Short Shakespeare Tale

King Henry V believed that he should also be the King of France and he sent letters to King Charles of France telling him so. King Charles' son, the Dauphin, laughed at these letters and sent King Henry V a gift in return. This 'gift' was a big box of tennis balls showing that the Dauphin believed King Henry was more interested in games than government. King Henry was deeply offended and sent his ambassadors back to the French with a declaration of war. (1)

Whilst King Henry was preparing to fight, he heard that three of his former friends, were plotting with the French against him as they were angry he had rejected their friendship once he took the crown. King Henry told these three Lords that he had heard one of his soldiers speaking treason against him and asked for their advice on what to do. The Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop and Sir Thomas Grey all agreed the soldier should be executed, even though King Henry suggested mercy. As a result, the King decided they should all face the same punishment. (2) With no more enemies at home to contend with, King Henry V prepared for war.

King Henry's army first came to the walled town of Harfleur. The English attacked the town with Henry urging his troops on to victory. (3) The King told the people of the town they should surrender rather than see their town destroyed. The Governor of Harfleur surrendered and gave King Henry and the English army their first victory. (4)

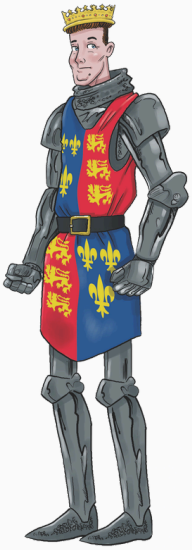


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Henry V
General

As both the English and French armies got ready for their next battle, a French herald named Mountjoy was sent to give a message to King Henry. The French had five times as many soldiers than the English and Mountjoy told Henry that if he surrendered and paid a large fee, there would be a truce so the English army could go home. King Henry refused and sent the herald back to the King of France. (5)



That night, in a place called Agincourt, both the English and French armies tried to rest ahead of the great battle to come. However, no one could sleep, not even King Henry. He disguised himself and walked around the camp talking to his men to give them comfort and learn from them. His men do not recognise him and so talk freely about their thoughts on the war and the King, asking Henry to share his opinions too.(6)

The next day, Henry urges his men to be brave and fearless, even though they are outnumbered (7). the English archers fired arrow after arrow into the advancing French cavalry. The battle was long and fierce. Many thousands of French soldiers died, and the herald, Mountjoy, was sent back to King Henry to tell him the King of France had surrendered. The English had won the battle of Agincourt! Not only were they victorious, but Henry was surprised to discover that less than one hundred English soldiers had been killed.

Following his victory, King Henry of England became King of France as well. In order to bring the two countries even closer together, King Henry asked Princess Catherine of France to marry him. She was worried that he would laugh at her for not being able to speak English well. (8) Her father agreed to the marriage, and so she returned to England with the King where they ruled ov
together.



However, King Henry V did not live for long after his victory, and his infant son became King Henry VI. Many troubled years followed, and England lost the kingdom of France, which King Henry V had won against all odds. (9)

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Henry V:
Key quotes

(1) 'And tell the present prince this mock of his
Hath turned his balls to gun-stones,'



(2) 'Get you therefore hence,
Poor miserable wretches, to your death,'

(3) 'The game's afoot.
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'

(4) 'Therefore, great king,
We yield our town and lives to thy soft mercy.'

(5) 'If we may pass, we will; if we be hindered,
We shall your tawny ground with your red blood
Discolor.'



(6) 'I think the king is but a man, as I am:
the violet smells to him as it doth to me.'

(7) 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother.'

(8) 'Your Majesty shall mock at me. I cannot
speak your England.'

(9) 'They lost France and made his England bleed,'

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