

Henry V abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 1

Introspection

Situation: Masquerading as Sir Thomas Erpingham, Henry V and a soldier in his army engage in a spirited discussion the night before the battle at Agincourt, the soldier agreeing to continue “a quarrel between us, if you live.”

WILLIAMS: Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live.

HENRY: I embrace it.

WILLIAMS: How shall I know thee again?

HENRY: Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my bonnet.

They exchange gloves.

BATES: Be friends, you English fools, be friends. We have French quarrels enough.

HENRY: Indeed.

The soldiers exit.

Henry V to himself, No. 1

What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect
That private men enjoy? Do kings detect
What privates see not, save ceremony?
O ceremony, show me they worth! When
Else art thou aught but place, form and degree,
Creating awe and fear in other men,
Wherein thou art less happy, being feared,
Than they in fearing? Drink from thy tankard
But poisoned flattery? Ceremony
Laid in bed majestic cannot sleep
So soundly as the slave, with a body
Filled and vacant mind. Lo, the king doth weep
From sleepless nights to maintain the present
Peace, that best advantages the peasant.