

Henry V

1.2

*Enter King Harry, the Dukes of Gloucester,
[Clarence], and Exeter, and the Earls of Warwick
and Westmorland*

KING HARRY

Where is my gracious lord of Canterbury?

EXETER

Not here in presence.

KING HARRY Send for him, good uncle.

WESTMORLAND

Shall we call in th'ambassador, my liege?

KING HARRY

Not yet, my cousin. We would be resolved,
Before we hear him, of some things of weight 5
That task our thoughts, concerning us and France.

*Enter the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop
of Ely*

CANTERBURY

God and his angels guard your sacred throne,
And make you long become it.

KING HARRY Sure we thank you.

My learned lord, we pray you to proceed,
And justly and religiously unfold 10
Why the law Salic that they have in France
Or should or should not bar us in our claim.
And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
Or nicely charge your understanding soul 15
With opening titles miscreate, whose right
Suits not in native colours with the truth;
For God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to. 20
Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war;
We charge you in the name of God take heed.
For never two such kingdoms did contend

Without much fall of blood, whose guiltless drops 25
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
'Gainst him whose wrongs gives edge unto the swords
That makes such waste in brief mortality.
Under this conjuration speak, my lord,
For we will hear, note, and believe in heart 30
That what you speak is in your conscience washed
As pure as sin with baptism.

CANTERBURY

Then hear me, gracious sovereign, and you peers
That owe your selves, your lives, and services
To this imperial throne. There is no bar 35
To make against your highness' claim to France
But this, which they produce from Pharamond:
`In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant'±±
`No woman shall succeed in Salic land'±±
Which *`Salic land'* the French unjustly gloss 40
To be the realm of France, and Pharamond
The founder of this law and female bar.
Yet their own authors faithfully affirm
That the land Salic is in Germany,
Between the floods of Saale and of Elbe, 45
Where, Charles the Great having subdued the Saxons,
There left behind and settled certain French
Who, holding in disdain the German women
For some dishonest manners of their life,
Established there this law: to wit, no female 50
Should be inheritrix in Salic land±±
Which Salic, as I said, 'twixt Elbe and Saale,
Is at this day in Germany called Meissen.
Then doth it well appear the Salic Law
Was not deviseÁd for the realm of France. 55
Nor did the French possess the Salic land
Until four hundred one-and-twenty years
After defunction of King Pharamond,
Idly supposed the founder of this law,
Who died within the year of our redemption 60
Four hundred twenty-six; and Charles the Great
Subdued the Saxons, and did seat the French
Beyond the river Saale, in the year

Eight hundred five. Besides, their writers say,
King PeÂpin, which deposeÂd ChildeÂric, 65
Did, as heir general±±being descended
Of Blithild, which was daughter to King Clotaire±±
Make claim and title to the crown of France.
Hugh Capet also±±who usurped the crown
Of Charles the Duke of Lorraine, sole heir male 70
Of the true line and stock of Charles the Great±±
To fine his title with some shows of truth,
Though in pure truth it was corrupt and naught,
Conveyed himself as heir to th' Lady Lingard,
Daughter to Charlemain, who was the son 75
To Louis the Emperor, and Louis the son
Of Charles the Great. Also, King Louis the Ninth,
Who was sole heir to the usurper Capet,
Could not keep quiet in his conscience,
Wearing the crown of France, till satisfied 80
That fair Queen Isabel, his grandmother,
Was lineal of the Lady Ermengarde,
Daughter to Charles, the foresaid Duke of Lorraine;
By the which marriage, the line of Charles the Great
Was reunited to the crown of France. 85
So that, as clear as is the summer's sun,
King PeÂpin's title and Hugh Capet's claim,
King Louis his satisfaction, all appear
To hold in right and title of the female;
So do the kings of France unto this day, 90
Howbeit they would hold up this Salic Law
To bar your highness claiming from the female,
And rather choose to hide them in a net
Than amply to embar their crookeÂd titles,
Usurped from you and your progenitors. 95

KING HARRY

May I with right and conscience make this claim?

CANTERBURY

The sin upon my head, dread sovereign.
For in the Book of Numbers is it writ,
`When the son dies, let the inheritance
Descend unto the daughter.' Gracious lord, 100
Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag;

Look back into your mighty ancestors.
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince, 105
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
Whiles his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility. 110
O noble English, that could entertain
With half their forces the full pride of France,
And let another half stand laughing by,
All out of work, and cold for action.

ELY

Awake remembrance of those valiant dead, 115
And with your puissant arm renew their feats.
You are their heir, you sit upon their throne,
The blood and courage that renowneÁd them
Runs in your veins±±and my thrice-puissant liege
Is in the very May-morn of his youth, 120
Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises.

EXETER

Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth
Do all expect that you should rouse yourself
As did the former lions of your blood.

WESTMORLAND

They know your grace hath cause; and means and
might, 125
So hath your highness. Never king of England
Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects,
Whose hearts have left their bodies here in England
And lie pavilioned in the fields of France.

CANTERBURY

O let their bodies follow, my dear liege, 130
With blood and sword and fire, to win your right.
In aid whereof, we of the spirituality
Will raise your highness such a mighty sum
As never did the clergy at one time
Bring in to any of your ancestors. 135

KING HARRY

We must not only arm t'invade the French,
But lay down our proportions to defend
Against the Scot, who will make raid upon us
With all advantages.

CANTERBURY

They of those marches, gracious sovereign, 140
Shall be a wall sufficient to defend
Our inland from the pilfering borderers.

KING HARRY

We do not mean the coursing snatchers only,
But fear the main intendment of the Scot,
Who hath been still a giddy neighbour to us. 145
For you shall read that my great-grandfather
Never unmasked his power unto France
But that the Scot on his unfurnished kingdom
Came pouring like the tide into a breach
With ample and brim fullness of his force 150
Galling the gleaneÁd land with hot assays,
Girding with grievous siege castles and towns,
That England, being empty of defence,
Hath shook and trembled at the bruit thereof.

CANTERBURY

She hath been then more feared than harmed, my
liege. 155
For hear her but exempl'd by herself:
When all her chivalry hath been in France
And she a mourning widow of her nobles,
She hath herself not only well defended
But taken and impounded as a stray 160
The King of Scots, whom she did send to France
To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner kings
And make your chronicle as rich with praise
As is the ooze and bottom of the sea
With sunken wrack and sumless treasures. 165

[A LORD]

But there's a saying very old and true:
'If that you will France win,
Then with Scotland first begin.'
For once the eagle England being in prey,
To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot 170

Comes sneaking, and so sucks her princely eggs,
Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,
To 'tame and havoc more than she can eat.

EXETER

It follows then the cat must stay at home.
Yet that is but a crushed necessity, 175
Since we have locks to safeguard necessities
And pretty traps to catch the petty thieves.
While that the armeÁd hand doth fight abroad,
Th'adviseÁd head defends itself at home.
For government, though high and low and lower, 180
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,
Congreeing in a full and natural close,
Like music.

CANTERBURY True. Therefore doth heaven divide

The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavour in continual motion; 185
To which is fixeÁd, as an aim or butt,
Obedience. For so work the honey-bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king, and officers of sorts, 190
Where some like magistrates correct at home;
Others like merchants venture trade abroad;
Others like soldiers, armeÁd in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home 195
To the tent royal of their emperor,
Who busied in his majesty surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens lading up the honey,
The poor mechanic porters crowding in 200
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,
The sad-eyed justice with his surly hum
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone. I this infer:
That many things, having full reference 205
To one consent, may work contrariously.
As many arrows, looseÁd several ways,
Fly to one mark, as many ways meet in one town,

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea,
As many lines close in the dial's centre, 210
So may a thousand actions once afoot
End in one purpose, and be all well borne
Without defect. Therefore to France, my liege.
Divide your happy England into four,
Whereof take you one quarter into France, 215
And you withal shall make all Gallia shake.
If we with thrice such powers left at home
Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,
Let us be worried, and our nation lose
The name of hardiness and policy. 220

KING HARRY

Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.
Exit one or more

Now are we well resolved, and by God's help
And yours, the noble sinews of our power,
France being ours we'll bend it to our awe,
Or break it all to pieces. Or there we'll sit, 225
Ruling in large and ample empery
O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms,
Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,
Tombless, with no remembrance over them.
Either our history shall with full mouth 230
Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave,
Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,
Not worshipped with a waxen epitaph.

Enter Ambassadors of France, with a tun

Now are we well prepared to know the pleasure
Of our fair cousin Dauphin, for we hear 235
Your greeting is from him, not from the King.

AMBASSADOR

May't please your majesty to give us leave
Freely to render what we have in charge,
Or shall we sparingly show you far off
The Dauphin's meaning and our embassy? 240

KING HARRY

We are no tyrant, but a Christian king,
Unto whose grace our passion is as subject
As is our wretches fettered in our prisons.

Therefore with frank and with uncurbed plainness
Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

AMBASSADOR

Thus then in few:

245

Your highness lately sending into France
Did claim some certain dukedoms, in the right
Of your great predecessor, King Edward the Third.
In answer of which claim, the Prince our master
Says that you savour too much of your youth, 250
And bids you be advised, there's naught in France
That can be with a nimble galliard won:
You cannot revel into dukedoms there.
He therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit,
This tun of treasure, and in lieu of this 255
Desires you let the dukedoms that you claim
Hear no more of you. This the Dauphin speaks.

KING HARRY

What treasure, uncle?

EXETER (*opening the tun*) Tennis balls, my liege.

KING HARRY

We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us.
His present and your pains we thank you for. 260
When we have matched our rackets to these balls,
We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturbed 265
With chases. And we understand him well,
How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,
Not measuring what use we made of them.
We never valued this poor seat of England,
And therefore, living hence, did give ourself 270
To barbarous licence±±as 'tis ever common
That men are merriest when they are from home.
But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,
Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness
When I do rouse me in my throne of France. 275
For that have I laid by my majesty
And plodded like a man for working days,
But I will rise there with so full a glory
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,

Yea strike the Dauphin blind to look on us. 280

And tell the pleasant Prince this mock of his
Hath turned his balls to gunstones, and his soul
Shall stand sore chargeÁd for the wasteful vengeance
That shall fly from them±±for many a thousand
widows

Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands, 285

Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;

Ay, some are yet ungotten and unborn

That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.

But this lies all within the will of God,

To whom I do appeal, and in whose name

290

Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on

To venge me as I may, and to put forth

My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause.

So get you hence in peace. And tell the Dauphin

His jest will savour but of shallow wit

295

When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.±±

Convey them with safe conduct.±±Fare you well.

Exeunt Ambassadors

EXETER This was a merry message.

KING HARRY

We hope to make the sender blush at it.

Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour

300

That may give furth'rance to our expedition;

For we have now no thought in us but France,

Save those to God, that run before our business.

Therefore let our proportions for these wars

Be soon collected, and all things thought upon

305

That may with reasonable swiftness add

More feathers to our wings; for, God before,

We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.

Therefore let every man now task his thought,

That this fair action may on foot be brought.

310

[Flourish.] Exeunt