



0. ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY MASSACRE - Story
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François Dubois (1529-1584) created this painting sometime between 1572 and 1584. It purports to depict a scene taking place during the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (against French Huguenots). The painting is currently maintained at the [Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts](#) (in Lausanne, Switzerland). Dubois, who was also a Huguenot, did not witness the events. His work depicts the body of Admiral Coligny hanging outside a window of the building in which he was killed. Image online via Wikimedia Commons. Click on the illustration for a full-page view.

[Admiral Coligny](#), according to the eyewitness account of [Auguste de Thou](#), was resigned to his fate:

But you, young man, respect these white hairs. What is it you would do? You cannot shorten by many days this life of mine.

The chronicler continues:

As he [Coligny] spoke, Besme [the assassin] gave him a sword thrust through the body, and having withdrawn his sword, another thrust in the mouth, by which his face was disfigured. So Coligny fell, killed with many thrusts.

The Duke of Guise (who employed the assassin Besme) wanted to be sure Coligny was really dead. [De Thou](#) describes what happened to the murdered body:

*Then the Duke of Guise inquired of Besme from the courtyard if the thing were done, and when Besme answered him that it was, the duke replied that the Chevalier d'Angouleme was unable to believe it unless he saw it; and at the same time that he made the inquiry they threw the body through the window into the courtyard, disfigured as it was with blood. When the Chevalier d'Angouleme, who could scarcely believe his eyes, had wiped away with a cloth the blood which overran the face and finally had recognized him, some say that he spurned the body with his foot. However this may be, when he left the house with his followers he said: "Cheer up, my friends! Let us do thoroughly that which we have begun. The king commands it." (Quotations from De Thou's *Histoire des choses arrivees de son temps*, Paris, 1659, translated into English and online via Fordham University's [Modern History Sourcebook](#).)*

Paris became a scene of [carnage](#) during the next three days as a mob joined the killing. An entire generation of Huguenot leaders was massacred. More than 2,000 lay dead in the streets of the city. Reports vary on the total number of Huguenots killed. Some say as many as 100,000 died during the days of blood-letting.

Henri of Navarre was spared, due to his royal blood, but most members of his entourage were dead. He was held prisoner four years.

Later, after all Catherine's sons ([Francis II](#), [Charles IX](#), and [Henri III](#)) had died without heirs, Henri, [King of Navarre](#) was [crowned](#) Henri IV, King of France. Given the French philosophy of the time - "[One faith, one law, one king](#)" - he first had to renounce his Protestant faith (in 1593).

But Henri's [ascent to the throne](#), in 1594, brought only a temporary [peace](#) to France. Assassins were still out to claim royal blood.

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ST.-BARTHOLOMEW-S-DAY-MASSACRE-Musketeer-The>

Media Stream



Coligny

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Auguste de Thou

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De Thou

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Paris - A Scene of Carnage

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Francis II

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

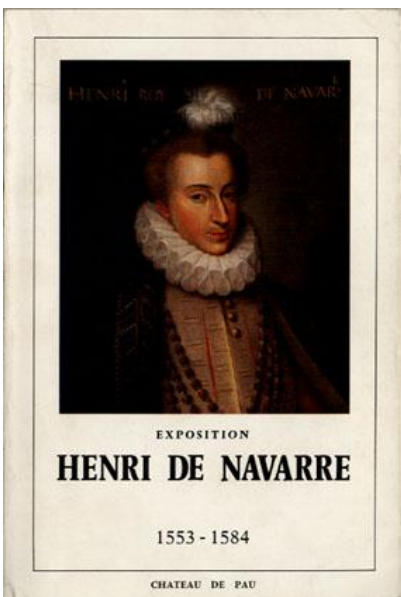
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Henri III

Image online, courtesy nndb.com website.

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Henry de Navarre

Image online, courtesy the Municipal Library of Lyon, France.

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Crowned King of France

Image online, courtesy the kellscraft.com website.

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Henri IV - Order of the Holy Spirit

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