

William Shakespeare's

Henry V

Character: Chorus

Genre: History

Tone: Serious

Style: Verse

Act/Scene: Prologue I i

Approx. Run Time: 1.10

Scene Setting: Introducing himself as our narrator, the Chorus wishes that a "Muse" would come and transform the play so that it would be as glorious as the true story it tells. But since that cannot be, he asks the audience to use their imagination to turn the stage into a battlefield and actors into kings.

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,
Assume the port of Mars;
and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds,
should famine, sword and fire
Crouch
for employment.
But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy
scaffold to bring forth
So great an object:
can this cockpit 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
crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your
imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty
monarchies,
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;
Think, when we talk of horses,
that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving
earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there;
jumping o'er
times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass:
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]