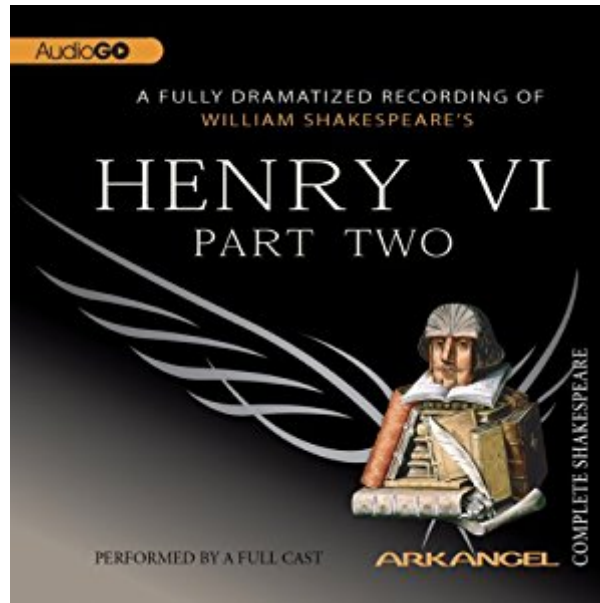


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Henry VI, Part 2: Arkangel Shakespeare



Synopsis

Rife with intrigue and treachery, this history play depicts the onset of the fifteenth-century Wars of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York. Young King Henry VI has married the beautiful Margaret of Anjou but the new queen is ruthless and ambitious. Supported by the powerful Duke of Suffolk, Margaret plots the overthrow of her enemies, chief among them the Duke of Gloucester. But the Duke of York also aspires to the crown, and the common people, led by Jack Cade, are in rebellion. To the despair of the mild young king, England descends into civil war. David Tennant plays Henry VI, and Kelly Hunter plays Queen Margaret. Norman Rodway is the Duke of Gloucester, Isla Blair the Duchess of Gloucester, and Clive Merrison plays the Duke of York.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 3 hours and 1 minute

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Original recording

Publisher: Arkangel

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Customer Reviews

As always, the Arkangel Shakespeare series is excellent. I read the play but the dramatization adds so much depth to written word. The only fault I have with the production is that there beginning and ending notifications on the CD to alert the CD is beginning and ending; that is, it is time to change the CD.

Shakespeare's histories are best read back to back in sequence, which gives a broader context and more of a historical sense. It can be a bit confusing to just take in one at random, more or less like dropping in on the middle of a story. That is particularly true here, in the second part (of three) about the reign of Henry VI. There is a lot going on in this play, and some of the acts seem to be there mainly to move us along in the historical narrative as efficiently as possible. There are some

interesting characters who Shakespeare takes some extra time to develop a bit more, but most of them are just various plotters in various factions who get killed off by each other in short order. The most interesting part of this play is Act IV, which is all about Jack Cade's rebellion. Shakespeare portrays him as nothing more than a rabble-rousing, populist demagogue, and brutally satirizes such movements as pandering to the lowest common denominator. Cade promises his followers, who are mostly petty criminals, a sort of communist utopia, with an unending supply of free booze. Then, as his first official act, he executes a clerk for being literate enough to be able to sign his own name, rather than simply making a mark like a plain, honest man---and likewise promises to "kill all the lawyers." And things go downhill from there. This isn't one of Shakespeare's best histories, but it has its merits and is definitely not bad either. This fully dramatized audio edition is quite well done and easy to follow---a very good way to experience these plays.

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