

HENRY V Dramatis Personae

Lots of parts for the guys with some chance for doubling to give more stage time. Not so much opportunity for the girls I'm afraid, but a couple of great parts.

The Chorus: Any age or either sex. The Chorus is a vital character who helps facilitate the audience's understanding of the play and has some of the most memorable speeches in Shakespeare.

The English Court.

King Henry V: 20s –30s. A born leader and superb soldier (with a few inner doubts). A young man who has thrown over his earlier hard drinking lifestyle and bad companions to become the 'Mirror of all Christian Kings'. Think a combination of The Duke of Wellington and a young Errol Flynn (!)

Duke of Gloucester: 20s. The King's younger brother and a soldier of renown.

Duke of Exeter: 40s – 50s. The King's uncle and principal adviser. Grim and terse, Exeter lives for young Henry. A true friend but a terrible enemy.

Duke of York: 20s. The King's young cousin, not so many lines but opportunity for lots of fighting (and potentially a great death scene).

Earl of Westmorland: 20s – 50s. Another of the King's court and a character who spends almost as much time on stage as the King.

Sir Thomas Erpingham: 50s – 60s. One of the King's more experienced commanders and another who is on stage quite a bit (not too demanding on the line learning front).

Archbishop of Canterbury: 40s – 60s. Sets up the play with an extremely long speech then disappears, either a good opportunity for doubling, or to be in the bar by the interval, if you prefer.

Earl of Cambridge, Sir Thomas Grey, Lord Scroop: 20s – 30s. Three of Henry's court who are in most of the early scenes, then revealed to be dastardly traitors in the pay of France! Great opportunity for doubling, for looking traitorous and for overacting as you are dragged off to the scaffold.

The English Army

Sgt. Fluellen: 30s –50s. The most senior NCO in the army, obsessed with military discipline and protocol and extremely Welsh. Imagine Sgt. Major Shuttup from 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum' and you won't be too far off

Sgt's Gower, Macmorris and Jamy: 20s – 60s. The Englishman, the Irishman and the Scotsman. Gower is Fluellen's constant companion and appears with him in all his scenes. Jamy and Macmorris have a nice scene in the siege works and will then be seen with the army throughout the rest of the play

Bates, Court and Williams: 20s –50s. Soldiers in the King's army. One great scene with the King before the battle then the bulk of the fighting thereafter (a soldier's lot).

Sgt. Pistol: 30s – 60s. The hardest (and possibly most rewarding) part in the play. A braggart and a coward, a true friend but an opportunistic thief, Pistol must be the hilarious comic relief and the heartbreaking shell-shocked soldier (no pressure!).

Sgt. Bardolph: 30s –60s. Like Pistol, Nym and the boy, Bardolph is an erstwhile drinking companion of the King and Falstaff and also like them he is a drunk and rogue, with the added attraction of being remarkably ugly (lots of makeup for this one) Comes to a sticky end when hanged for theft.

Corporal Nym: 30s – 60s. Sour and terse Nym completes the trio of bad hats with Bardolph and Pistol. These three have some of the funniest and most touching sequences in the play and will need to fit well together very well.

The Boy: 11 – 15. Another ‘Cheapside’ character, the boy accompanies Nym, Bardolph and Pistol (although he doesn’t think much of them and tries to keep them out of trouble). Some ability to sing would be good, as well a talent for looking cheekily angelic and reducing the audience to tears when he’s horribly killed at the end of the battle.

The French Court

King Charles VI: 50s – 60s. A weak and vacillating character in the mould of the Bourbon kings of the 18th and early 19th C. A big man carrying the weight of the world. (Some great speeches).

The Dauphin: 20s – 30s. The heir to the French crown, is vain and fractious but proud of his position his abilities and his country. Some ability to sword fight would be good (but not vital) and a marked resemblance to Napoleon would be handy.

The Constable of France: 30s – 60s. The country’s highest nobleman and a great warrior (lots of opportunity to vent spleen at the Dauphin and to look haughty).

The Duke of Orleans: 20s – 40s. Completes the French court, a fabulously wealthy aristo and a capable soldier, friend of the Dauphin but finding him increasingly annoying.

Montjoy: 20s – 40s. The herald of the French army and the Frenchman on stage more than any other. Constantly carrying messages from the French to the English, he is rather caught between two stools. Honest and diplomatic, he has the tricky task of dealing with an angry King Henry and a moody Dauphin.

The Duke of Burgundy: 30s-60s. Smooth and able politician charged with restoring peace between the warring nations of France and England. One extremely good (long) speech. (A good double, or a good part if you can’t get to the theatre before interval...)

The Girls

(I’ve put them all together for ease of access, not because I don’t think they’re important!!)

Queen Isabel of France: 40s – 50s. Only comes on at the end of the play but does have a great speech and does close the action.

Princess Katherine: late teens – 30s. Pretty and vivacious (she is a Princess!) Katherine has two great scenes, one spoken entirely in French so a convincing French accent is pretty vital.

Alice: 30s – 60s. The Princesses lady in waiting and confidant, she goes wherever Katherine goes. Similarly an ability to put on a good French accent is important.

Nell Quickly: 30s – 60s. Hostess of the Boars Head Tavern and wife of Pistol, Nell is on a lot at the start of the play and has one particularly great speech.

As well as assorted soldiers and politicians (the governor of Harfleur) etc.

Look forward to seeing you at the auditions.

Julian