

**The Politics of Madness: Government in the Reigns of Charles
VI and Henry VI**

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In the hot summer of 1453, King Henry VI went "mad". Staying at his hunting lodge, Clarendon Palace, outside Salisbury, he slumped like a sack into a catatonic stupor, his eyes downcast, apparently unable or unwilling to speak or move. And he stayed that way for 17 months. Johnson nevertheless points out that Charles's symptoms were different from Henry's. By the time Henry lapsed into madness, all this "apart from the toehold of Calais" had been lost. Restored to some sort of health, Henry promptly dismissed the Duke of York, who had effectively taken control of the kingdom, and restored Somerset to his role in government. Open warfare soon followed between the two rival branches of the Plantagenet clan.