



# **SHAKESPEARENCE!**

## About the Henry VI Plays:

**Henry VI** is a series of three history plays by [William Shakespeare](#), set during the lifetime of [King Henry VI of England](#).

- [Henry VI, Part 1](#) deals with the loss of [England's French](#) territories and the political machinations leading up to the [Wars of the Roses](#), as the English political system is torn apart by personal squabbles and petty jealousy;
- [Henry VI, Part 2](#) depicts the King's inability to quell the bickering of his nobles, and the inevitability of armed conflict; and
- [Henry VI, Part 3](#) deals with the horrors of that conflict.

The three plays were published separately, and have often been performed separately, although they have also been combined in various adaptations into a single play or two plays.

## About the War of the Roses:

- The Wars of the Roses were a series of battles that took place in [England](#) from 1455 to 1485.
- The fighting was between two families that claimed the right to the throne—the House of York and the House of Lancaster.
- They were called the Wars of the Roses because the symbol of each house was a rose. The House of York was represented by a white rose. The House of Lancaster was represented by a red rose.

Edward III was king of England from 1327 to 1377. After his death, his many children and their descendants argued over who should rule England. The descendants eventually were split into the ***Yorks and the Lancasters***.

Henry VI, a Lancaster, became king in 1422. Henry was not a strong ruler. However, his queen, Margaret of Anjou, was very influential. During Henry's reign the laws were not enforced, which made life unpleasant for many people. The government also insisted that the people pay a lot of taxes.

Henry Tudor was crowned **Henry VII** on October 30, 1485. He united the York and Lancaster houses by marrying Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York in 1486. This began the reign of the **House of Tudor**.