

- V. Questions 41 to 48 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Henry VI, Part 3*.

from HENRY VI, Part 3, Act II, Scene v

The play is set during the War of the Roses. The opposing parties are the great royal houses of York and Lancaster, who are identified by the emblems of the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster.

King Henry's forces of the House of Lancaster have just been soundly defeated. King Henry comes to an open place near the battlefield and contemplates the futility of war.

- KING HENRY:** This battle fares like to the morning war,
 When dying clouds contend with growing light,
 What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
 Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
 5 Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
 Forc'd by the tide to combat with the wind;
 Now sways it that way, like the self-same sea
 Forc'd to retire by fury of the wind.
 Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
 10 Now one the better, then another best;
 Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
 Yet neither conqueror nor conquered;
 So is the equal poise of this fell war.
 Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
 15 To whom God will, there be the victory!
 (*Enter a SON that hath killed his father, dragging in the dead body*)
SON: Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.
 This man whom hand to hand I slew in fight
 20 May be possessed with some store of crowns;
 And I, that haply¹ take them from him now,
 May yet ere night yield both my life and them
 To some man else, as this dead man doth me.
 Who's this? O God! it is my father's face,
 25 Whom in this conflict I unwares have kill'd.
 O heavy times, begetting such events!
 From London by the King was I press'd forth;
 My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,
 Came on the part of York, press'd by his master;
 30 And I, who at his hands receiv'd my life,
 Have by my hands of life bereaved him.
 Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did!
 And pardon, father, for I knew not thee!
KING HENRY: O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!

Continued

¹haply — by chance

35 Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
 Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.
 Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
 And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
 Be blind with tears, and break o'ercharg'd with grief.

40 *(Enter a FATHER, bearing his son)*
FATHER: Thou that so stoutly hast resisted me,
 Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold,
 For I have bought it with an hundred blows.
 But let me see: is this our foeman's face?

45 Ah no, no, no, it is mine only son!
 O, pity, God, this miserable age!
 What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
 Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural,
 This deadly quarrel daily doth beget! . . .

50 **KING HENRY:** O, pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
 The red rose and the white are on his face,
 The fatal colours of our striving houses;
 The one his purple blood right well resembles,
 The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth.

55 Wither one rose, and let the other flourish;
 If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.
SON: How will my mother for a father's death
 Take on with me and ne'er be satisfi'd!

FATHER: How will my wife for slaughter of my son
 Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfi'd!

60 **KING HENRY:** How will the country for these woeful chances
 Misthink the King and not be satisfi'd!

SON: Was ever son so ru'd a father's death?
FATHER: Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?

65 **KING HENRY:** Was ever king so griev'd for subjects' woe?
 Much is your sorrow; mine, ten times so much.
SON: I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.
(Exit with the body)

FATHER: These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
 My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre, . . .
 I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,
 For I have murdered where I should not kill.
(Exit with the body)

KING HENRY: Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,
 Here sits a king more woeful than you are.

75

William Shakespeare