How To Survive Being in a Shakespeare Play
by Don Zolidis

1M, 3 any
Comedy

Stop Listening to Dudes

(HENRY V enters, in armor, with sword. He speaks in a very royal British/Shakespearean accent. His SOLDIERS, exhausted, bloody, and beat-up, limp on and gather around him.)

SOLDIER 1: Oh man. This war is going so badly.

SOLDIER 2: I don’t care. I’ll fight for Henry. He’s my king! (Growls, waves his sword around.)

SOLDIER 3: Aye! For King and Country!

SOLDIER 1: Right. Sure. Definitely. Just um…his name is on the title of the play, right?

SOLDIER 2: This is the glorious History of Henry the Fifth. Grrr.

SOLDIER 1: And it doesn’t say “tragedy” anywhere on there, so that means Henry lives and everyone else dies.

SOLDIER 2: I am happy to die for king and country! HAPPY ABOUT IT! YES! In fact, if I don’t die today, I will be sorely disappointed. Oh to die in the company of this glorious king. Woo! England!

SOLDIER 3: YAAAAASSS King!

SOLDIER 1: Huh. Question: ( Raises his hand.) Can we get some additional soldiers please?

HENRY V: What’s he that wishes so?

SOLDIER 1: ( Raises hand.) Um…me? My name’s Dave I signed up for this army by mistake. I was hoping to have an administrative role. The most violent thing I’ve ever done is soccer, or, in England, football.

HENRY V: (Interrupting:) If we are mark’d to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God’s will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.

SOLDIER 1: I’m not sure this is sound military strategy—

HENRY V: O, do not wish one more!

SOLDIER 1: How ’bout like a thousand more? Or armored giant cats or something? We could ride them into battle.

HENRY V: Rather proclaim it,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart;
SOLDIER 1: Ooh.

(He tries to leave, but the other SOLDIERS stop him. HENRY V is really getting into his inspirational speech now.)

HENRY V: We would not die in that man’s company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.

OTHER SOLDIERS: (Except SOLDIER 1.) I heard that. Woop. Aye. (Etc.)

HENRY V: This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

OTHER SOLDIERS: Yaasss! That’s right. He speaks truth! (Etc.)

HENRY V: He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say ‘To-morrow is Saint Crispian:’
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.

(HENRY shows his scars.)

SOLDIERS: Ooooooh.

HENRY V: And say ‘These wounds I had on Crispin’s day!’

OTHER SOLDIERS: Yes! Woo! Wooo!

(SOLDIER 1 raises his hand again.)

SOLDIER 1: So wait, our whole plan is ‘chicks dig scars?’

(HENRY V strolls amongst his men, giving them an encouraging nod and a smile.)

HENRY V: And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,

SOLDIER 1: (Underneath:) Oh here we go.

HENRY V: But we in it shall be remember’d;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

SOLDIER 1: (Underneath:) We’re still doing this speech then?

HENRY V: For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother.

(There’s a lot of hugging. Someone tries to hug SOLDIER 1—-)
SOLDIER 1: *(Underneath:)* Question on that—would we be in line for an inheritance then if we’re your brothers?

HENRY V: *(Ignoring him:)* This day shall gentle his condition:
   And gentlemen in England now a-bed
   Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
   And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
   That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day!
   *(The other SOLDIERS CHEER and raises their swords, stamp their feet.)*

SOLDIER 1: Um hi. Yes. I don’t see a plan here. You’ve basically just said it’s good to be outnumbered and we’ll get cool scars from this. We’re all gonna die is not a strategy!

SOLDIER 2: Then we all die TOGETHER!!! *(Cheers and whoops from everyone.)*

SOLDIER 1: Again, I signed up for an administrative position. I have excellent word processing skills, if we need any letters written up, or—do we need to coordinate lunch? I can coordinate lunch. That seems like a fine use for me—

HENRY V: Onward!
   *(HENRY V raises his sword and charges off-stage.)*
   *(All the other SOLDIERS follow, except SOLDIER 1. He looks around.)*
   *(Off-stage fighting sounds.)*

SOLDIER 2: *(Overlapping, off-stage:)* AAAAAH OH NO MY ARM GOT CHOPPED OFF!

SOLDIER 3: *(Overlapping, off-stage:)* AHHHH MY FACE MY BEAUTIFUL FACE!

SOLDIER 2: *(Overlapping, off-stage:)* OH THIS WAS A BAD IDEA WE’RE DYING!

SOLDIER 3: *(Overlapping, off-stage:)* SO MUCH PAIN! THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN!
   *(HENRY V runs backs in, possibly drenched in blood.)*

HENRY V: Once more into the breech!

SOLDIER 1: No thanks!
   *(HENRY V charges off again.)*

SOLDIER 2: *(Off-stage:)* OH NO THIS HURTS EVEN MORE THAN LAST TIME!

SOLDIER 3: *(Off-stage:)* MOMMY!

SOLDIER 2: *(Off-stage:)* IF ONLY WE HAD ONE MORE SOLDIER THIS WOULD TURN THE TIDE OF BATTLE!
SOLDIER 3: (Off-stage:) JUST ONE MORE DUDE! THAT WOULD DO IT! ONE SINGLE ADDITIONAL PERSON TO HELP WITH THIS SPECIFIC FIGHT RIGHT HERE!
(SOLDIER 1 looks around. There is no one else on stage.)

End of Scene.