



King Henry VI Part 1 (Arden Shakespeare: Third Series)

William Shakespeare

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A fresh look at a play usually regarded as the first component of a three-part historical epic, this edition argues that *Henry VI Part 1* is a "prequel," a freestanding piece that returns for ironic and dramatic effect to a story already familiar to its audience. The play's ingenious use of stage space is closely analyzed, as is its manipulation of a series of set-piece combats to give a coherent syntax of action. Discussion of the dramatic structure created by the opposing figures of Talbot and Jeanne la Pucelle, and exploration of the critical controversies and "puzzles" surrounding the figure of Jeanne, lead to a reflection on the nature of the history play as genre in the 1590s. Burns provides notes on his editorial procedure in the section before the play itself. Appendices on names, naming, and wordplay; casting; contemporary adaptations; and military hierarchy and the conduct of war in the age of Henry VI are also included.

The Arden Shakespeare has developed a reputation as the pre-eminent critical edition of Shakespeare for its exceptional scholarship, reflected in the thoroughness of each volume. An introduction comprehensively contextualizes the play, chronicling the history and culture that surrounded and influenced Shakespeare at the time of its writing and performance, and closely surveying critical approaches to the work. Detailed appendices address problems like dating and casting, and analyze the differing Quarto and Folio sources. A full commentary by one or more of the play's foremost contemporary scholars illuminates the text, glossing unfamiliar terms and drawing from an abundance of research and expertise to explain allusions and significant background information. Highly informative and accessible, Arden offers the fullest experience of Shakespeare available to a reader.

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