

Henry VI Part 1 abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 2

Confidence

Situation: As John Talbot, now the earl of Shrewsbury and the leader of the English forces in France, positioning his men to take Bordeaux, attempts to bluff the French general, but the general calls his bluff, letting him know that he and his men are trapped.

TALBOT: Go to the gates of Bordeaux, trumpeter; summon their general unto the wall.

A French general enters.

TALBOT: English John Talbot, captains, calls you forth. Be humble to us; call my sovereign yours and do him homage as obedient subjects; and I'll withdraw me and my bloody power. But, if you frown upon this proffered peace, you tempt the fury of my attendants.

French General to Talbot

Thou fearful owl of death, the end of thy
Tyranny nears; thou canst enter but by
Death, for we are strong enough to issue
Out and fight. If thou retire, the Dauphin
Stands with the snares of war to tangle you.
Both ways squadrons are pitched to wall thee in
From the liberty of flight. And no way
Canst thou turn thee for redress but death may
Front thee. Lo, there standst, a most valiant,
Unconquered, invincible spirit who
Hath bathed in a glory of praise that can't
Be denied, but as the glass begins to
End the process of your sandy hour,
These eyes shall see thee pale body cower.

A drum sounds far off.

GENERAL: Hark! Hark! The Dauphin's drum, a warning bell, sings heavy music to thy timorous soul; and mine shall ring thy dire departure out.

The General and his staff exit.

TALBOT: He fables not. I hear the enemy. How are we parked and bounded in a park, a little herd of England's timorous deer, caught with a yelping kennel of French curs! If we be English deer, be then in blood, not rascal-like, but rather, turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel and make the cowards stand aloof at bay. Sell every man his life as dear as mine.