Henry VI, Part 2

by William Shakespeare

Act 1, sc. 1 (line 203 - Verse)

York

Anjou and Maine are given to the French;

Paris is lost; the state of Normandy

Stands on a tickle point, now they are gone:

Suffolk concluded on the articles,

The peers agreed, and Henry was well pleased

To change two dukedoms for a duke's fair daughter.

I cannot blame them all: what is't to them?

'Tis thine they give away, and not their own.

Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage

And purchase friends and give to courtezans,

Still revelling like lords till all be gone;

While as the silly owner of the goods

Weeps over them and wrings his hapless hands

And shakes his head and trembling stands aloof,

While all is shared and all is borne away,

Ready to starve and dare not touch his own:

So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue,

While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.

Methinks the realms of England, France and Ireland

Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood

As did the fatal brand Althaea burn'd

Unto the prince's heart of Calydon.

Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!

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Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,

Even as I have of fertile England's soil.

A day will come when York shall claim his own;

And therefore I will take the Nevils' parts

And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,

And, when I spy advantage, claim the crown,

For that's the golden mark I seek to hit:

Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,

Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist,

Nor wear the diadem upon his head,

Whose church-like humours fits not for a crown.

Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:

Watch thou and wake when others be asleep,

To pry into the secrets of the state;

Till Henry, surfeiting in joys of love,

With his new bride and England's dear-bought queen,

And Humphrey with the peers be fall'n at jars:

Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,

With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfumed;

And in my standard bear the arms of York

To grapple with the house of Lancaster;

And, force perforce, I'll make him yield the crown,

Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.