

Henry V abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 1

Inspiration

Situation: Henry V has moved his troops to the gates of Harfleur, a city in France to the south of Calais, the negotiations between the French and English kings having collapsed.

HENRY: Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more, or close the wall up with our English dead.

Henry V to his troops

Nothing so becomes our men in peace than
Modest stillness, but when war blows, each man
Imitate the action of the tiger
And disguise our fair nature with hard-walled
Rage. Let each frightful eye pry as if 'twere
Like a brass cannon and each brow a gulled
Rock o'erhanging a wild and rough ocean.
Noble men, whose fathers have fought and won
In these parts, dishonor not your mothers.
Show us now your mettle as we depart
For Harfleur, doubting you not; as brothers
We, straining like greyhounds upon the start.
Follow your heart as we to battle forge,
Crying, "For Harry, England and Saint George!"