

# *Henry V (at Harfleur)*

## **ACT 3. SCENE 1. France. Before Harfleur.**

*Alarum. Enter KING HENRY, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, and Soldiers, with scaling-ladders*

### **KING HENRY V**

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;  
Or close the wall up with our English dead.  
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man  
As modest stillness and humility:  
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,  
Then imitate the action of the tiger;  
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,  
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;  
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;  
Let pry through the portage of the head  
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it  
As fearfully as doth a galled rock  
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,  
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.  
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,  
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit  
To his full height. On, on, you noblest English.  
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!  
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,  
Have in these parts from morn till even fought  
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument:  
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest  
That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.  
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,  
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeoman,  
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here  
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear  
That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;  
For there is none of you so mean and base,  
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.  
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:  
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge  
Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'

*Exeunt. Alarum, and chambers go off*

## *Henry V* ACT 3. SCENE 3. The same [Harfleur]. Before the gates.

*The Governor and some Citizens on the walls; the English forces below.*

*Enter KING HENRY and his train.*

**KING HENRY V**

How yet resolves the governor of the town?  
This is the latest parle we will admit;  
Therefore to our best mercy give yourselves;  
Or like to men proud of destruction  
Defy us to our worst: for, as I am a soldier,  
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,  
If I begin the battery once again,  
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur  
Till in her ashes she lie buried.  
The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,  
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,  
In liberty of bloody hand shall range  
With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass  
Your fresh-fair virgins and your flowering infants.  
What is it then to me, if impious war,  
Array'd in flames like to the prince of fiends,  
Do, with his smirch'd complexion, all fell feats  
Enlink'd to waste and desolation?  
What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,  
If your pure maidens fall into the hand  
Of hot and forcing violation?  
What rein can hold licentious wickedness  
When down the hill he holds his fierce career?  
We may as bootless spend our vain command  
Upon the enraged soldiers in their spoil  
As send precepts to the leviathan  
To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,  
Take pity of your town and of your people,  
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;  
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace  
O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds  
Of heady murder, spoil and villany.  
If not, why, in a moment look to see  
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand  
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;  
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,  
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls,  
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,  
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused  
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry  
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.  
What say you? will you yield, and this avoid,  
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroy'd?

## GOVERNOR

Our expectation hath this day an end:  
The Dauphin, whom of succors we entreated,  
Returns us that his powers are yet not ready  
To raise so great a siege. Therefore, great king,  
We yield our town and lives to thy soft mercy.  
Enter our gates; dispose of us and ours;  
For we no longer are defensible.

## KING HENRY V

Open your gates. Come, uncle Exeter,  
Go you and enter Harfleur; there remain,  
And fortify it strongly 'gainst the French:  
Use mercy to them all. For us, dear uncle,  
The winter coming on and sickness growing  
Upon our soldiers, we will retire to Calais.  
To-night in Harfleur we will be your guest;  
To-morrow for the march are we address.

*Flourish. The King and his train enter the town.*