

Henry V

Prologue

Enter Chorus as Prologue

CHORUS

O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention:
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself, 5
Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels,
Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and
fire

Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraise'd spirits that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth 10
So great an object. Can this cock-pit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O pardon: since a crooke'd figure may 15
Attest in little place a million,
And let us, ciphers to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work.

Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies, 20
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder.
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance. 25

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,
Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning th'accomplishment of many years 30
Into an hourglass for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history,
Who Prologue-like your humble patience pray

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.
Exit