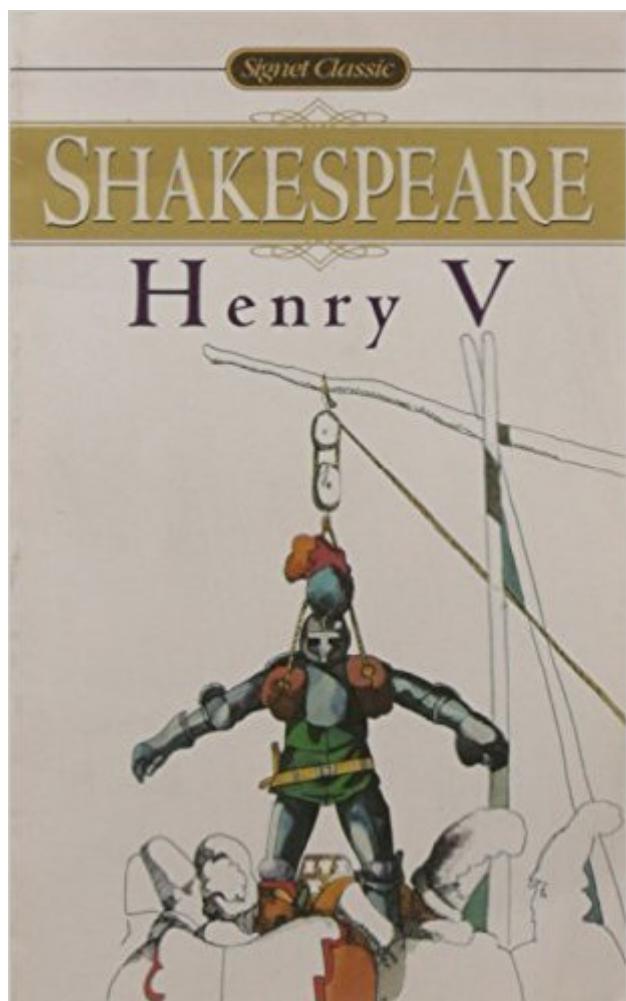


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Henry V (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

The Signet Classics edition of Shakespeare's popular history play. Featuring the rise of King Henry V, this play chronicles England's underdog victory over the French at the Battle of Agincourt during the Hundred Years' War. This revised Signet Classics edition includes unique features such as:

- An overview of Shakespeare's life, world, and theater
- A special introduction to the play by the editor, John Russell Brown
- Selections from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, the source from which Shakespeare derived Henry V
- Dramatic criticism from William Hazlitt, W. B. Yeats, E.M.W. Tillyard, and others
- A comprehensive stage and screen history of notable actors, directors, and productions
- Text, notes, and commentaries printed in the clearest, most readable text
- And more...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This play is best known for the St. Crispian's Day "Band of Brothers" speech given by King Henry just before the battle at Agincourt. It is a powerful speech that rallies people at all times and everywhere. Sir Lawrence Olivier made a film version in 1944 during WWII and Kenneth Branagh made another as recently as 1989. You can count on there being more versions. Especially so when computers can help them make spectacular battle scenes (that aren't really in the play) with less expense. Audiences love this play and they should. There is a lot to like and enjoy. I think upon repeated readings Henry becomes a more equivocal character than he seems at first. And readers of the King Henry IV plays will know him before he became King Henry and know something deeper

about his personality. And of course there is the whole bit about the drive to France being sponsored by the Church to avoid confiscation of property by the Crown. Moreover, there is the slaughtering of the French prisoners, and his treatment of Falstaff (who dies offstage in this play). This isn't revisionist stuff, it is right there in the play, but it is easy to miss the first time you are trying to take in the play. In any case, this Arden edition is the one to buy and read from. Why? Because it has the most authoritative text, but that is only the beginning. It also shows variants between the early sources. The notes at the bottom of each page of the play are simply fabulous. The editor includes not only helpful notes explaining what might be obscure in the text of the play, he provides sources Shakespeare probably used such as Holinshed and makes for some very interesting study. There are also some helpful notes on how various scenes have been performed over time.

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