warwick
Who opens the play wondering how the King escaped their hands

York, and King Henry
The claimant and the king, already in mid-chase

Queen Margaret
A mother and a captain in a civil war; teach her with gravity

Richard of Gloucester
A younger son already looking toward a later crown; do not import a later play's lines

A KING ESCAPED, AND A WAR ALREADY MOVING

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I

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

01

How the King Escaped

ACT I, SCENE I

Warwick wonders how the King escaped their hands. York answers that while they pursued the horsemen of the north, he slyly stole away and left his men. The war is already in mid-chase as the part begins.

- The first line is exact. Keep "the King" as this file capitalizes it.
- The place is London, the Parliament House.
- This is PG #1502, Part 3. For grades 10–12.
- Quote the play, not the list of scenes.

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I, London, the Parliament House

02

A War of Kinsmen

THE BATTLES

Fathers and sons, York and Lancaster, a crown passed and recaptured: the play is a civil war, not a foreign one. Teach the cost to a kingdom that fights itself.

- Gravity. This is the darkest of the three parts.
- Do not reduce the battles to a sports-table of winners.
- Loyalty and betrayal change sides, Warwick among them.
- 10–12.

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I

03

Cruelty, and How to Teach It

THE EARLY ACTS, AND AFTER

There are scenes a school must handle with care: a child killed, a father taunted, a paper crown. Name the moral fact—that civil war makes kinsmen cruel—and do not make a spectacle of the injuries.

- No gore on the map. Tact. Gravity.
- The cruelty is the play's warning, not its entertainment.
- Young Rutland and York's last hour belong to this warning.
- Do not linger on the staging of pain.

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I

04

Richard of Gloucester

THE LATER MOVEMENT

A younger son of York, already marked in this play, looks toward a later crown. This part is also the door into Richard III. Teach the ambition as the play writes it, not as a later film.

- Do not import a later play's famous lines into this one.
- The trilogy prepares a tyrant; say so without treating this part as a mere prequel.
- Quote this file.
- 10–12.

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I

05

The Last of Three Parts

THE PLAY AS A WHOLE

Label this honestly as Part 3, the close of Henry VI's story in these three plays, and a door into what follows. Finish it. The hosted file is complete, PG #1502.

- Catalogue 10–12.
- No gore on the map.
- Keep "King" capitalized when you quote the first line.
- Warwick's first line is the right first quotation.

> *"I wonder how the King escaped our hands."*
>
> Act I, Scene I, London, the Parliament House

A Civil War · Kinsmen · Cruelty as a Warning · A Rising Tyrant · The Last of Three

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. The play opens: "I wonder how the King escaped our hands." Keep "King" as capitalized in this file. Warwick is speaking, in the Parliament House. Quote the play, not the list of scenes.
2. This is Shakespeare, PG #1502, Henry VI, Part 3. For grades 10–12. Label the three parts honestly. This is the darkest of them.
3. There are scenes of great cruelty (a child, a paper crown). Teach the moral fact; put no gore on the map; do not make a spectacle of pain.
4. Richard of Gloucester already looks toward a later crown. Do not import Richard III's famous lines into this play.
5. This part closes the trilogy and opens a door into what follows. Finish it.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text (Project Gutenberg #1502), Project Gutenberg #1502, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/henry-vi-part-3/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.