

KING: He that shall see this day and live old age will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors and say, "Tomorrow is Saint Crispian." Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars and say "These wounds I had on Crispin's day." Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot but he'll remember, with advantages what feats he did that day. Then shall our names, familiar in his mouth as household words—Harry the King, Bedford, and Exeter, Warwick, and Talbot, Salisbury, and Gloucester—be in their flowing cups freshly remembered. This story shall be the good man teach his son, and Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by from this day to the ending of the world but we in it shall be remembered, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers—for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother. Be he ne'er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition. And gentlemen in England now abed shall think themselves accursed were they not here, and hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day (4.3.41-67).

### In Which King Henry Takes a Guilt Trip to France

As the English army prepare to invade France in *Henry V* with the eponymous king at the forefront, the earls that fight for Henry are fearfully cautious of the sheer numbers of a fresh French army—they give each other final farewells. Though essentially King Henry doesn't care for the body count at Agincourt so long as he gets out alive, it would be nice to leave triumphant with as many men as possible (and for those men to perform their best to the French). In order to work with the soldiers who stand before him, however, Henry uses his ego to challenge the ego of the masses. By instilling a grave sense of honor, duty, and solidarity in their service, Henry's Saint Crispian's Day speech manipulates and charges his massively outnumbered army towards the French and victory.

Henry has to make this speech in order to follow up the stakes he has steadily raised—the (tennis) ball is in his (Agin)court. However, what weapons does a king possess on a battlefield if his men are not compelled to fight; his words are useless then. Henry cannot back down when he's already promised pillaging and "naked infants spitted upon spikes" to the people of Harfleur (3.4.38). Although he has presented prime textbook examples of fear-mongering, Henry—who possesses a distinct mental idea of being a hero, a king as evidenced during his meteoric rise to the throne in *Henry IV*—finally has to perform on a stage that is not his own *and* yield results.

In contrast to 4.1 wherein Henry disguises himself as a common soldier, 4.3 features Henry as a confident King who, in a tension-filled and melancholy moment, begins to address his "coz", "cousin Westmorland" as the men begin to give their farewells "till we meet in heaven" (4.3.30,19,7). In doing so, King Henry brings himself down to a more relatable level while elevating Earl Westmoreland, an advisor, to family member. This creates a sense of comradery among the "band of brothers" that continues throughout the entire speech, permeating through Henry's diction (4.3.60). He relates his company of advisors to a family, which in what could be their final moments, and establishes calm.

Henry refers to his audience to in increasingly familial language; Henry declares that "he today who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother" (4.3.61-62). Meaning all who fight (including Henry) who place value and honor behind his actions, will be considered royalty—not *could be* considered royalty—"shall be" (4.3.62). Henry speaks about the future anniversaries of Saint Crispian's Day and the scars survivors will bear, yes, but after this army has passed what will live on is through oral tradition. If they do not fight, how will they be remembered as

heroes? Henry wants a result. He speaks the name of each man present—giving each man a beat of importance and time to reflect—while implying them that they have the potential to elevate from practically-royalty to legendary heroes. His audience consists of earls—they have power and money. What they don't have, what Henry does not have at this point, is legendary status. They have to create it; these men create their own future narratives.

By logic, Henry would want a larger army in order to fight the “full threescore thousand” French men, but Henry places a high value in honor that wins out: “But if it be a sin to covet honor I am the most offending soul alive” (4.3.2-3,28-29). Henry gives his men a choice to desert as he does not want men that “[fear] his fellowship to die”—Henry only wants men who are willing to go the distance and the death, especially on the feast of martyred brothers. And if a man survives, he can “show his scars” and speak of the battle and allow the story to continue (4.3.48). In calling to attention that it is Saint Crispin's Day, Henry directly associates the soldiers who will fall at Agincourt with the just cause of England on their backs with saints—martyrs—who fall in the name of God.

In planting a seed of choice within his men, Henry fuels their confidence by scaling down the larger situation at hand: The Battle of Agincourt. Henry challenges the brute strength and confidence buried within his advisors, provoking and stroking their egos to stand up to his jabs: “The fewer men, the greater share of honor” (4.3.23). Henry wants his men to think they have the choice to be part of this exclusive group that could be historic, that the situation is not desperate. His taunting asserts that he has power—he is the one making the speech, using first person pronouns to invite these outsiders into a higher social group—that manifests as a king who is generous and cares for the honor and livelihood of his country and would defend it with the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom.

And ultimately, Henry himself is willing to sacrifice for his country. Though he is presented as a confident king, the mounting possibility that he could lose this battle is omnipresent. In crafting a figure for speech, a persona that he uses when addressing a group, Henry's rather simple goal of defeating the French gets elevated to a matter of God, of Christian brotherhood and unbreakable links sealed in blood. It's a rich sense of tradition that calls to mind the act of Christian apologetics. By constructing a strawman argument, Henry's not just calling for not only his men to defend their own honor and the honor of England, but the honor of God. It's a guilt trip that forces his men to evaluate their own pitiful situation and at the same time, look up at their confident King and, out of duty to the men who came before and then men who come afterwards, fight and win.