

Fall 2023

## THE WARS OF THE ROSES

### Henry VI – Part I

**Synopsis:** There is a power vacuum after the sudden death of powerful leader Henry V, with a very young Henry VI and squabbling nobles. There is an external threat with Joan of Arc in France, seen as a saint by the French and as a witch by the English. Shakespeare juxtaposes events in England and France to provide dramatic commentary and make causal connections.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Joan la Pucelle (Joan of Arc) is definitely the most charismatic figure in the play, though not always consistent. How does Shakespeare portray the different ways she is seen by different factions? How is her role contrasted with that of Talbot and Margaret? Further, can we think of modern figures who are viewed in diametrically opposite ways by different groups and how that affects public discourse?
- The play starts with the loss of the idealized king Henry V. How does Shakespeare portray the descent into political chaos and the loss of chivalry? The opening scene and the exchange between Talbot and his son in Act IV-5 may be illustrative.

Folger Shakespeare Link: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/henry-vi-part-1/>  
Carnegie-Stout Public Library also has paper copies of the play.

Kanopy BBC production link: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/dubuque/video/5332688>

**Discussion: Sept. 10, 2023 @ 2 PM**

Carnegie-Stout Public Library 360 W 11th Street, Dubuque, IA