

HENRY IV, PART 1*A line-by-line translation***Act 1, Scene 1****Shakespeare**

Enter the KING, Lord John of LANCASTER, Earl of WESTMORELAND, with others

KING

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in strands afar remote.
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.
Nor more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flow'rets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces. Those opposèd eyes,
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery
Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks,
March all one way and be no more opposed
Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies.
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathèd knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulcher of Christ—
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross
We are impressed and engaged to fight—
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were molded in their mothers' womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessèd feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.
But this our purpose now is twelve month old,
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go.
Therefor we meet not now. Then let me hear
Of you, my gentle cousin Westmoreland,
What yesternight our council did decree
In forwarding this dear expedience.

WESTMORELAND

My liege, this haste was hot in question,
And many limits of the charge set down
But yesternight: when all athwart there came
A post from Wales loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butcherèd,
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation
By those Welshwomen done, as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

KING

It seems then that the tidings of this broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

WESTMORELAND

This matched with other did, my gracious lord.
For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the north and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood Day, the gallant Hotspur there,

Shakescleare Translation

The KING, Lord John of LANCASTER, the Earl of WESTMORELAND and others enter.

KING

Even though we are shaken up and weak, we should try to find time in this moment of peace to catch our breath, and as we do this we can decide about where in the world to fight next ¹. England's soil will no longer be wet with our own soldiers' blood; her fields will no longer be ruined by the invasions of war; and her flowers will no longer be crushed by the hooves of the warhorses. The two sides of this war--made up of men from the same countries, the same families even--are as similar to each other as shooting stars in the sky. Yet, even though these men have just fought against each other in a civil war and came close to destroying each other, they will now march together in a focused and orderly formation. They will no longer stand against their friends and family. The violence of war, like a knife which has not been properly covered, will not hurt us any longer. Therefore friends, an English army will march as far as the Holy Land, ² as soldiers of Christ, recruited and committed to fighting for what Jesus did for us on that cross. Our soldiers were born to remove atheists from the holy fields that Jesus walked on--as the feet which touched this sacred ground were nailed to the cross fourteen hundred years ago to redeem us of our sins. But we have been planning this trip for a year, and it is useless to tell you we are going as you already know--but that's not why we've met. Tell me now, my noble ³ cousin ⁴ Westmoreland: what did the Council decide last night about this vital expedition?

¹ This opening speech not only refers to the rebellions occurring in England and the British Isles at large during this period, but also the king's plans to promote greater national stability after the deposition of Richard II. The king also makes reference to his hopes to launch a new crusade, in order to atone for Richard's death.

² The original text refers to, literally, the tomb of Christ--the possession of which partially motivated the Crusades.

³ Shakespeare often uses the term "gentle" to demonstrate a person's social status. The word in this sense is related to the terms "gentleman" or "gentility."

⁴ Shakespeare often uses the term "cousin" loosely. It is not necessarily an indication of actual blood relation, but rather a term to demonstrate kinship. In this case, though, King Henry and the Earl of Westmoreland are related by marriage.

WESTMORELAND

My lord, this speedy mission was being eagerly debated, and many of the resources and duties had already been decided. But, yesterday evening, a messenger suddenly arrived from Wales to report some sad news. He came to tell us that the noble Mortimer ⁵, who had been taking an army from Herefordshire to fight against the wild Glendower ⁶, was captured by him instead. A thousand men were murdered, and their corpses were violated by the Welshwomen so badly that I don't even want to repeat what I was told.

⁵ "Mortimer" here is Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March.

⁶ Owen Glendower was a lord from Wales, rumored to be a sorcerer.

KING

I guess that the news of this attack will stop our mission to the Holy Land.

WESTMORELAND

Yes, my gracious lord, along with this. We have received even more horrible and unwelcome news from the north, which is this: On September 14th ⁷ young Harry Percy, known as the bold "Hotspur," fought against the brave

⁷ Holy Rood Day was a church festival held on September 14th, commemorating the recovery of a

Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,
That ever valiant and approvèd Scot,
At Holmedon met, where they did spend
A sad and bloody hour—
As by discharge of their artillery
And shape of likelihood the news was told;
For he that brought them, in the very heat
60 And pride of their contention did take horse,
Uncertain of the issue any way.

KING

Here is a dear, a true-industrious friend,
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse.
Stained with the variation of each soil
65 Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours,
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.
The Earl of Douglas is discomfited;
Ten thousand bold Scots, two-and-twenty knights,
Balked in their own blood, did Sir Walter see
70 On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners Hotspur took
Mordake, Earl of Fife, and eldest son
To beaten Douglas, and the Earl of Atholl,
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith.
And is not this an honorable spoil?
75 A gallant prize? Ha, cousin, is it not?

WESTMORELAND

In faith, it is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

KING

Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st me sin
In envy that my Lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son,
80 A son who is the theme of Honor's tongue,
Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride;
Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,
See riot and dishonor stain the brow
85 Of my young Harry. O, that it could be proved
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And called mine "Percy," his "Plantagenet"!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
90 But let him from my thoughts. What think you, coz,
Of this young Percy's pride? The prisoners,
Which he in this adventure hath surprised
To his own use he keeps, and sends me word
I shall have none but Mordake, Earl of Fife.

WESTMORELAND

95 This is his uncle's teaching. This is Worcester,
Malevolent to you in all aspects,
Which makes him prune himself, and bristle up
The crest of youth against your dignity.

KING

But I have sent for him to answer this.
100 And for this cause awhile we must neglect
Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.
Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we
Will hold at Windsor. So inform the lords.
But come yourself with speed to us again,
105 For more is to be said and to be done
Than out of anger can be uttered.

WESTMORELAND

I will, my liege.

Archibald ⁸, that fearless Scotsman proven in battle, at Holmedon ⁹. They fought against each other for an hour and it was awfully bloody, if the sound of the gunfire was any indication. Yet, the messenger who brought the news left in the midst of the battle, and so could only predict what had happened. He didn't actually know the final outcome.

piece of the cross on which Jesus was crucified.

⁸ "Archibald" here refers to Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Douglas.

⁹ Shakespeare refers here to the 1402 battle fought at Holmedon Hill in Northumberland, England.

KING

One of my dear, hardworking friends Sir Walter Blunt has only recently dismounted from his horse and arrived here in court. He has ridden across all of the ground from Holmedon to here to bring us happy and welcome news. The Earl of Douglas has been defeated and he saw ten thousand Scottish soldiers and twenty-two knights piled up in their own blood on the fields of Holmedon. Hotspur took some prisoners: he took Mordake, the Earl of Fife and the son of the defeated Earl of Douglas. And he also took the Earls of Antholl, Murray, Angus, and Menteith. Isn't this an honorable bunch? A great prize? Isn't it, cousin?

WESTMORELAND

Certainly, it's the type of conquest that even a prince could boast about.

KING

Don't say that--it makes me feel sad! And it is a sin every time I feel jealous of Lord Northumberland ¹⁰ for having such an incredible son. His son is the topic of conversation when Honor speaks. Hotspur is the straightest plant in the whole forest; he is the favorite of sweet Fortune. When I see how he is praised, I also see the wildness and dishonor which ruins the reputation of my own son, Harry. If only I could prove that some fairy had switched them in their cradles when they were babies! Then the Percy family would have had Harry, and we Plantagenets ¹¹ would have gotten Hotspur! Anyway, I must stop thinking about Harry now. Westmoreland, what do you think about this young Hotspur and his pride? He has said that he is going to keep all of the prisoners that he captured himself, and tells me that I can only have Mordake, the Earl of Fife ¹².

¹⁰ Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, is Hotspur's father.

¹¹ The Plantagenets made up a royal house, originating in Anjou, France, and from which Henry IV was descended.

¹² According to the conventions of war at the time, prisoners taken during battle were meant to be transferred to the King, so that he could get the ransom money for their capture. Hotspur is refusing to follow that procedure, angering King Henry.

WESTMORELAND

It's his uncle who's told him to do that. This is Worcester through and through, a man who will always act against you ¹³. Now he has made Hotspur act like this, putting his youth against your dignity and age.

¹³ The original text makes reference to astrology. People in Shakespeare's time observed the planets to make determinations from everything from divining the future to making health care decisions. A planet's "aspect" refers to its position with regard to other planets, and the positive or negative consequences of that spatial relationship.

KING

Well, I have asked him to come here to answer for that. Therefore, we are going to have to put our mission to the Holy Land on hold for a while. Next Wednesday, we will have a meeting at Windsor. Go and tell the other lords, and then come back here as quickly as possible, as we have more to discuss and more to do. But it will have to wait until I am less angry.

WESTMORELAND

I will do that, my lord.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter HENRY, PRINCE of Wales, and Sir John FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

PRINCE HENRY

Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldest truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were 5 cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in 10 flame-colored taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

FALSTAFF

Indeed, you come near me now, Hal, for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he, that wand'ring knight so fair. And I 15 prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as God save thy Grace—Majesty, I should say, for grace thou wilt have none—

PRINCE HENRY

What, none?

FALSTAFF

No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be 20 prologue to an egg and butter.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, how then? Come, roundly, roundly.

FALSTAFF

Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's foresters, 25 gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

PRINCE HENRY

Thou sayest well, and it holds well too, for the 30 fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon. As for proof now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatched on Monday night and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning, got with swearing "Lay by" and spent 35 with crying "Bring in"; now in as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder, and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.

Shakescleare Translation

HENRY--the PRINCE of Wales--and Sir John FALSTAFF enter.

FALSTAFF

Now, Hal, what time is it, boy?

PRINCE HENRY

You are so stupid 1, what with all the wine 2 you drink--and how you unbutton your pants after dinner and pass out on benches until after noon. You can't even remember to ask for the thing you actually want to know! Why in the devil's name do you care what time of day it is? Unless hours were cups of wine, minutes were chickens, clocks were the tongues of prostitutes, sundials the signs of whorehouses, and the sun itself a hot woman in a red silk dress 3, I don't know why on earth you would need to know the time.

1 In the original text, Hal uses the term "fat-witted" to make fun of both Falstaff's lack of wit, and his weight, which is one of Falstaff's most defining characteristics.

2 "Sack," a strong white wine from Spain and the Canary Islands, is Falstaff's drink of choice.

3 The taffeta petticoats Hal refers to were purportedly worn by prostitutes in Shakespeare's time.

FALSTAFF

Oh, now you've got me, Hal. For we are both thieves of the night, living under the moon and the stars, not under the beautiful sun 4. I ask you, my sweet boy, when you are king, God help your Grace 5--or rather I should call you "your Majesty," because you have no grace.

4 Shakespeare uses the word Phoebus (otherwise known as Apollo)--the god of the sun--as a stand-in for the sun itself.

5 "Your Grace" is a term used to address royalty, much like "your Majesty." Falstaff will play on the word "grace" in the sense of "virtue" in the next line.

PRINCE HENRY

What? None?

FALSTAFF

No, truthfully, not even enough to say grace before a bad, small meal 6.

6 In Shakespeare's day, "an egg and butter" was a light meal eaten on Friday or in Lent, not deserving of a long prayer before consumption.

PRINCE HENRY

What do you mean then? Come on, what's your point?

FALSTAFF

Well then 7, my sweet boy, when you are king, don't let us night-owls be accused of wasting the daylight by sleeping. Let us be thought of as followers of Diana 8, gentlemen of darkness, servants of the moon. Let men say that we are well behaved, since we are governed by the same noble and innocent mistress--the moon--who controls the tides and under whose light we can sneak around.

7 In the original text, "marry"--a reference to the Virgin Mary--is used as a mild oath.

8 Diana was the ancient Roman goddess of the moon.

PRINCE HENRY

You speak the truth, and it is a suitable analogy. For our fortunes come and go just like the tides do, which makes sense, since we are both governed by the moon. I can prove it: think of a purse full of gold that has been excellently stolen on a Monday night, and then its contents stupidly spent on a Tuesday morning. When you steal it, you cry, "Give it over," and you spend it crying, "Bring it on." At one moment it feels like our fortunes are as low as the foot of the ladder to the gallows, and the next they are as high as the crossbar at the top of them.

FALSTAFF

By the Lord, thou sayest true, lad. And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

PRINCE HENRY

- 40 As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle. And is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?

FALSTAFF

How now, how now, mad wag? What, in thy quips and thy quiddities? What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

PRINCE HENRY

- 45 Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

FALSTAFF

Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

PRINCE HENRY

Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

FALSTAFF

- 50 No, I'll give thee thy due. Thou hast paid all there.

PRINCE HENRY

Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch, and where it would not, I have used my credit.

FALSTAFF

- 55 Yea, and so used it that were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent— But I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? And resolution thus fubbed as it is with the rusty curb of old father Antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

PRINCE HENRY

No, thou shalt.

FALSTAFF

- 60 Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge.

PRINCE HENRY

Thou judgest false already: I mean thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves, and so become a rare hangman.

FALSTAFF

Well, Hal, well, and in some sort it jumps with my humor as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

PRINCE HENRY

- 65 For obtaining of suits?

FALSTAFF

Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear.

FALSTAFF

By God, you're right, Hal. Say, isn't the hostess of this bar a very attractive woman?

PRINCE HENRY

She is as sweet as honey from Hybla ⁹, you old, dirty drunk. And don't you think that a sheriff's jacket lasts a very long time?

⁹ Shakespeare refers here to an ancient town in Sicily, known for its bees and honey.

FALSTAFF

What do you mean, you crazy boy? Are you joking around with me? What on earth do I have to do with a sheriff's jacket?

PRINCE HENRY

Well, what on earth do I have to do with the hostess of this bar?

FALSTAFF

Well, you have asked her for the bill ¹⁰ many times.

¹⁰ The pun on "called her to a reckoning" in the original text implies that Hal has had sex with Mistress Quickly many times.

PRINCE HENRY

Have I ever asked you to pay for anything yourself?

FALSTAFF

No, I guess that's true. You have always settled everything with her yourself.

PRINCE HENRY

Yes, and with other hostesses, when I had the money to pay them. And when I didn't, I just used my credit.

FALSTAFF

Yes, and you've used your credit so much that if it wasn't "here apparent" that you are the "heir apparent," ¹¹ you would have never gotten away with it. But I was wondering, my sweet boy, will there still be hangings in England when you're king? Will a determined thief still be cheated by that horrible, old clown—the law? When you're king, don't hang thieves.

¹¹ Shakespeare's joke arises from the fact that the pronunciation of "here" and "heir" would have been very similar, if not identical, in his time.

PRINCE HENRY

No, you will.

FALSTAFF

I will? Oh wonderful! I will be an excellent judge.

PRINCE HENRY

You've already judged what I said in the wrong way. I mean that you will be responsible for hanging thieves, so you will become a wonderful hangman!

FALSTAFF

Well, Hal, in some ways I am more inclined to be a hangman than to wait around for favors from the king, I can tell you that.

PRINCE HENRY

Waiting to get your suits ¹²?

¹² Hal uses the phrase "obtaining suits" in the sense of granted legal petitions, and also as a reference to a hangman's job to receive an executed criminal's clothing.

FALSTAFF

Exactly, waiting to get my suits, while the hangman has an extensive wardrobe. Oh Christ ¹³, I'm as sad as a tomcat ¹⁴ or an abused bear.

¹³ A common curse in Shakespeare's time, "'Sblood" is a contraction of "by Christ's blood."

PRINCE HENRY

Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

FALSTAFF

70 Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

PRINCE HENRY

What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moorditch?

FALSTAFF

75 Thou hast the most unsavory similes, and art indeed the most comparative, rascaldest, sweet young prince. But, Hal, I prithee trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old lord of the council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not, and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not, and yet he talked wisely, and in the street, too.

PRINCE HENRY

Thou didst well, for wisdom cries out in the streets and no man regards it.

FALSTAFF

85 O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal, God forgive thee for it. Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over. By the Lord, an I do 90 not, I am a villain. I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

PRINCE HENRY

Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?

FALSTAFF

Zounds, where thou wilt, lad. I'll make one. An I do not, call me villain and baffle me.

PRINCE HENRY

95 I see a good amendment of life in thee, from praying to purse-taking.

FALSTAFF

Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labor in his vocation.

Enter POINS

100 Poins!—Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried "Stand!" to a true man.

PRINCE HENRY

Good morrow, Ned.

PRINCE HENRY

Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

FALSTAFF

Yes, or the whining sound of a bagpipe.

PRINCE HENRY

What about a rabbit, or a sad day out in Moorditch?

[14] The gib cat in the original text—like the lugged bear, old lion, lover's lute, bagpipe, and hare—was associated with sadness in Shakespeare's time.

[15] In Shakespeare's day, Moorditch was a disgusting drainage ditch north of the city of London.

FALSTAFF

You use the most unpleasant similes, and make incredible comparisons for such a naughty, sweet young prince. But, Hal, let's not talk about such pointless things anymore. I wish to God that you or I knew where we could buy a supply of good reputations. Some old lord from the Council came up to me in the street the other day to give me his judgement about you, sir. But I didn't listen to him, even though he said some very wise things. I didn't take any notice of him, although his words were certainly wise, and this was just in the middle of the street.

PRINCE HENRY

You did well, for the Bible says, "Wisdom cries out in the streets, and no-one hears it."

FALSTAFF

Oh, you always seem to make the Bible fit in with your wicked games. I wouldn't be surprised if you managed to corrupt a saint. You have done many bad things to me, Hal. I hope God can forgive you for it. Before I met you, Hal, I knew nothing of wickedness, and now I'm basically a sinner myself, if I'm telling the truth. I need to turn my life around, and I will turn it around. By the Lord, if I don't, then I am a true villain. I refuse to be condemned to hell, even for the son of a Christian king.

PRINCE HENRY

Where shall we go and do some stealing tomorrow, Jack?

FALSTAFF

Good heavens!

[16] Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the oath "Zounds," a contracted version of the phrase "by God's wounds."

PRINCE HENRY

I'm already seeing you turn your life around, from praying to stealing purses.

FALSTAFF

Why, Hal, it's my calling in life. It's not a sin for a man to follow his calling in life.

POINS enters.

Poins! Now we can find out if Gadshill has planned a robbery. If men go to heaven because of the good things that they have done, then I'm not sure there's even a dungeon in hell that is hot enough for Poins. He is the most almighty villain that has ever shouted "Hold it right there!" to an honest man.

PRINCE HENRY

Good morning, Ned.

POINS

Good morrow, sweet Hal.—What says Monsieur Remorse?
 105 What says Sir John Sack-and-Sugar? Jack, how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul that thou soldest him on Good Friday last for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?

PRINCE HENRY

Sir John stands to his word. The devil shall have his bargain, for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs. He will give the devil his due.

POINS

(to FALSTAFF) Then art thou damned for keeping thy word with the devil.

PRINCE HENRY

Else he had been damned for cozening the devil.

POINS

115 But, my lads, my lads, tomorrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gad's Hill, there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses. I have vizards for you all. You have horses for yourselves. Gadshill lies tonight in Rochester. I have bespoke supper tomorrow night in Eastcheap. We may do it as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns. If you will not, tarry at home and be hanged.

FALSTAFF

Hear ye, Yedward, if I tarry at home and go not, I'll hang you for going.

POINS

You will, chops?

FALSTAFF

Hal, wilt thou make one?

PRINCE HENRY

Who, I rob? I a thief? not I, by my faith.

FALSTAFF

130 There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings.

PRINCE HENRY

Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

FALSTAFF

Why, that's well said.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.

FALSTAFF

135 By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then when thou art king.

PRINCE HENRY

I care not.

POINS

Good morning, sweet Hal. What does Mr. Regretful have to say for himself? What's up Sir John the Drunk? Jack, how's that deal with the devil going since you sold him your soul on Good Friday ¹⁷ for a cup of white wine ¹⁸ and a cold chicken leg?

¹⁷ Good Friday—the holy day commemorating Christ's death on the cross—was meant to be set aside for fasting.

¹⁸ In the original text, Poins refers to a strong variety of white wine produced on the island of Madeira.

PRINCE HENRY

Sir John Falstaff will keep his word. The devil will get his end of the bargain, for Jack was never one to break with a proverb. He will give the devil what he owes him.

POINS

[To FALSTAFF] Then you're damned for keeping a deal with the devil.

PRINCE HENRY

Otherwise he would be damned for cheating the devil.

POINS

Anyway boys, boys! Early tomorrow morning, around four o'clock, some travelers are going to pass by Gad's Hill. ¹⁹ Some of them are on their way to Canterbury Cathedral with rich offerings ²⁰, and some are traders who are on their way to London with a lot of money in their purses. I have masks for all of you. You have your own horses. Gadshill himself will spend the night in Rochester, and I have already ordered dinner for tomorrow night in Eastcheap ²¹. This plan is so certain it could be done in our sleep. If you will do it, I'll give you riches. If you won't, then stay at home and hang yourselves instead.

¹⁹ South of London, Gad's Hall was a locale prone to robberies.

²⁰ Pilgrims flocked to Canterbury Cathedral in order to make offerings at the shrine of the martyr Thomas à Becket.

²¹ A market street near London Bridge, Eastcheap is the setting for all of the bar scenes in this play.

FALSTAFF

Listen here, Yedward ²², if I stay at home and don't go, then I will hang you for going.

POINS

You will, fat cheeks?

FALSTAFF

Hal, will you join us?

PRINCE HENRY

What me, a robber? Am I a thief? I don't think so, by God.

FALSTAFF

If you won't even fight for ten shillings, then there is no honesty, manhood, or friendship in you, and you certainly aren't of royal descent.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay then, for once in my life I'll do something insane.

FALSTAFF

Good stuff.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, actually, I guess I'll stay at home and see what happens.

FALSTAFF

In that case, by God, I'll be a traitor to you when you become king.

PRINCE HENRY

I don't care.

POINS

Sir John, I prithee, leave the Prince and me alone. I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go.

FALSTAFF

140 Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion, and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move, and what he hears may be believed, that the true prince may, for recreation sake, prove a false thief, for the poor abuses of the time want countenance. Farewell. You
145 shall find me in Eastcheap.

PRINCE HENRY

Farewell, thou latter spring. Farewell, All-hallowen summer.

Exit FALSTAFF

POINS

Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us tomorrow. I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone.
150 Falstaff, Peto, Bardolph, and Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid. Yourself and I will not be there. And when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head off from my shoulders.

PRINCE HENRY

How shall we part with them in setting forth?

POINS

155 Why, we will set forth before or after them, and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail; and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves, which they shall have no sooner achieved but we'll set upon them.

PRINCE HENRY

160 Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment to be ourselves.

POINS

Tut, our horses they shall not see; I'll tie them in the wood. Our vizards we will change after we leave them. And, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to immask our noted outward garments.

PRINCE HENRY

Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us.

POINS

Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms.
170 The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty at least he fought with, what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, I'll go with thee. Provide us all things necessary and meet me tomorrow night in Eastcheap. There I'll sup. Farewell.

POINS

Sir John, please leave me and the Prince alone for a while. I'll give him such good reasons for joining in that he won't be able to resist.

FALSTAFF

Well, then I hope that God gives you the powers of persuasion, and him the power to listen. I hope that the words you speak will affect him and he will believe what you tell him. That way, the honest prince might become a
23 false thief just for fun, since today's wickedness needs a patron. Goodbye then. You can find me in Eastcheap.

.
23 The joke here is that Hal does in fact become a "false thief," later pretending to be a robber in order to pick Falstaff's pocket.

PRINCE HENRY

Goodbye, you September spring. Goodbye, you November summer.
24 .

.
24 Both of these phrases about seasons occurring later than they are supposed to is a joke about Falstaff's age.

FALSTAFF exits.

POINS

Now, my good sweet lord, join us tomorrow. I have a prank that I want to carry out that I can't do alone. Falstaff, Peto, Bardolph, and Gadshill are going to rob those men that I had mentioned, but you and I won't be there. When they have the plunder, we will rob them ourselves! If we don't, then you might as well chop off my head!

PRINCE HENRY

How will we get away from them when we are traveling together?

POINS

Well, we will leave either before them or after them, and arrange a place to meet. When we don't show up, they will have to carry out the robbery themselves, and as soon as they've done that, we'll attack them.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay, but won't they still recognize us by our horses, our clothes, and all of the things that we have with us?

POINS

Nah, they won't see our horses because I'll tie them up in the woods. We will change our masks after we leave them. Plus, sir
25 , I've also got coats made for the occasion out of coarse linen, to cover what we're wearing underneath.

.
25 In the original text, Shakespeare uses the term "sirrah," which is the familiar form of "sir." Since Poins uses this word with Hal, we gather that they do not have the formal relationship between ruler and subject, but a familiar one instead.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay. But I'm afraid it will be too difficult for us to beat them.

POINS

Well, I'm certain that two of them are complete cowards and will run away. As for the third, if he fights for even a second longer than he sees fit, I will give up fighting forever. The hilarity of this practical joke will come from the ridiculous lies that this same, fat idiot Falstaff will tell us when we meet them at dinner. I am sure he will pretend that he fought with at least thirty men, and tell us how he bravely defended himself, how he hit them, and received many injuries. And when we prove that he's lying, that will be funniest part.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay, I'll go with you. Get all of the things that we'll need and meet me tomorrow night in Eastcheap. I'll have dinner there. Goodbye.

POINS

Farewell, my lord.

Exit POINS

PRINCE HENRY

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humor of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work,
But when they seldom come, they wished for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So when this loose behavior I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend to make offense a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

Exit

POINS

Goodbye, my lord.

POINS exits.

PRINCE HENRY

I understand these men, and will put up with their wild behavior and their laziness for now. In this way, I will be like the sun ²⁶, which allows the vile, infectious clouds to cover up his beauty from the rest of the world. But then, when he decides that he has been missed enough, he can amaze the world by breaking through the disgusting, ugly mists and vapors that were almost strangling him. If the entire year was a vacation, then playing would become as boring as working. Because they are so rare, we look forward to vacations, and enjoy them as unusual occurrences. So when I leave behind this wild behavior and accept that it is my duty to become king--even though I never asked for it--I will be better than people think I will be. I will prove people wrong. Just like a bright piece of metal, put against a dull background, my transformation will be even more remarkable because of the contrast with my past self. I will use my misbehavior for my own advantage, making up for lost time when people least expect it.

²⁶ The sun was a traditional symbol of English royalty, one first used in heraldry of the 12th century. We recall this symbolic use of the word in the opening soliloquy of another Shakespeare play, *Richard III*.

He exits.

Act 1, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter the KING, NORTHUMBERLAND, WORCESTER, HOTSPUR, Sir Walter BLUNT, with others

KING

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,
And you have found me, for accordingly
You tread upon my patience. But be sure
5 I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty and to be feared, than my condition,
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
And therefore lost that title of respect
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

WORCESTER

10 Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves
The scourge of greatness to be used on it,
And that same greatness too which our own hands
Have holp to make so portly.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord—

KING

15 Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye.
O sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,
And majesty might never yet endure
The moody frontier of a servant brow.
20 You have good leave to leave us. When we need
Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

Exit WORCESTER

Shakescleare Translation

The KING, NORTHUMBERLAND, WORCESTER, HOTSPUR, Sir Walter BLUNT, and their attendants enter.

KING

I have been too cold and moderate, and I haven't reacted to these shameful deeds like I should have. You have noticed this, and you have abused my patience. But know this: from now on I will act like a king again, powerful and feared. I will not allow my natural characteristics, which are soft and light, to lose me the respect which powerful people will only give to other powerful people.

WORCESTER

Your Majesty, our family--the Percy family--doesn't deserve to be punished by you and your power, as we helped you to get to this position of power in the first place.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord--

KING

Worcester, leave now, for I can see danger and disobedience in your eye. Oh sir, you speak far too boldly and arrogantly, and royalty should never have to be worried about a servant's threatening frown. You have full permission to leave us. When we need your help and advice, we will send for you.

WORCESTER exits.

KING

(to NORTHERNLAND) You were about to speak.

NORTHERNLAND

Yea, my good lord.
Those prisoners in your Highness' name demanded,
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied
As is delivered to your Majesty:
Either envy, therefore, or misprison
Is guilty of this fault, and not my son.

HOTSPUR

30 My liege, I did deny no prisoners.
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly dressed,
35 Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reaped
Showed like a stubble land at harvest home.
He was perfumèd like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box, which ever and anon
40 He gave his nose and took 't away again,
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff; and still he smiled and talked.
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He called them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
45 To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He questioned me; amongst the rest demanded
My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.
50 I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pestered with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience
Answered neglectingly I know not what—
He should, or he should not; for he made me mad
55 To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns, and drums, and wounds—God save the mark!—
And telling me the sovereignest thing on earth
Was parmacety for an inward bruise,
60 And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous saltpeter should be digged
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed
So cowardly, and but for these vile guns
65 He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answered indirectly, as I said,
And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
70 Betwixt my love and your high Majesty.

BLUNT

The circumstance considered, good my lord,
Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said
To such a person and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
75 May reasonably die and never rise
To do him wrong or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

KING

Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception
80 That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer,
Who, on my soul, hath willfully betrayed
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damned Glendower,
85 Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers then
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?

KING

[To NORTHERNLAND] You were about to speak.

NORTHERNLAND

Yes, my good lord. The prisoners that you asked for, which Harry Percy captured at Holmedon, were not kept away from you out of spite, as has been reported to you. Whoever told you this has just done it because they are jealous, or because there's been a misunderstanding. My son's done nothing wrong.

HOTSPUR

My lord, I didn't deny you any prisoners. But I do remember that just after the battle, when I was parched with thirst after fighting, when I was breathless, faint, and resting on my sword, a certain lord arrived. He was refined and elegantly dressed--bright like a bridegroom--and his beard was freshly cut, like a field after a harvest. He smelled very fancy. And he held a perfume box in his hand, which every so often he lifted to his nose, sniffed, and moved the box away again. He kept doing this as he continued to smile and talk to me. As the soldiers were carrying the dead bodies past us, he called them unsophisticated idiots, and rude for bringing an ugly, disgusting corpse where he could smell it. He questioned me, with his fancy, ladylike language and told me that I had to give up the prisoners to your Majesty. At that point, I was so annoyed by my unattended wounds and being pestered by that parrot, that I can't even remember what I said to him in my pain and my impatience to get away. I don't know whether I told him whether or not he could have the prisoners. His shiny face, sweet smell, and hearing him talk about guns, drums, and wounds with the voice of a lady-in-waiting made me so angry! For God's sake! He told me that the best thing for a wound is parmaceti ¹ and that it was a pity the innocent earth had to be dug up in order to extract the key ingredient for gunpowder ². He said that this gunpowder has cowardly destroyed many good, valiant men, and if it wasn't for horrible guns, he would have been a soldier himself. I answered this pointless, incoherent chatter casually, as I've already said. Please don't accept his report right away and let it ruin the relationship between me and you, your Majesty.

¹ "Parmaceti," or "spermaceti," is fat from the head of a sperm whale, once used to treat bruises and minor wounds.

² "Salt peter" in the original text refers to potassium nitrate--a central ingredient in gunpowder.

BLUNT

Considering the circumstances, my lord, whatever Lord Harry Percy said to that man, at such a time and place, should be allowed to be forgotten. It should never be used against him, and he should never be blamed for it, as long as he takes it all back now.

KING

But he is still refusing to give us the prisoners unless we agree to his terms and conditions. He says that we must pay for the ransom of his foolish brother-in-law ³, Mortimer, even though Mortimer willingly betrayed the soldiers that he took to fight that great magician, the cursed Glendower. We have even heard that Mortimer has recently married Glendower's daughter! Are we supposed to empty our purses just to bring a traitor home? Should I pay for treason and make a deal with a coward, when he has lost sight of even himself? No. Let him die out there. No-one who asks

³ Hotspur is married to Mortimer's older sister, named Kate in this play.

Shall we buy treason and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?
90 No, on the barren mountains let him starve,
For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

HOTSPUR

Revolted Mortimer!
95 He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war. To prove that true
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,
Those mouthèd wounds, which valiantly he took
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank
100 In single opposition hand to hand
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breathed, and three times did they
drink,
105 Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood,
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Bloodstainèd with these valiant combatants.
110 Never did bare and rotten policy
Color her working with such deadly wounds,
Nor could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly.
Then let not him be slandered with revolt.

KING

115 Thou dost belie him, Percy; thou dost belie him.
He never did encounter with Glendower.
I tell thee, he durst as well have met the devil alone
As Owen Glendower for an enemy.
Art thou not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth
120 Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer.
Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me
As will displease you.— My lord Northumberland,
We license your departure with your son.—
125 Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.

Exit KING Henry, BLUNT, and train

HOTSPUR

An if the devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them. I will after straight
And tell him so, for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

NORTHUMBERLAND

130 What, drunk with choler? stay and pause awhile.
Here comes your uncle.

Enter WORCESTER

HOTSPUR

Speak of Mortimer?
Zounds, I will speak of him, and let my soul
Want mercy if I do not join with him.
135 Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins
And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust,
But I will lift the downtrod Mortimer
As high in the air as this unthankful King,
As this ingrate and cankered Bolingbroke.

NORTHUMBERLAND

140 (to WORCESTER) Brother, the King hath made your nephew
mad.

WORCESTER

Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

me to spend even a penny to save that treacherous
Mortimer will be my friend.

HOTSPUR

Treacherous Mortimer? He never changed his allegiance,
my lord, except in an accident of war. I can prove it, by
describing to you all of the wounds--the gaping wounds--
which he bravely received when fighting one-on-one with
the great Glendower for almost an hour, exchanging brave
blows. They stopped fighting three times to catch their
breath, and three times to drink water from the Severn
River. Even the Severn was scared of their bloody faces, and
the bloody water they left behind flowed away to hide itself
by the riverbank, out of sight. A traitor has never used
deadly wounds to hide their treachery, and Mortimer would
never have willingly received so many blows. Don't let him
be falsely accused of treason.

KING

That's a lie, Percy, that's a lie—he never fought with
Glendower. I am telling you, he would probably rather meet
the devil for a fight than have Owen Glendower as his
enemy. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? But, sir, from now
on I don't want to hear anymore about Mortimer. Send me
the prisoners as quickly as you can, or you will not enjoy my
response. My lord Northumberland, you and your son are
allowed to leave now. Send us the prisoners, or you will
hear from us.

KING Henry, BLUNT, and their attendants exit.

HOTSPUR

Even if the devil himself came and shouted at me, I would
not hand over these prisoners. I should go after him and tell
him that now, even if it costs me my head, it will relieve my
heart.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What, are you drunk with anger? Stay and think about it for
a minute. Here comes your uncle.

WORCESTER enters.

HOTSPUR

Not talk about Mortimer? Heavens, I will talk about him,
and I'll be damned if I don't join him! I would empty all of
my veins for him and watch my blood drip onto the ground,
drop by drop! I will lift up the put-down Mortimer until he
sits as high as this horrible King, this ungrateful and rotten
Bolingbroke.

 *Bolingbroke* is a surname provided for King Henry, as a nod to his birthplace, Bolingbroke Castle.

NORTHUMBERLAND

(to WORCESTER) Brother, the King has made your nephew
very angry.

WORCESTER

Who started this argument after I left?

HOTSPUR

He will forsooth have all my prisoners,
And when I urged the ransom once again
145 Of my wife's brother, then his cheek looked pale,
And on my face he turned an eye of death,
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.

WORCESTER

I cannot blame him. Was not he proclaimed
By Richard, that dead is, the next of blood?

NORTHUMBERLAND

150 He was; I heard the proclamation.
And then it was when the unhappy King—
Whose wrongs in us God pardon!—did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition;
From whence he, intercepted, did return
155 To be deposed and shortly murderèd.

WORCESTER

And for whose death we in the world's wide mouth
Live scandalized and foully spoken of.

HOTSPUR

But soft, I pray you. Did King Richard then
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
160 Heir to the crown?

NORTHUMBERLAND

He did; myself did hear it.

HOTSPUR

Nay then, I cannot blame his cousin King
That wished him on the barren mountains starve.
But shall it be that you that set the crown
165 Upon the head of this forgetful man
And for his sake wear the detested blot
Of murderous subornation—shall it be
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents or base second means,
170 The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?
O, pardon me that I descend so low
To show the line and the predicament
Wherein you range under this subtle King.
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
175 Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
That men of your nobility and power
Did gage them both in an unjust behalf
(As both of you, God pardon it, have done)
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
180 An plant this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke?
And shall it in more shame be further spoken
That you are fooled, discarded, and shook off
By him for whom these shames you underwent?
No, yet time serves wherein you may redeem
185 Your banished honors and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again,
Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt
Of this proud King, who studies day and night
To answer all the debt he owes to you
190 Even with the bloody payment of your deaths.
Therefore I say—

WORCESTER

Peace, cousin, say no more.
And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontents
195 I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

HOTSPUR

In truth, the King says that he is going to have all of my prisoners. When I brought up the issue of Mortimer's ransom, his cheeks turned pale, and he had a look of mortal fear on his face—that's how shook up he is just hearing Mortimer's name.

WORCESTER

I can't say I blame him. Didn't King Richard announce that Mortimer was next in line to the throne?

NORTHUMBERLAND

He did; I heard the announcement. It happened right when the unlucky King Richard (God forgive us for what we did to him!) was setting out to invade Ireland ⁵. When this was interrupted, he came back to England, only to be removed from the throne and murdered soon after.

⁵ Shakespeare here makes reference to King Richard II's 1399 expedition to Ireland, in which he hoped to put an end to the raids of the "wild Irish."

WORCESTER

And now because of the role we played in King Richard's death, we are considered appalling, and the whole world speaks badly of us.

HOTSPUR

Hang on a minute, please. Did King Richard actually announce that my brother-in-law, Edmund Mortimer, was the next in line to the throne?

NORTHUMBERLAND

He did. I heard him myself.

HOTSPUR

Well then, I can't blame the King for wanting Mortimer to starve out there. But is it okay that you, the men who put the crown on Henry's forgetful head—and bear the awful mark of murderous accusations for his sake—should be the subject of all the world's curses? When you were just the agents, or the instruments, in this plan? Would you blame the rope, the ladder, or the hangman even when someone is hanged? Sorry for associating you with such things, but I just wanted to show you the categories that you are ranked in, under this crafty King. Will you let people shame you in this way? Are you okay with the fact that historical accounts in the future will say that you noble and powerful men pledged yourself to an unjust cause (as you both actually did, God forgive you) to get rid of Richard—that sweet, lovely rose—and helped to plant this thorn, this wild rose, Bolingbroke? Will it be even more shameful when people realize that you have been tricked, and discarded by the person for whom you shamed yourselves in the first place? No, there is still time for you to redeem the honor you have lost, and win back your good reputations in this world. You can take revenge on the mocking and scorn of this arrogant King, who thinks all day and night about how he can repay you for your debts, and concludes that he will do so with your deaths ⁶. Therefore, I say—

⁶ Here, Shakespeare uses the word "deaths" as a pun on "debts" from the previous line.

WORCESTER

Enough, nephew. Don't say anything else. I am going to tell you a secret, which has been locked away. I will unlock this secret and tell you a dark and dangerous story, which will please you in your anger. This story is full of peril and adventure, just like the feeling of walking across a fast-rushing river, balanced on an unsteady spear.

HOTSPUR

If he fall in, good night, or sink or swim!
 200 Send danger from the east unto the west,
 So honor cross it from the north to south,
 And let them grapple: O, the blood more stirs
 To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

NORTHUMBERLAND

Imagination of some great exploit
 205 Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

HOTSPUR

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
 To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
 Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
 Where fathom line could never touch the ground,
 210 And pluck up drowned honor by the locks,
 So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
 Without corrival all her dignities.
 But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

WORCESTER

(to NORTHUMBERLAND) He apprehends a world of figures
 215 here,
 But not the form of what he should attend.—
 (to HOTSPUR) Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

HOTSPUR

I cry you mercy.

WORCESTER

Those same noble Scots
 220 That are your prisoners—

HOTSPUR

I'll keep them all.
 By God, he shall not have a Scot of them.
 No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not.
 I'll keep them, by this hand!

WORCESTER

You start away
 And lend no ear unto my purposes:
 Those prisoners you shall keep—

HOTSPUR

Nay, I will. That's flat!
 He said he would not ransom Mortimer,
 230 Forbad my tongue to speak of Mortimer.
 But I will find him when he lies asleep,
 And in his ear I'll hollo "Mortimer."
 Nay,
 I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
 235 Nothing but "Mortimer," and give it him
 To keep his anger still in motion.

WORCESTER

Hear you, cousin, a word.

HOTSPUR

All studies here I solemnly defy,
 Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke.
 240 And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales—
 But that I think his father loves him not
 And would be glad he met with some mischance—
 I would have him poisoned with a pot of ale.

WORCESTER

Farewell, kinsman. I'll talk to you
 245 When you are better tempered to attend.

HOTSPUR

If he falls in, then it's all over—it doesn't matter if he sinks or swims! Wherever this danger comes from, it's all right, as long as it provides the opportunity to win honor. It takes more courage to wake up a lion⁷, than it does to scare a hare!

⁷ The lion has long been used as an heraldic symbol of the English monarch, and was an early symbol of the Plantagenets.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Thinking about this heroic adventure is making him lose his self-control.

HOTSPUR

By God, I feel like it would be easy to jump up and grab noble Honor off the moon's pale face. Or dive down to the bottom of the deepest ocean, and drag drowned Honor by her hair to the surface. That way the man who rescues her doesn't have to share the glory with anyone. Who wants to share glory?!

WORCESTER

[To NORTHUMBERLAND] He is using some lovely imagery here, but that's not what he should be paying attention to right now.

[To HOTSPUR] Good nephew, listen to me for a while.

HOTSPUR

I apologize.

WORCESTER

The noble Scotsmen that you've taken as prisoners--

HOTSPUR

I will keep them all. I swear, the King's not getting a single Scot⁸, not even if a Scotsman would save his soul. I swear to God, I'm keeping them!

⁸ There is a double meaning here, as Shakespeare refers to both a Scotsman, and a "scot"—a small quantity or payment.

WORCESTER

You interrupt me before listening to what I have to say. You will get to keep the prisoners--

HOTSPUR

Yes, I will. That's for sure! He's said that he will not pay Mortimer's ransom and has forbidden me from speaking of Mortimer. I'm going to find him when he's sleeping and shout "Mortimer" in his ear. No, better yet, I'm going to get a bird and teach it to say nothing but "Mortimer," and give it to the King to make sure he's always angry.

WORCESTER

Listen to me, nephew, for a minute.

HOTSPUR

I am going to give up all of my other interests to focus on irritating and tormenting this Bolingbroke and his unworthy⁹ son, the Prince of Wales. If I didn't think that Henry disliked his son and would be happy if something bad happened to him, I would poison his ale.

⁹ Hotspur uses the imagery of the sword and buckler to disparage the highly born Prince of Wales, as these weapons had common associations with men of lower social rank.

WORCESTER

Goodbye, nephew, I'll talk to you when you're in a better mood to listen.

NORTHUMBERLAND

(to HOTSPUR) Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool Art thou to break into this woman's mood, Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!

HOTSPUR

Why, look you, I am whipped and scourged with rods, 250 Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke. In Richard's time—what do you call the place? A plague upon it! It is in Gloucestershire. 'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept, 255 His uncle York; where I first bowed my knee Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke. 'Sblood, when you and he came back from Ravenspurgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND

At Berkley Castle.

HOTSPUR

You say true. 260 Why, what a candy deal of courtesy This fawning greyhound then did proffer me: "Look when his infant fortune came to age," And "gentle Harry Percy," and "kind cousin." O, the devil take such cozeners!— God forgive me! 265 Good uncle, tell your tale. I have done.

WORCESTER

Nay, if you have not, to it again.
We will stay your leisure.

HOTSPUR

I have done, i' faith.

WORCESTER

Then once more to your Scottish prisoners: 270 Deliver them up without their ransom straight, And make the Douglas' son your only mean For powers in Scotland, which, for divers reasons Which I shall send you written, be assured Will easily be granted.— (to NORTHUMBERLAND) You, my lord, 275 Your son in Scotland being thus employed, Shall secretly into the bosom creep Of that same noble prelate, well beloved, The Archbishop.

HOTSPUR

280 Of York, is it not?

WORCESTER

True; who bears hard
His brother's death at Bristol, the Lord Scroop.
I speak not this in estimation,
As what I think might be, but what I know 285 Is ruminated, plotted, and set down,
And only stays but to behold the face
Of that occasion that shall bring it on.

HOTSPUR

I smell it. Upon my life, it will do well.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Before the game is afoot thou still let'st slip.

NORTHUMBERLAND

[To HOTSPUR] You're an irritable and impatient idiot to keep chatting away like a woman ¹⁰, listening to no-one's voice but your own!

¹⁰ As we've seen before in this scene during the description of the soldier with the perfume box, Shakespeare employs the gender stereotypes common in his day to disparage male characters. These stereotypes include the suggestions that women were excessively talkative, moody, and squeamish.

HOTSPUR

Hey, I feel like I am being whipped with rods, irritated and stung by ants when I hear about this vile politican, Bolingbroke. When Richard was alive—what was that place called? Damn it! It's in Gloucestershire. It's where that crazy duke's uncle lived, the Duke of York. It's the place where I first knelt and committed myself to this Bolingbroke. God! It was when you and he had just come back from Ravenspurgh ¹¹.

¹¹ Ravenspurgh is the port to which King Henry returned from his exile.

NORTHUMBERLAND

At Berkley Castle.

HOTSPUR

That's it. What great courtesy that flattering dog gave me!
"Look how the hopes of his youth have come true," and "gentle Harry Percy," and "kind cousin." Oh, to hell with cheats ¹² like him! I'm sorry. Good uncle, tell me your story. I'm finished.

¹² In the original text, Shakespeare puns on the proximity of the word "cozeners" to the word "cousin." That is to say, while King Henry was initially kind to Hotspur and called him "cousin," he was really just cozening, or cheating, him.

WORCESTER

Are you sure? If you're not, keep going. We will wait for you to be ready.

HOTSPUR

I'm finished, I mean it.

WORCESTER

Then let's talk once more about your Scottish prisoners. Release them right now without a ransom. Build a relationship with Douglas and use him to build an army in Scotland. I know that he'll help you and I will send you a letter soon, explaining why.

[To NORTHUMBERLAND] As for you, my lord, with your son busy in Scotland, you must secretly win the confidence of that noble, loved religious man, the Archbishop.

HOTSPUR

The Archbishop of York, do you mean?

WORCESTER

Yes, since he's deeply affected by the death of his brother, the Lord Scroop ¹³, in Bristol. What I am telling you is not just guesswork. It has been decided, plotted, and put in place, and they are now just waiting for the right opportunity to attack.

¹³ King Henry had the Earl of Scroop executed for treason in 1399.

HOTSPUR

I see what you mean. That will go well, I'm sure of it.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Don't let your dogs off the leash before the hunt has even started.

HOTSPUR

290 Why, it cannot choose but be a noble plot.
And then the power of Scotland and of York
To join with Mortimer, ha?

WORCESTER

And so they shall.

HOTSPUR

In faith, it is exceedingly well aimed.

WORCESTER

295 And 'tis no little reason bids us speed
To save our heads by raising of a head,
For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
The King will always think him in our debt,
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,
300 Till he hath found a time to pay us home.
And see already how he doth begin
To make us strangers to his looks of love.

HOTSPUR

He does, he does. We'll be revenged on him.

WORCESTER

Cousin, farewell. No further go in this
305 Than I by letters shall direct your course.
When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,
I'll steal to Glendower and Lord Mortimer,
Where you and Douglas and our powers at once,
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet
310 To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Farewell, good brother. We shall thrive, I trust.

HOTSPUR

Uncle, adieu: O, let the hours be short
Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport.

Exeunt

HOTSPUR

Well, it can't help being a very good plan. And the armies of Scotland and of York will join up with Mortimer's, right?

WORCESTER

They will.

HOTSPUR

Truthfully, it's an excellent plan.

WORCESTER

There are many reasons why we need to hurry to raise an army in order to save ourselves. Although we behave properly around him, the King will always feel in our debt for what we did in getting him the throne, and will think that we aren't happy until he has found a way to fully repay us. Haven't you noticed that he's already begun to stay away from us?

HOTSPUR

He does, he does. We will have our revenge on him.

WORCESTER

[To HOTSPUR] Goodbye, nephew. Don't do anything more until I write to you with instructions. When the time comes, which will be soon, I will go off to Glendower and Lord Mortimer. I will make it so that you, Douglas, and all of our armies will meet at the same time, and will carry out fates in our weapons, with a strength that we don't have right now.

NORTHUMBERLAND

[To WORCESTER] Goodbye, my good brother. We will be successful, I am sure of it.

HOTSPUR

[To WORCESTER] Goodbye, uncle. I hope it's not long until battlefields, wounds, and groans are the consequences of our mission!

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter a CARRIER with a lantern in his hand

FIRST CARRIER

Heigh-ho! An it be not four by the day, I'll be hanged. Charles's Wain is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not packed.—What, ostler!

OSTLER

(within) Anon, anon.

FIRST CARRIER

5 I prithee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle. Put a few flocks in the point. Poor jade is wrung in the withers out of all cess.

Shakescleare Translation

A CARRIER  enters with a lantern in his hand.

 A carrier delivered goods for a living.

FIRST CARRIER

Good god, it must be 4 in the morning by now! The Big Dipper  is now above the chimney, but our horses aren't ready to leave. Hey, ostler !

 In the original text, "Charles' Wain" literally translates to "Charles' Wagon," another name for the constellation that makes reference to Charlemagne.

 In Shakespeare's time, an ostler was a groom or a stableman.

OSTLER

(Offstage) In a second, in a second.

FIRST CARRIER

Hey, Tom , soften my horse's saddle. Put some extra padding under the saddle. My poor old horse has got some bad cuts between its shoulders.

 Tom here could refer to either the ostler or the Second Carrier.

*Enter another CARRIER***SECOND CARRIER**

Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is
the next way to give poor jades the borts. This house is
10 turned upside down since Robin ostler died.

FIRST CARRIER

Poor fellow never joyed since the price of oats rose.
It was the death of him.

SECOND CARRIER

I think this be the most villainous house in all London
road for fleas. I am stung like a tench.

FIRST CARRIER

15 Like a tench? By the Mass, there is ne'er a king
christen could be better bit than I have been since the
first cock.

SECOND CARRIER

Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we
leak in your chimney, and your chamber-lye breeds fleas
20 like a loach.

FIRST CARRIER

What, ostler, come away and be hanged. Come away.

SECOND CARRIER

I have a gammon of bacon and two rases of ginger to be
delivered as far as Charing Cross.

FIRST CARRIER

God's body, the turkeys in my pannier are quite
starved.— What, ostler! A plague on thee! Hast thou
never an eye in thy head? Canst not hear? An 'twere not
as good deed as drink to break the pate on thee, I am a
very villain. Come, and be hanged. Hast no faith in
thee?

*Enter GADSHILL***GADSHILL**

30 Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

FIRST CARRIER

I think it be two o'clock.

GADSHILL

I prithee, lend me thy lantern to see my gelding in the
stable.

FIRST CARRIER

Nay, by God, soft. I know a trick worth two of that, i'
faith.

GADSHILL

(to SECOND CARRIER) I pray thee, lend me thine.

SECOND CARRIER

Ay, when, canst tell? "Lend me thy lantern," quoth he.
Marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

*Another CARRIER enters.***SECOND CARRIER**

The food for the horses here is as wet as a dog. That's the
quickest way to give old horses diseases. This inn has gone
downhill since the ostler Robin died.

FIRST CARRIER

Poor guy hadn't been happy since the price of oats went up.
It was the death of him.

SECOND CARRIER

This stable has worse fleas than anywhere on the road
leading to London. I am stung like a tench ⁵.

⁵ A tench is a fish with markings
similar in appearance to flea bites.

FIRST CARRIER

Like a tench? I swear, not even a Christian king could be
bitten more than I've been bitten since midnight.

SECOND CARRIER

They haven't even given us a bathroom, so we have to
urinate in the fireplace even though we know that urine ⁶
breeds fleas like a loach ⁷.

⁶ "Chamber-lye" in the original text
refers to the practice of re-using urine
from chamber pots as a cleaning
solution in which to soak laundry.
Other unusual early modern cleaning
products include ash and sand.

⁷ A loach is a small freshwater fish
once thought to harbor fleas and
other parasites.

FIRST CARRIER

What are you doing, ostler?! Come here right now--I mean
it!

SECOND CARRIER

I have a leg of smoked ham and some ginger roots that I
have to deliver to Charing Cross.

FIRST CARRIER

Jesus Christ ⁸, the turkeys in my basket are starving!
Come on, ostler! Damn you! Can you not see anything? Can
you not hear? If it isn't a good idea to smack you on the
head, then I am an idiot. Come on I say! Can we trust you at
all?

⁸ In the original text, this oath
literally translates to "by God's body,"
a reference to the body of Christ.

*GADSHILL enters.***GADSHILL**

Good morning, carriers. What time is it?

FIRST CARRIER

I think it's about two o'clock.

GADSHILL

Lend me your lantern so that I can check on my horse in the
stable.

FIRST CARRIER

Not a chance. I know a few tricks like that myself, indeed.

GADSHILL

(To the SECOND CARRIER) Okay then, lend me yours.

SECOND CARRIER

Hey, no way! "Lend me thy lantern," he says. By God, I'll
see you hanged before I do.

GADSHILL

Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come to London?

40

SECOND CARRIER

Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant thee. Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up the gentlemen. They will along with company, for they have great charge.

Exeunt CARRIERS

GADSHILL

What ho, chamberlain!

CHAMBERLAIN

(within) At hand, quoth pickpurse.

GADSHILL

That's even as fair as "at hand, quoth the Chamberlain," for thou variest no more from picking of purses than giving direction doth from laboring: thou layest the plot how.

Enter CHAMBERLAIN

CHAMBERLAIN

Good morrow, Master Gadhill. It holds current that I told you yesternight: there's a franklin in the Wild of Kent hath brought three hundred marks with him in gold. I heard him tell it to one of his company last night at supper—a kind of auditor, one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows what. They are up already and call for eggs and butter. They will away presently.

GADSHILL

Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas' clerks, I'll give thee this neck.

CHAMBERLAIN

No, I'll none of it. I pray thee keep that for the hangman, for I know thou worshipst Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

GADSHILL

What talkest thou to me of the hangman? If I hang, I'll make a fat pair of gallows, for if I hang, old Sir John hangs with me, and thou knowest he is no starveling. Tut, there are other Troyans that thou dreamst not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace, that would, if matters should be looked into, for their own credit sake make all whole. I am joined with no foot-land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio purple-hued malt-worms, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers, such as can hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray, and yet, zounds, I lie, for they pray continually to their saint the commonwealth, or rather not pray to her but prey on her, for they ride up and down on her and make her their boots.

CHAMBERLAIN

What, the commonwealth their boots? Will she hold out water in foul way?

80

GADSHILL

Sir carrier, when are you planning to be in London?

SECOND CARRIER

Some time tonight, I can assure you. Come on, Mugs, my friend. We'll go wake up the ostler. They want to travel with us because they have valuable baggage with them.

CARRIERS exit.

GADSHILL

Hey, chamberlain 9!

9 A chamberlain was a bedroom attendant in Shakespeare's time.

CHAMBERLAIN

(Offstage) "I'm ready," as the pickpockets say!

GADSHILL

That's basically the same as "I'm ready, says the Chamberlain," since you're about as different from a thief as a supervisor is from a worker—you just decide how the work is done.

CHAMBERLAIN enters.

CHAMBERLAIN

Good morning, Mr. Gadhill. Everything I told you last night is still true. There's a small landowner staying here from Kent who has two hundred pounds 10 with him in gold. I heard him telling one of his friends last night at dinner. The friend was some kind of accountant. He has a lot of baggage too—Lord knows what it contains. They are already awake and have asked for their breakfast. They will set off soon.

10 A mark was a unit of value, worth about two-thirds of a pound. Therefore 300 marks equal 200 pounds.

GADSHILL

Sir, if they don't run into thieves on their journey, I'll let you hang me.

CHAMBERLAIN

I won't do it. Save it for the hangman. For I know you worship the patron saint of thieves 11 as much as a villain like you worships anything.

11 Saint Nicholas was the patron saint of travelers, who became associated with robbers who regularly traveled highways in search of victims.

GADSHILL

Why are you talking to me about the hangman? If I am going to hang, I will make up one half of a fat pair, because if I hang, Falstaff will hang alongside me—and you know he is not exactly skinny. You know, there are other companions that you can't even imagine, ones who are happy to give the profession of robbing some respectability—and all for the sake of a practical joke. And if there was ever an investigation into our crimes, their reputation would resolve everything. I'm not accompanied by some highwaymen on foot, or thieves with long canes striking people for small change, or red-faced, mustache-sporting drunkards. No, I'm accompanied by easygoing noblemen, magistrates, great ones! These men would prefer to fight than talk, and would rather talk than drink, and would drink first before they'd pray. But, no, that's a lie—they're always praying to their saint—the commonwealth, England. Or rather, they don't pray to her, but instead they prey on her. For they trample over her and make her their boots.

CHAMBERLAIN

Make her their boots 12? Will she let you stay dry on a muddy road?

12 Here, the chamberlain puns on the word "boots" in the sense of footwear, as opposed to "booty," or the gains from their thievery.

GADSHILL

She will, she will. Justice hath liquored her. We steal as in a castle, cocksure. We have the receipt of fern seed; we walk invisible.

CHAMBERLAIN

Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fern seed for your walking invisible.

GADSHILL

Give me thy hand. Thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.

CHAMBERLAIN

Nay, rather let me have it as you are a false thief.

GADSHILL

Go to. *Homo* is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave.

Exeunt

GADSHILL

She will, she will. Justice has made her waterproof [13]. We can steal in complete safety and with confidence. We have the perfect potion [14] to remain unseen.

[13] Literally speaking, to "liquor" in the original text means to cover with grease, so as to render something waterproof. It can also refer to bribery, like our modern expression "to grease someone's palm."

[14] The "receipt of fern-seed" was the recipe for a potion which was thought to turn people invisible.

CHAMBERLAIN

No, I don't think so. It will be the darkness of the night which will make us invisible, not some perfect potion.

GADSHILL

Shake my hand. You will get a share of our plunder. On my honor as a true man, you will.

CHAMBERLAIN

No, I would prefer it if you swore on your reputation as a lying thief.

GADSHILL

Whichever. *Homo* [15] is a name which applies to all men, even the lying thieves. Tell the ostler to bring my horse out of the stable. Goodbye, you silly fool.

[15] Gadshill uses the Latin word for "man" here, "*homo*" (as in, "*homo sapiens*").

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter PRINCE HENRY, POINS, BARDOLPH, and PETO

POINS

Come, shelter, shelter! I have removed Falstaff's horse, and he frets like a gummed velvet.

PRINCE HENRY

Stand close.

Exit POINS, BARDOLPH, and PETO exit

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

Poins! Poins, and be hanged! Poins!

PRINCE HENRY

Peace, you fat-kidneyed rascal. What a brawling dost thou keep!

FALSTAFF

Where's Poins, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

He is walked up to the top of the hill. I'll go seek him.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

Shakescleare Translation

PRINCE HENRY, POINS, BARDOLPH, and PETO enter.

POINS

Come on, hide yourselves, hide yourselves! I have taken Falstaff's horse and he's coming apart at the seams [1].

[1] The original phrase refers to cheap velvet stiffened with gum resin, which was prone to fraying or "fretting."

PRINCE HENRY

Hide.

POINS, BARDOLPH, and PETO exit.

FALSTAFF enters.

FALSTAFF

Poins! Damn you, Poins! Poins!

PRINCE HENRY

Be quiet, you fat-bellied idiot! Why are you making so much noise?!

FALSTAFF

Where's Poins, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

He has walked up that hill. I'll go and find him.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

I am accursed to rob in that thief's company. The rascal hath removed my horse and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot by the square further afoot, I shall break my wind. Well, I doubt not but to die a fair death for all this, if I 'scape hanging for killing that rogue. I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two-and-twenty years, and yet I am bewitched with the rogue's company. If the rascal hath not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged. It could not be else: I have drunk medicines.— Poins! Hal! A plague upon you both.—Bardolph! Peto!—I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further. An 'twere not as good a deed as drink to turn true man and to leave these rogues, I am the veriest varlet that ever chewed with a tooth. Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me, and the stony-hearted villains know it well enough. A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another!

They whistle.

Whew!

Enter PRINCE HENRY, POINS, PETO, and BARDOLPH

A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues.
Give me my horse and be hanged!

PRINCE HENRY

Peace, you fat guts! Lie down, lay thine ear close to the ground, and list if thou canst hear the tread of travelers.

FALSTAFF

Have you any levers to lift me up again being down?
'Sblood, I'll not bear mine own flesh so far afoot again for all the coin in thy father's Exchequer. What a plague mean you to colt me thus?

PRINCE HENRY

Thou liest. Thou art not colted; thou art uncolted.

FALSTAFF

I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to my horse, good king's son.

PRINCE HENRY

Out, you rogue! Shall I be your ostler?

FALSTAFF

Hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent garters! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this. An I have not ballads made on you all and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison—when a jest is so forward, and afoot too! I hate it.

Enter GADSHILL

GADSHILL

Stand.

FALSTAFF

So I do, against my will.

POINS

O, 'tis our setter. I know his voice, Bardolph. —What news?

FALSTAFF

I do not want to rob anyone with that thief around. He has stolen my horse and I have no idea where he's tied him up. If I have to walk even four more feet, I will be out of breath.

Although I expect to die an honorable death in spite of this, if I don't get hanged for killing that thief. For the last twenty-two years, I have sworn every hour that I will never speak to him again, but I am still delighted by his company. He must have given me a potion to make me love him--there's no other possibility. Yeah, that must be it! I must have drunk a potion! Poins! Hal! Oh, damn you both. Bardolph! Peto! I'll die before I take another step. If I shouldn't just become an honest man and leave these idiots, then I am the worst scoundrel that ever lived. Eight yards of rough ground feels like seventy miles of walking for me, and those hard-hearted villains know that! What good is it when there is no honor among thieves.

2 The original text makes a pun on "breaking wind" in the sense of losing one's breath, and also passing gas. It adds to the characterization of Falstaff as a base, if not crude, figure.

They whistle from offstage.

Whew!

PRINCE HENRY, POINS, PETO, and BARDOLPH enter.

Damn you all! Give me my horse, you devils. Give me my horse and to hell with all of you!

PRINCE HENRY

Be quiet, you fat thing. Lie down, put your ear close to the ground, and listen to see if you can hear the travelers' footsteps.

FALSTAFF

Do you have a machine to lift me back up again once I'm down? I swear to God, I wouldn't walk all this way again even for all the money in your father's treasury. Why do you cheat me and horse around like this?

PRINCE HENRY

You are lying. How can we horse around when we don't even have a horse?

FALSTAFF

Please, my good Prince Hal, tell me where my horse is, you good Prince.

PRINCE HENRY

Leave it, you scoundrel! Am I supposed to be your stable boy?!

FALSTAFF

Go hang yourself in your own princely garters! If I'm captured, I will tell them all about you.

3 In the original text, Shakespeare derives "peach" from the archaic verb "to appeal," which means "to accuse" or "to bring a charge against."

If I don't make them sing dirty ballads about you, then poison me with a cup of wine. I hate it when a joke is taken too far,

4 and leaves me without a horse!

GADSHILL enters.

GADSHILL

Stop.

FALSTAFF

I am, even if I don't want to.

POINS

Oh, it's the one who set up this robbery. I recognize his voice, Bardolph.

3 In the original text, Shakespeare derives "peach" from the archaic verb "to appeal," which means "to accuse" or "to bring a charge against."

4 In the original text, Shakespeare puns on the fact that their practical joke is "afoot," or in motion—as well as Falstaff's distaste for walking.

GADSHILL

Case you, case you. On with your vizards. There's money of the King's coming down the hill. 'Tis going to the King's Exchequer.

FALSTAFF

You lie, you rogue. 'Tis going to the King's Tavern.

GADSHILL

55 There's enough to make us all.

FALSTAFF

To be hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

Sirs, you four shall front them in the narrow lane. Ned Poins and I will walk lower. If they 'scape from your encounter, then they light on us.

PETO

60 How many be there of them?

GADSHILL

Some eight or ten.

FALSTAFF

Zounds, will they not rob us?

PRINCE HENRY

What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?

FALSTAFF

Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather, but yet no coward, Hal.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, we leave that to the proof.

POINS

Sirrah Jack, thy horse stands behind the hedge. When thou needest him, there thou shalt find him. Farewell, and stand fast.

FALSTAFF

70 Now cannot I strike him, if I should be hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

(aside to POINS) Ned, where are our disguises?

POINS

(aside to PRINCE HENRY) Here, hard by. Stand close.

Exeunt PRINCE HENRY and POINS

FALSTAFF

Now, my masters, happy man be his dole, say I. Every man to his business.

Enter the TRAVELERS

FIRST TRAVELER

75 Come, neighbor, the boy shall lead our horses down the hill.
We'll walk afoot awhile and ease our legs.

[To GADSHILL] What's happening?

GADSHILL

Cover up, cover up. Put on your masks. Disguise yourselves. There's tax revenue coming down the hill, bound for the royal treasury.

FALSTAFF

You are lying, you rascal. It's going to the King's bank.

GADSHILL

There's enough to make all of our fortunes.

FALSTAFF

And guarantee that we are hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

Sirs, you four will attack them in the narrow lane. Ned Poins and I will go further down the way. If they manage to escape from your attack, then they will meet us instead.

PETO

How many of them are there?

GADSHILL

About eight or ten.

FALSTAFF

Heavens, won't they just rob us instead?

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, are you a coward, Sir John Pot-Belly?

FALSTAFF

Certainly I am no John of Gaunt ⁵, your grandfather. But I'm also not a coward, Hal.

⁵ Falstaff puns on Hal's grandfather's name "Gaunt," and the meaning of the word as "lean" or "skinny."

PRINCE HENRY

Well, let's see about that.

POINS

Sir Jack, your horse is waiting behind that hedge. When you need him, you will find him there. Goodbye, and get ready.

FALSTAFF

I can't hit him now, or I'd be hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

[To POINS so that only he can hear] Ned, where are our disguises?

POINS

[To PRINCE HENRY so that only he can hear] They are here, right by us. Now let's hide.

PRINCE HENRY and POINS exit.

FALSTAFF

Now, my men, may luck be with us! Get ready to go.

The TRAVELERS enter.

FIRST TRAVELER

Come on, friend. This boy will take our horses down the hill. Let's walk for a little while and stretch our legs.

THIEVES

Stand!

TRAVELERS

Jesus bless us!

FALSTAFF

80 Strike! Down with them! Cut the villains' throats! Ah, whoreson caterpillars, bacon-fed knaves, they hate us youth. Down with them! Fleece them!

TRAVELERS

O, we are undone, both we and ours forever!

FALSTAFF

Hang, you gorballed knaves! Are you undone? No, you fat chuffs. I would your store were here. On, bacons, on! What, you knaves, young men must live. You are grandjurors, are you? We'll jure you, faith.

Here they rob them and bind them. Exeunt

Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS

PRINCE HENRY

The thieves have bound the true men. Now could thou and I rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest forever.

POINS

Stand close, I hear them coming.

PRINCE HENRY and POINS hide. Enter the thieves again

FALSTAFF

Come, my masters, let us share, and then to horse before day. An the Prince and Poins be not two arrant 95 cowards, there's no equity stirring. There's no more valor in that Poins than in a wild duck.

As they are sharing, PRINCE HENRY and POINS set upon them.

PRINCE HENRY

Your money!

POINS

Villains!

They all run away, and FALSTAFF, after a blow or two, runs away too, leaving the booty behind them.

PRINCE HENRY

Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse. 100 The thieves are all scattered, and possessed with fear So strongly that they dare not meet each other. Each takes his fellow for an officer. Away, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death, And lards the lean earth as he walks along. Were 't not for laughing, I should pity him.

POINS

How the fat rogue roared!

Exeunt

THIEVES

Freeze!

TRAVELERS

Jesus bless us!

FALSTAFF

Attack! Get them! Cut the scoundrels' throats! Oh, vile parasites! Overfed idiots! They hate young people like us. Get them! Take everything they've got!

TRAVELERS

Oh, we are completely ruined!

FALSTAFF

God, you potbellied morons! Are you completely ruined? No, you fat penny-pinchers. I wish all of your possessions were here. Come on, you pigs, come on! What's wrong, you idiots? Young men have to live somehow. You're Grand Jurors, ⁶ aren't you? Well, we'll show you some justice.

⁶ The use of this term in the original text indicates that the travelers are men of importance. In Shakespeare's time, only wealthy men were allowed to serve on grand juries.

They rob them and tie them up. They exit.

PRINCE HENRY and POINS enter.

PRINCE HENRY

The thieves have tied up the honest men. Now if we can rob the thieves, we can go happily to London. And this would be something we could talk about for a week, laugh about for a month, and remember as a good joke forever.

POINS

Hide--I hear them coming.

PRINCE HENRY and POINS hide. The thieves enter again.

FALSTAFF

Come on, men, let's share out this money and then get going before it is light. If the Prince and Poins aren't two complete cowards, then there's no truth in the world. Poins doesn't have any more courage than a wild duck!

As the thieves are sharing out the money, PRINCE HENRY and POINS, in disguise, attack them.

PRINCE HENRY

Give us your money!

POINS

Villains!

They all run away, and FALSTAFF, after being hit a couple of times, runs away too, leaving the plunder behind them.

PRINCE HENRY

How easy was that? Now we can ride off happily. The thieves have all run away, so scared that they won't even want to meet each other. Each of them mistakes his companion for an officer of the law! Let's go, Ned. Falstaff is sweating so much that he drips fat onto the ground as he walks along. If it wasn't so funny, I would feel sorry for him.

POINS

How that fat rascal screamed!

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter HOTSPUR alone, reading a letter

HOTSPUR

But, for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house. He could be contented; why is he not, then? In respect of the love he bears our house—he shows in this he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. *The purpose you undertake is dangerous.* Why, that's certain. 'Tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. *The purpose you undertake is dangerous, the friends you have named uncertain, the time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition.* Say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow, cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid, our friends true and constant—a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation; an excellent plot, very good friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! Why, my Lord of York commands the plot and the general course of the action. Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I could brain him with his lady's fan. Is there not my father, my uncle, and myself? Lord Edmund Mortimer, my Lord of York, and Owen Glendower? Is there not besides the Douglas? Have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month, and are they not some of them set forward already? What a pagan rascal is this—an infidel! Ha, you shall see now in very sincerity of fear and cold heart, will he to the King and lay open all our proceedings. O, I could divide myself and go to buffets, for moving such a dish of skim milk with so honorable an action! Hang him, let him tell the King. We are prepared. I will set forward tonight.

Enter his lady, LADY PERCY

How now, Kate? I must leave you within these two hours.

LADY PERCY

O my good lord, why are you thus alone? For what offense have I this fortnight been A banished woman from my Harry's bed? Tell me, sweet lord, what is 't that takes from thee Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep? Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth And start so often when thou sit'st alone? Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks And given my treasures and my rights of thee To thick-eyed musing and curst melancholy? In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watched, And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars, Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed, Cry "Courage! To the field!" And thou hast talk'd Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents, Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets, Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin, Of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain, And all the currents of a heady fight. Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war, And thus hath so bestirred thee in thy sleep, That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow Like bubbles in a late-disturbèd stream, And in thy face strange motions have appeared, Such as we see when men restrain their breath On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are these?

Shakescleare Translation

HOTSPUR enters alone, reading a letter.

HOTSPUR

"As for me, my lord, I would be happy to be there, because of the love I have for your family." If he is happy to be here, then why isn't he? Because of the love I have for your family--it's clear he loves his own house more than he loves mine. I'll read some more. "*Your mission is dangerous.*" Well, that's true, but it's also dangerous to catch a cold, to sleep, to drink. I can tell you, my silly lord, that even though stinging nettles are dangerous, we will be able to safely find the flower within them. "*Your mission is dangerous, your allies are unreliable, the time unsuitable, and your whole conspiracy is too light to counterbalance an opponent like the King.*" Is that so? Is it? I will say it again, you are a silly, weak coward, and these are just lies. What an idiot he is! By God, our plan is as good as any plan that's ever been made; our allies are honest and reliable. It's a good plot, with good allies, and it's full of promise. It's even an excellent plan, with very good allies. What a cold-hearted idiot he is! Why, the Archbishop of York supports my plan and how the mission is developing. Heavens, if I was close to this rascal right now, I would smack him with his wife's fan. Don't we have the support of my father, my uncle, and myself?! Lord Edmund Mortimer, the Archbishop of York, and Owen Glendower?! And don't we also have Douglas? Don't I have letters from all of them agreeing to meet me with their armies by the ninth of next month, and some of them have even set off already? What an unbelievable idiot he is--a non-believer! Ha, just wait for him to run to the King and tell him all about our plan, he'll be so filled with fear. Oh, if only I could split myself in half and tell my other half how angry I am that I trusted such an unworthy person with such important news. To hell with him--let him tell the King! We're ready. I will set off tonight.

LADY PERCY--his wife--enters.

How are you Kate? I have to leave within the next two hours.

LADY PERCY

Oh my good lord, why are you always alone? Why have you banned me from your bed for the past two weeks? Tell me, sweet lord, what has taken away your appetite, your desire, and your precious sleep? Why do you stare at the ground so much, and jump so often when you are sitting alone? Why have you lost the color in your cheeks? Why have you taken away the intimacy that is my pleasure and my right as your wife, and instead given it to this dark way of thinking and bad-tempered sadness? I have watched you in your restless sleep, and have heard you murmuring stories about war, as if you are giving commands to an army. You have cried out, "Have courage! To the field!" You have talked about advances and retreats, about trenches, tents, barriers, ramparts, defensive walls. You have talked about different cannons, about prisoners being ransomed, soldiers dying, and all of the things that happen in a violent battle. Your soul has also been at war, and has been disturbing you in your sleep. There have been beads of sweat on your forehead, that look like bubbles in a swirling stream. There have been strange expressions on your face, like the types we see when men hold their breath at a terrible, sudden request. Oh, what do these signs mean? You are plotting something serious, and I want to know what it is, or else you do not love me.

Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

HOTSPUR

What, ho!

Enter SERVANT

65 Is Gilliams with the packet gone?

SERVANT

He is, my lord, an hour ago.

HOTSPUR

Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

SERVANT

One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

HOTSPUR

What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

SERVANT

70 It is, my lord.

HOTSPUR

That roan shall be my throne.
Well, I will back him straight. O, Esperance!
Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

Exit SERVANT

LADY PERCY

But hear you, my lord.

HOTSPUR

75 What say'st thou, my lady?

LADY PERCY

What is it carries you away?

HOTSPUR

Why, my horse,
My love, my horse.

LADY PERCY

Out, you mad-headed ape!
80 A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen
As you are tossed with. In faith,
I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir
About his title, and hath sent for you
To line his enterprise; but if you go—

HOTSPUR

—So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

LADY PERCY

Come, come, you parquito, answer me
Directly unto this question that I ask.
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
90 An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

HOTSPUR

Away!
Away, you trifler. Love, I love thee not.
I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world
To play with mammals and to tilt with lips.
95 We must have bloody noses and cracked crowns,
And pass them current too.—Gods me, my horse!—
What say'st thou, Kate? What would'st thou have with

HOTSPUR

[To the SERVANT] Hey, you!

The SERVANT enters.

Has Gilliams left with the letters?

SERVANT

He has, my lord, about an hour ago.

HOTSPUR

And did Butler bring those horses from the sheriff?

SERVANT

He has brought one horse, my lord, just now.

HOTSPUR

Which horse? A brown one, with its ears clipped?

SERVANT

Yes, that one, my lord.

HOTSPUR

That horse will be like my throne. I will mount him right away. Oh, be hopeful! Tell Butler to lead the horse into the field.

 In the original text, Hotspur invokes the Percy family's motto "Esperance," which literally means "hope."

The SERVANT exits.

LADY PERCY

Listen to me, my lord.

HOTSPUR

What do you have to say, my lady?

LADY PERCY

Why have you got so carried away?

HOTSPUR

Why, that's my horse's fault, my love--my horse's fault.

 Hotspur takes Kate's question literally here.

LADY PERCY

Stop it, you crazy idiot! Even a weasel doesn't have the same temper that you have. I swear, I'll find out what you're planning, Harry, that's for sure. I am worried that my brother Mortimer is going to take action to claim his rightful crown and has sent for you to support his mission. But if you go--

HOTSPUR

—Such a long way on foot, I will be tired my love.

LADY PERCY

Come on, you little parrot, take my question seriously and answer me. I swear, I will break your little finger, Harry, if you don't tell me the whole truth.

HOTSPUR

Go away! Go away, you shrew! Love? I don't love you. I don't even care about you, Kate. Now is not the time for playing with dolls and leaning in for silly kisses. Now is the time for bloody noses and battered heads, and we must inflict them on others too. Oh God, bring me my horse! What do you have to say, Kate? What do you want from me?

me?

LADY PERCY

Do you not love me? Do you not indeed?
100 Well, do not then, for since you love me not,
I will not love myself. Do you not love me?
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

HOTSPUR

Come, wilt thou see me ride?
And when I am a-horseback, I will swear
105 I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate,
I must not have you henceforth question me
Whither I go, nor reason whereabout.
Whither I must, I must; and to conclude,
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.
110 I know you wise, but yet no farther wise
Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,
But yet a woman; and for secrecy
No lady closer, for I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,
115 And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

LADY PERCY

How? So far?

HOTSPUR

Not an inch further. But hark you, Kate,
Whither I go, thither shall you go too.
Today will I set forth, tomorrow you.
120 Will this content you, Kate?

LADY PERCY

It must, of force.

Exeunt

LADY PERCY

You don't love me? Really? Well don't bother then, since if
you don't love me, I won't love myself. You don't love me?
Tell me if this is a joke or not.

HOTSPUR

Come on, will you come and say goodbye? When I am on
horseback, I will swear to love you forever. But listen, Kate.
From now on you must not question me about where I am
going, or the reasons why. If I must go, then I must. That's
that. Therefore this evening I must leave you, dear Kate. I
know you are wise, but you can only be as wise as the wife
of Harry Percy should be; I know you are loyal, but you are
still a woman.³ And no woman can keep a secret like you
can, especially since you will not be able to speak about
something you don't know. So that is as far as I will trust
you, sweet Kate.

³ We are reminded in the original text of the stereotype in Shakespeare's time that women were changeable and fickle.

LADY PERCY

Wow? That far?

HOTSPUR

Yes, and not an inch further. But listen here, Kate, wherever
I go, you will go too. I will leave today and you will leave
tomorrow. Will that make you happy, Kate?

LADY PERCY

It will have to, out of necessity.

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS

PRINCE HENRY

Ned, prithee, come out of that fat room and lend me thy
hand to laugh a little.

POINS

Where hast been, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

With three or four loggerheads amongst three or
5 fourscore hogsheads, I have sounded the very bass string
of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of
drawers, and can call them all by their christen names,
as Tom, Dick, and Francis. They take it already upon
their salvation that though I be but Prince of Wales,
10 yet I am the king of courtesy, and tell me flatly am no
proud jack, like Falstaff, but a Corinthian, a lad of
mettle, a good boy—by the Lord, so they call me—and when
I am King of England, I shall command all the good lads
in Eastcheap. They call drinking deep "dyeing scarlet,"
and when you breathe in your watering, they cry "Hem!"
15 and bid you "Play it off!" To conclude, I am so good a
proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink
with any tinker in his own language during my life. I
tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honor that thou wert
20 not with me in this action; but, sweet Ned—to sweeten
which name of Ned, I give thee this pennyworth of sugar,
clapped even now into my hand by an undersinker, one

Shakescleare Translation

PRINCE HENRY and POINS enter.

PRINCE HENRY

Ned, please, come out of that stuffy room and make me
laugh for a while.

POINS

Where have you been, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

I've been with three or four blockheads,¹ and somewhere
between sixty and eighty cases of wine. I have been with
the lowest of the lowly. Sir, I am now best friends with three
of these bartenders, and can even call them by their first
names—Tom, Dick, and Francis. They have promised me
that even though I am just the Prince of Wales, I am a king
of politeness in their eyes. They told me straight that I'm
not a pompous idiot, like Falstaff, but a worthy fellow, a
determined lad, a good boy even—I swear to God they call
me that. When I am King of England, I will have the support
of all the good lads in Eastcheap. When you drink a lot, they
call it being "dyed red",² and when you take a break from
drinking, they cough loudly, and tell you to finish your
drink. All in all, I got so good at drinking in fifteen minutes
that I can be a good drinking buddy with people of any
social class.³ I am telling you Ned, you didn't help
yourself in missing this encounter. But sweet Ned, I will
make your name even sweeter by giving you a penny's
worth of sugar. I got this from an apprentice bartender, a

¹ Here Hal refers to the drawers who brought him down to the wine cellar.

² The imagery here conveys the flushing of the face, and bloodshot eyes, which accompany drunkenness.

³ In the original text, Hal cites a tinker as someone with whom he can drink. Tinkers were of a lower social rank, and made their living by fixing metal utensils, such as pots and pans.

that never spake other English in his life than "Eight shillings and sixpence," and "You are welcome," with this shrill addition, "Anon, anon, sir.—Score a pint of bastard in the Half-moon," or so. But, Ned, to drive away the time till Falstaff come, I prithee, do thou stand in some by-room while I question my puny drawer to what end he gave me the sugar; and do thou never leave calling "Francis," that his tale to me may be nothing but "Anon." Step aside, and I'll show thee a precedent.

Exit POINS

POINS

(*within*) Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Thou art perfect.

POINS

(*within*) Francis!

Enter FRANCIS, a drawer

FRANCIS

35 Anon, anon, sir.—Look down into the Pomegranet, Ralph.

PRINCE HENRY

Come hither, Francis.

FRANCIS

My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

FRANCIS

Forsooth, five years, and as much as to—

POINS

40 (*within*) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, anon, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

Five year! By 'r lady, a long lease for the clinking of pewter! But, Francis, darest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture, and show it a fair pair of heels, and run from it?

FRANCIS

O Lord, sir, I'll be sworn upon all the books in England, I could find in my heart—

POINS

(*within*) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

50 How old art thou, Francis?

boy who has never said anything in his life except for, "That'll be eight shillings and sixpence," and "You're welcome," and sometimes, "Just a minute, sir. Bring a pint of bastard ⁴ to the Half-moon ⁵ room," or something like that. But Ned, to waste some time before Falstaff gets here, will you stand in a side room while I question one of the inexperienced apprentices about why he gave me the sugar. Keep calling out the name "Francis," so that he keeps having to reply, "Just a minute, sir." Go to this room, and I'll show you something worth remembering.

POINS exits.

POINS

[*Offstage*] Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Perfect.

POINS

[*Offstage*] Francis!

FRANCIS—a drawer—enters.

FRANCIS

Wait a minute, sir—Ralph, check to see that everything's okay in the Pomegranate ⁶ room.

⁴ *Bastard was a sweet wine from Spain, mixed with honey.*
⁵ *This is a name of a room in the tavern.*

PRINCE HENRY

Come here, Francis.

FRANCIS

My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

How much longer do you have left to serve as an apprentice?

FRANCIS

Indeed ⁷, about five years, about as long as—

⁶ *"Forsooth" derives from Old English word "sooth," which means genuine or true. Thus, this word roughly translates to "in truth."*

POINS

[*Offstage*] Francis!

FRANCIS

Just a minute, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

Five years! By God ⁸, that's a long time to learn how to pull a pint! But, Francis, would you dare to be brave enough to be a coward with your contract, and leave it behind? Run away from it?

⁷ *The contraction in the original text expands to "By our Lady," an oath referring to the Virgin Mary.*

FRANCIS

Oh Lord, sir, I swear on all the Bibles in England, I could manage to--

POINS

[*Offstage*] Francis!

FRANCIS

One minute, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

How old are you, Francis?

FRANCIS

Let me see. About Michaelmas next, I shall be—

POINS

(within) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, sir. (to PRINCE HENRY) Pray, stay a little, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

55 Nay, but hark you, Francis, for the sugar thou gavest me, 'twas a pennyworth, was 't not?

FRANCIS

O Lord, I would it had been two!

PRINCE HENRY

I will give thee for it a thousand pound. Ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it.

POINS

60 (within) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, anon.

PRINCE HENRY

Anon, Francis? No, Francis, but tomorrow, Francis; or, Francis, o' Thursday; or indeed, Francis, when thou wilt.

65 But, Francis—

FRANCIS

My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

Wilt thou rob this leathern jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated, agate-ring, puke-stocking, caddis-garter, smooth-tongue, Spanish-pouch—

FRANCIS

70 O Lord, sir, who do you mean?

PRINCE HENRY

Why, then, your brown bastard is your only drink, for look you, Francis, your white canvas doublet will sully. In Barbary, sir, it cannot come to so much.

FRANCIS

What, sir?

POINS

75 (within) Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Away, you rogue! Dost thou not hear them call?

Here they both call him. FRANCIS the drawer stands amazed, not knowing which way to go.

FRANCIS

Let me work it out. Next year, around the end of September 9, I will be--

9 Francis refers to the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, or Michaelmas, which occurs on September 29th.

POINS

[Offstage] Francis!

FRANCIS

Just a minute, sir.

[To PRINCE HENRY] Stay here a minute, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

No, but listen to me, Francis. The sugar that you gave me was about a penny's worth, right?

FRANCIS

Oh Lord, I wish it could have been worth two pennies!

PRINCE HENRY

I will give you a thousand pounds for it. Ask me for it whenever you want, and you can have it.

POINS

[Offstage] Francis!

FRANCIS

One minute, please!

PRINCE HENRY

You want it in one minute, Francis? No, Francis, but you can have it tomorrow, or Thursday. Or indeed, Francis, whenever you want it. But Francis--

FRANCIS

Yes, my lord?

PRINCE HENRY

Are you ready to rob this man of your service 10? This man who wears leather jackets, has fashionable crystal buttons, is short-haired, wears an agate ring, has dark, woolen stockings, has cloth garters instead of silk, a smooth way of talking, and a Spanish leather pouch--

10 Here, Hal refers to Francis' master, whom he will "rob" of his service if he breaks the terms of his apprenticeship and leaves.

FRANCIS

Oh Lord sir, who are you talking about?

PRINCE HENRY

Why then this brown bastard 12 will have to remain your only drink, for if you leave, your white canvas jacket will get dirty. Even if you go to Barbary in North Africa, you won't have any more than you have now. 11

11 Critics have alternately interpreted these lines as Hal's warning to Francis not to leave his apprenticeship; a speech meant to confuse and fluster Francis further; and, specifically in the last line, a taunting remark that Francis lost out on the opportunity to gain 1000 pounds.

12 A sweet, Spanish wine.

FRANCIS

What, sir?

POINS

[Offstage] Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Go on, you rascal! Didn't you hear them calling your name?

Both POINS and PRINCE HENRY call his name. FRANCIS stands there puzzled, not knowing which way to go.

*Enter VINTNER**VINTNER* enters.¹³ The vintner is employed as an innkeeper.**VINTNER**

What, stand'st thou still and hear'st such a calling?
Look to the guests within.

*Exit FRANCIS**FRANCIS* exits.

My lord, old Sir John with half a dozen more are at the
door.
80 Shall I let them in?

PRINCE HENRY

Let them alone awhile, and then open the door.

*Exit VINTNER**VINTNER* exits.

Poins!

*Reenter POINS**POINS* re-enters.**POINS**

Anon, anon, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

85 Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the
door.
Shall we be merry?

POINS

As merry as crickets, my lad. But hark you, what
cunning match have you made with this jest of the
90 drawer. Come, what's the issue?

PRINCE HENRY

I am now of all humors that have showed themselves
humors since the old days of Goodman Adam to the pupil
age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.

*Enter FRANCIS**FRANCIS* enters.

What's o'clock, Francis?

FRANCIS

95 Anon, anon, sir.

*Exit FRANCIS**FRANCIS* exits.**PRINCE HENRY**

That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a
parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is
upstairs and downstairs, his eloquence the parcel of a
reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of
100 the north, he that kills me some six or seven dozen of
Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his
wife "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work." "O my
sweet Harry," says she, "how many hast thou killed
today?" "Give my roan horse a drench," says he, and
answers "Some fourteen," an hour after. "A trifle, a
trifle." I prithee, call in Falstaff. I'll play Percy,
and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife.
"Rivo!" says the drunkard. Call in Ribs, call in
Tallow.

*Enter FALSTAFF, GADSHILL, PETO, and BARDOLPH, followed by
FRANCIS with wine*

POINS

110 Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been?

VINTNER

Why are you standing there doing nothing when you hear
people are calling your name? Go and see what the guests
want.

FRANCIS exits.

My lord, old Sir John is at the door with about six other
men. Should I let them in?

PRINCE HENRY

Leave them outside for a while, and then let them in.

VINTNER exits.

Poins!

POINS re-enters.**POINS**

Hang on, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

Sir, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the door. Are
we ready to have a good laugh?

POINS

We'll be chirping like crickets, my lad. But listen, what
clever trick did you play on the drawer? Tell me, what's your
plan?

PRINCE HENRY

I am currently feeling every mood that anyone has ever felt,
from when Adam was alive in Eden to the young age
we're at now, at midnight.

¹⁴ The term "Goodman" in the original text was used to address men of a lower social rank than Hal's.*FRANCIS* enters.

What time is it, Francis?

FRANCIS

Give me a minute, sir.

FRANCIS exits.**PRINCE HENRY**

This boy has less to say than a parrot does, even though
he's a human! His job is to run upstairs and downstairs, and
the only things he ever has to say are the items on a bill. I
don't see the world like Percy does, yet this Hotspur of the
north, who kills fifty or sixty Scotsmen before breakfast,
washes his hands, and says to his wife, "God, life is boring! I
want something to do." "Oh my sweet Harry," she replies,
"how many people have you killed today?" He tells her,
"Give my brown horse its medicine," and then an hour later
answers, "Only fourteen, that's nothing, nothing." Please,
call in Falstaff now. I will play Percy, and that damned
potbellied Falstaff will play his wife, Dame Mortimer.
"Bottoms up!" says the drunkard. Bring in the meat, bring
in the fat.

¹⁵ In the original text, Hal uses the words "brawn," "Ribs," and "Tallow"--all related to fatty meat--as a reference to Falstaff's weight.

*FALSTAFF, GADSHILL, PETO, and BARDOLPH enter, followed by
FRANCIS with wine*

POINS

Welcome, Jack. Where have you been?

FALSTAFF

A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too!
Marry and amen!— Give me a cup of sack, boy.— Ere I lead
this life long, I'll sew netherstocks and mend them, and
foot them too. A plague of all cowards!— Give me a cup
of sack, rogue! — Is there no virtue extant? (*he
drinketh*)

115

PRINCE HENRY

Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of
butter?—Pitiful-hearted Titan!—that melted at the sweet
tale of the sun's? If thou didst, then behold that
compound.

120

FALSTAFF

(*to FRANCIS*) You rogue, here's lime in this sack too.—
There is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous
man, yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime
in it. A villainous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack. Die
125 when thou wilt. If manhood, good manhood, be not forgot
upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring.
There lives not three good men unhang'd in England, and
one of them is fat and grows old, God help the while. A
bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver. I could sing
130 psalms, or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say
still.

125

PRINCE HENRY

How now, woolsack, what mutter you?

FALSTAFF

A King's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom
135 with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore
thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on
my face more. You, Prince of Wales!

135

PRINCE HENRY

Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter?

FALSTAFF

Are not you a coward? Answer me to that—and Poins
there?

POINS

140 Zounds, ye fat paunch, an you call me coward, by the
Lord,
I'll stab thee.

140

FALSTAFF

I call thee coward? I'll see thee damned ere I call
thee coward, but I would give a thousand pound I could
145 run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in
the shoulders you care not who sees your back. Call you
that backing of your friends? A plague upon such
backing! Give me them that will face me.— Give me a cup
of sack.—I am a rogue if I drunk today.

FALSTAFF

I say! A curse on all cowards, and revenge, too! That's how
it should be!

[*To FRANCIS*] Give me a cup of wine, boy.

[*To the others*] I'll give up this way of life before too long.
Instead I'll take up sewing and mending stockings,
and make new feet for them, too. A curse on all cowards!

[*To FRANCIS*] Give me a cup of wine, you rascal!

[*To the others*] Isn't there any truth left in this world? [*He
drinks*]

PRINCE HENRY

Have you ever seen the tender-hearted sun melt a dish of
butter [16](#) like this, with such flattery?! If you have, then
take a look at this [new mixture](#). [17](#)

[16](#) Shakespeare uses the word *Titan*, shorthand for the Greek sun-god *Helios*, to stand in for the planet. This reference has confused a number of editors, but the most plausible meaning is that Falstaff is hot and sweaty, and Hal has compared him to a melting dish of butter.

[17](#) The compound mentioned in the original text could refer to melting butter, or to Falstaff himself.

FALSTAFF

[*To FRANCIS*] You idiot, there's lime in this wine [18](#)! Evil
men have nothing in them but harm, but a coward is even
worse than a cup of wine with lime in it. An evil coward! Get
on your way, then, old Jack. Die now. If there are any true
men left on this earth except for me, then I am a spawned
herring [19](#). There aren't even three good men in England
who haven't been hanged, and one of them is fat and
getting older. God help these times! It is a bad world, I say. I
wish I was a weaver and then I could sing psalms [20](#) while I
worked. I say it again--damn all you cowards.

[18](#) Lime, or calcium oxide, was added to make wines of poor quality sparkle in the early modern era.

[19](#) This metaphor associates Falstaff with a fish just laid as an egg--thin and weak.

[20](#) Many weavers of the time were of Dutch origin, and were known for their Protestant religious practices including psalm-singing.

PRINCE HENRY

What's the matter, you big sack of wool, what are you
blabbering on about?

FALSTAFF

A King's son! If I don't beat you out of your kingdom with a
wooden dagger [21](#), and send all of your followers before
you like a flock of geese, then I will never grow a beard
again. You, the Prince of Wales?! As if!

[21](#) A wooden dagger was carried by the comic character Vice in the morality plays.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, you fat son-of-a-bitch, what's the matter?

FALSTAFF

Aren't you a coward? Answer that question--you too, Poins!

POINS

Good Lord, you potbelly, if you call me a coward, I swear to
God, I'll stab you.

FALSTAFF

Me call you a coward? I would rather see you damned than
call you a coward. I would give a thousand pounds if I could
run away as fast as you can. Your shoulders are attractive
enough that you don't seem to care who sees your back. Do
you call that backing up your friends? Damn you and your
help! Give me a man that will face me rather than turn his
back. Get me a cup of wine. I would be lying if I said I've had
anything to drink today.

PRINCE HENRY

150 O villain, thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunk'st last.

FALSTAFF

All is one for that. (*he drinketh*) A plague of all cowards, still say I.

PRINCE HENRY

What's the matter?

FALSTAFF

155 What's the matter? There be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

PRINCE HENRY

Where is it, Jack? Where is it?

FALSTAFF

Where is it? Taken from us it is. A hundred upon poor four of us.

PRINCE HENRY

160 What, a hundred, man?

FALSTAFF

I am a rogue if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose, my buckler cut through and through, my sword hacked like a handsaw. *Ecce signum!* I never dealt better since I was a man. All would not do. A plague of all cowards! (*points to GADSHILL, PETO and BARDOLPH*) Let them speak. If they speak more or less than truth, they are villains, and the sons of darkness.

PRINCE HENRY

170 Speak, sirs, how was it?

GADSHILL

We four set upon some dozen.

FALSTAFF

Sixteen at least, my lord.

BARDOLPH

And bound them.

PETO

No, no, they were not bound.

FALSTAFF

175 You rogue, they were bound, every man of them, or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

GADSHILL

As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us.

FALSTAFF

180 And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

PRINCE HENRY

What, fought you with them all?

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, you liar! Your lips have barely been wiped clean since your last drink.

FALSTAFF

That makes no difference. [*He drinks*] Damn all cowards, I say again.

PRINCE HENRY

What's the matter?

FALSTAFF

What's the matter? Four of us here stole a thousand pounds just this morning.

PRINCE HENRY

Then where is it, Jack? Where is it?

FALSTAFF

Where is it? It was stolen from us. A hundred men attacked the four of us.

PRINCE HENRY

What? One hundred, man?

FALSTAFF

I am a liar if I haven't been fighting with at least twelve of them in close combat for at least two hours. It's a miracle I escaped. They stabbed through my jacket eight times, through my pants four times, my shield is full of holes, and my sword is cut up and useless. Look at the proof ²²! I have never fought better, but whatever I did, it wasn't enough. Damn all you cowards. [*Points at GADSHILL, PETO, and BARDOLPH*] Let them speak. If they don't tell you the complete truth, then they're villains and are evil.

PRINCE HENRY

Tell us, sirs, how was it?

GADSHILL

Four of us managed to attack about twelve men.

FALSTAFF

It was sixteen at least, my lord.

BARDOLPH

And we tied them up.

PETO

No, no, we didn't tie them up.

FALSTAFF

You idiot, they were tied up, all of them, or else I am a Jew, a Hebrew Jew ²³.

²² This is the translation from the original text's Latin, "ecce signum."

²³ Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the word *Jew* to indicate someone who should not be trusted. Anti-Semitic attitudes and remarks were not unheard of in early modern England.

GADSHILL

As we were dividing up the money, six or seven new men attacked us.

FALSTAFF

And they untied the others, and then all these other men arrived.

PRINCE HENRY

What? And you fought all of them?

FALSTAFF

All? I know not what you call all, but if I fought not with fifty of them I am a bunch of radish. If there were not two- or three-and-fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

185

PRINCE HENRY

Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

FALSTAFF

Nay, that's past praying for. I have peppered two of them. Two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward. Here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me.

190

PRINCE HENRY

What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.

FALSTAFF

Four, Hal, I told thee four.

POINS

195

Ay, ay, he said four.

FALSTAFF

These four came all afront, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

PRINCE HENRY

Seven? Why there were but four even now.

FALSTAFF

200

In buckram?

POINS

Ay, four in buckram suits.

FALSTAFF

Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

PRINCE HENRY

(aside to POINS) Prithee, let him alone. We shall have more anon.

FALSTAFF

205

Dost thou hear me, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

PRINCE HENRY

So, two more already.

FALSTAFF

210

Their points being broken—

POINS

Down fell their hose.

FALSTAFF

What do you mean by all? I don't know what you mean by all, but if I didn't fight with fifty of them, then I'm a bunch of radishes. If there weren't fifty-two or fifty-three of them attacking poor, old Jack, then I'm not even a man.

PRINCE HENRY

I pray to God you didn't kill any of them.

FALSTAFF

It's too late to pray. I crushed two of them. I am sure I killed two more of them, two idiots wearing coarse linen.²⁴ I tell you what, Hal, if I am lying then spit in my face and insult me. You know how I fight. This is how I stood, and this is how I held my sword. Four idiots in coarse linen attacked me.

²⁴ It may be worth remembering that Poins had suits made of this same coarse linen, buckram, for he and Hal to wear during their robbery.

PRINCE HENRY

There were four of them? You said two just now.

FALSTAFF

Four, Hal, I said four.

POINS

Yes, yes, he definitely said four.

FALSTAFF

These four idiots were all in a row and vigorously thrust at me. I didn't wait any longer, I let all of their seven sword points strike my shield, like this.

PRINCE HENRY

Seven? A minute ago you said there were four.

FALSTAFF

Wearing coarse linen?

POINS

Yes, four wearing coarse linen.

FALSTAFF

There were seven. I swear on this sword, or I am a villain.

PRINCE HENRY

(To POINS so that only he can hear) Come on, let's leave him alone. There'll be more any second.

FALSTAFF

Did you listen to me, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

Yes, and I paid attention to what you said, Jack.

FALSTAFF

That's good, because what I'm saying is worth your attention. So these nine men in coarse linen that I just told you about--

PRINCE HENRY

So there are two more already.

FALSTAFF

Because their points were broken--

POINS

Their breeches²⁵ fell down.

²⁵ Poins makes a joke here and takes "points" to mean the laces which were used to attach breeches to a jacket.

FALSTAFF

Began to give me ground, but I followed me close, came in foot and hand, and with a thought, seven of the eleven I paid.

PRINCE HENRY

215 O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two!

FALSTAFF

But as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back, and let drive at me, for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

PRINCE HENRY

220 These lies are like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou claybrained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-catch—

FALSTAFF

What, art thou mad? Art thou mad? Is not the truth the truth?

PRINCE HENRY

Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? Come, tell us your reason. What sayest thou to this?

POINS

Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

FALSTAFF

230 What, upon compulsion? Zounds, an I were at the strappado or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion? If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

PRINCE HENRY

235 I'll be no longer guilty of this sin. This sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horseback-breaker, this huge hill of flesh—

FALSTAFF

'Sblood, you starveling, you elfskin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stockfish! O, for breath to utter what is like thee! You tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bowcase, you vile standing tuck—

PRINCE HENRY

Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again, and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

POINS

245 Mark, Jack.

PRINCE HENRY

We two saw you four set on four, and bound them and were masters of their wealth. Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four and, with a word, outfaced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house. And, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still run and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art

FALSTAFF

They started to move away, but I followed them closely, and thinking on my feet, I killed seven of the eleven right there and then.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh wow! Eleven men in coarse linen have grown out of just two!

FALSTAFF

But as the devil would have it, three despicable scoundrels dressed in green, coarse wool fabric crept up on me from behind, and attacked me. You see, Hal, it was so dark that you could barely even see your own hand.

PRINCE HENRY

These lies are becoming much like the person who is telling them--big as a mountain, clear to see, and very visible. Why you dull-witted fatty, you thick-headed fool, you son-of-a-bitch, you disgusting, greasy lump of fat--

FALSTAFF

What, are you crazy? Are you crazy? Isn't the truth just the truth?

PRINCE HENRY

Well, how would you know that these men were wearing green, coarse wool fabric if it was so dark that you couldn't even see your own hand? Come on, tell us how. What do you have to say to this?

POINS

Yeah, tell us how, Jack, how.

FALSTAFF

What? Just because you have told me to? Heavens, even if I was put in any torture device in the world, I wouldn't answer just because you've told me to. Tell you how, give you a reason just because you've told me to? Even if reasons were as common as blackberries, I wouldn't give anyone a reason just because they've told me to. I certainly won't.

PRINCE HENRY

I can't listen to this anymore. This red-faced coward, who could flatten a bed, this breaker of horses' backs, this huge mountain of flesh--

FALSTAFF

Hell to that! You starving thing, you skin of an elf, you shriveled cow's tongue, you dried bull's penis, you dried cod²⁶! Oh, there isn't enough breath for me to say all of the things that you are! You tailor's yardstick, you empty sheath, you case for a string-player's bow, you vile, upright sword--

PRINCE HENRY

Catch your breath for a minute and then go again. When you've tired yourself out making stupid comparisons, listen to just one thing I have to say.

POINS

Listen to him, Jack.

PRINCE HENRY

We two saw the four of you attack the four travelers, tie them up, and take their money. Listen now to how the simple truth of the matter will destroy your lies. Then we two attacked you four, and with a single shout, we frightened you into giving us the money you had stolen. We have it now, and can show it to you right here in this bar. Falstaff, you ran away as quickly and with as much skill as a cow from the slaughterhouse--screaming to be saved and

²⁶ Falstaff uses these specific insults to call attention to how skinny Hal is--a fact about the historical figure of the Prince reported in the sources Shakespeare used for this play.

255 thou to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

POINS

Come, let's hear, Jack. What trick hast thou now?

FALSTAFF

By the Lord, I knew you as well as he that made you.
260 Why, hear you, my masters, was it for me to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true Prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules, but beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true Prince.
Instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on
265 instinct. I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life—I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true Prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money.—Hostess, clap to the doors.— Watch tonight, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you. What, shall we
270 be merry? hall we have a play extempore?

PRINCE HENRY

Content, and the argument shall be thy running away.

FALSTAFF

Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

O Jesu, my lord the Prince!

PRINCE HENRY

275 How now, my lady the hostess, what sayest thou to me?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman of the court at door would speak with you. He says he comes from your father.

PRINCE HENRY

Give him as much as will make him a royal man and send him back again to my mother.
280

FALSTAFF

What manner of man is he?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

An old man.

FALSTAFF

What doth Gravity out of his bed at midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

PRINCE HENRY

285 Prithee do, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Faith, and I'll send him packing.

Exit FALSTAFF

running as far as you could. How outrageous you are to chop away at your sword like you've done, and then say that you did it in a fight! What story, what trick, what hiding place are you going to be able to find to escape this obvious and visible shame?

POINS

Come on then, let's hear it, Jack. What trick are you going to use now?

FALSTAFF

By God, I knew it was you right away. Listen here, gentlemen, was I going to kill the heir to the throne? Was I going to turn on the true Prince? Come on, you know I am as brave as Hercules ²⁷, but I listen to my gut. Even a lion will not attack a true Prince. Instinct is very important. I was a coward because my instinct told me I had to be. Now I guess I will have to think of myself as a brave lion, since you are a true Prince. But, by God, am I glad that you have the money! Hostess, shut the doors. Let's have fun tonight and leave our prayers until tomorrow! Bold lads, boys, men with hearts of gold—you are not worth all of these good titles. Shall we celebrate? Shall we have some improvised drama to entertain us?

²⁷ Falstaff recalls Hercules, an ancient Greek hero known for his feats of strength.

PRINCE HENRY

Yes, let's, and the plot can be about you running away.

FALSTAFF

Ah, no more of that, Hal, if you love me at all.

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Jesus, my lord the Prince!

PRINCE HENRY

What's happening, my lady the hostess? Do you have something to say to me?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Indeed, my lord, there is a nobleman from the court at the door and he said he would like to speak to you. He says that he comes from your father.

PRINCE HENRY

Give him enough money to turn him into a royal man ²⁸ and then send him back to my mother ²⁹.

²⁸ Hal means to pay him the difference between being a nobleman and a royal man; or, literally, to give him the difference between a "noble" coin, worth about 7 shillings, and a "royal" coin, worth 10 shillings.

²⁹ If he is now a "royal" man, then his wife must be the Queen.

FALSTAFF

What type of man is he?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

An old man.

FALSTAFF

What's an old man doing out of his bed at midnight? Should I go and talk to him?

PRINCE HENRY

Please do, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Okay, I will tell him to go.

FALSTAFF exits.

PRINCE HENRY

Now, sirs. By 'r lady, you fought fair.—So did you, Peto.— So did you, Bardolph.—You are lions too. You ran away upon instinct. You will not touch the true Prince. No, fie!

290

BARDOLPH

Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

PRINCE HENRY

Faith, tell me now in earnest, how came Falstaff's sword so hacked?

PETO

Why, he hacked it with his dagger and said he would swear truth out of England but he would make you believe 295 it was done in fight, and persuaded us to do the like.

BARDOLPH

Yea, and to tickle our noses with speargrass to make them bleed, and then to beslobber our garments with it, and swear it was the blood of true men. I did that I did 300 not this seven year before: I blushed to hear his monstrous devices.

PRINCE HENRY

O villain, thou stolest a cup of sack eighteen years ago, and wert taken with the manner, and ever since thou hast blushed extempore. Thou hadst fire and sword on thy side, and yet thou ran'st away. What instinct hadst thou for it?

BARDOLPH

My lord, do you see these meteors? Do you behold these exhalations?

PRINCE HENRY

I do.

BARDOLPH

What think you they portend?

PRINCE HENRY

Hot livers and cold purses.

BARDOLPH

Choler, my lord, if rightly taken.

PRINCE HENRY

No, if rightly taken, halter.

Enter FALSTAFF

Here comes lean Jack. Here comes bare-bone.—How now, my sweet creature of bombast? How long is 't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine own knee?

315

PRINCE HENRY

Now, sirs, it must be said that you fought well. So did you, Peto. So did you, Bardolph. You are brave lions as well, and you only ran away because your instinct told you it was necessary. You will not attack a true Prince. No, that's for sure!

BARDOLPH

Truthfully, I only ran away when I saw the others running.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay, tell me the truth now. How did Falstaff's sword get so cut up?

PETO

Well, he hacked at it with his dagger, and then said that he would lie so convincingly and make you believe that he had done it fighting. And he persuaded us to say the same.

BARDOLPH

Yes, and he made us rub our noses with some sharp blades of grass to make them bleed, and then to smear this blood all over our clothes and say that it was the blood of the men we had fought. When he told us to tell this outrageous lie, I did something that I haven't done in seven years—I blushed.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, you scoundrel, that's not true—you stole a cup of wine eighteen years ago, and were caught red-handed. Every since then you have blushed 30 30 each and every time you drink. You had your fiery character and your weapons going for you, but you still ran away. What instinct told you to do that?

30 Hal pokes fun at Bardolph's inflamed, red face and nose—Bardolph's defining characteristic. Hal will continue to do so when he refers to fire in the next line.

BARDOLPH

My lord, do you see these red lumps? Can you see these rashes on my face?

PRINCE HENRY

I can.

BARDOLPH

What do you think they warn of 31?

31 Bardolph plays with the word "meteor," which he has used in the original text to describe the red lumps on his face. From ancient times all the way through Shakespeare's day, it was a common belief that meteors were portents.

PRINCE HENRY

Drunkenness 32 and poverty.

32 In Shakespeare's day, excessive drinking was thought to make the organ which processes alcohol—the liver—hot in temperature.

BARDOLPH

Anger, my lord, if I understand them correctly.

PRINCE HENRY

If it is understood correctly, it means you'll be hanged 33 if you are arrested.

33 Here, Hal makes a pun on the word "choler," which sounds like "collar" (which could be used in hanging) when spoken aloud.

FALSTAFF enters.

Here he comes—our thin Jack. Here he comes all skinny. How are you, my sweet, stuffed 34 creature? How long has it been, Jack, since you've seen your own knee?

34 Hal uses the word "bombast" in the sense of exaggerated language, and also in the sense of cotton padding, or stuffing. And to add another layer to the joke, actors playing Falstaff would often wear padded costumes during

320

325

FALSTAFF

My own knee? When I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talon in the waist. I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring. A plague of sighing and grief! It blows a man up like a bladder. There's villainous news abroad. Here was Sir John Bracy from your father. You must to the court in the morning. That same mad fellow of the north, Percy, and he of Wales that gave Amamon the bastinado, and made Lucifer cuckold, and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook—what a plague call you him?

POINS

Owen Glendower.

FALSTAFF

Owen, Owen, the same, and his son-in-law Mortimer, and old Northumberland, and that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that runs a-horseback up a hill perpendicular—

PRINCE HENRY

He that rides at high speed, and with his pistol kills a sparrow flying.

FALSTAFF

You have hit it.

PRINCE HENRY

So did he never the sparrow.

FALSTAFF

335 Well, that rascal hath good mettle in him. He will not run.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, what a rascal art thou then to praise him so for running?

FALSTAFF

340 A-horseback, you cuckoo, but afoot he will not budge a foot.

PRINCE HENRY

Yes, Jack, upon instinct.

FALSTAFF

I grant you, upon instinct. Well, he is there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand blue-caps more: Worcester is stolen away tonight. Thy father's beard is turned white with the news. You may buy land now as cheap as stinking mackerel.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, then, it is like if there come a hot June, and this civil buffeting hold, we shall buy maidenheads as they buy hob-nails, by the hundreds.

FALSTAFF

350 By the Mass, thou sayest true. It is like we shall have good trading that way. But tell me, Hal, art not thou horrible afraid? Thou being heir apparent, could the world pick thee out three such enemies again as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? Doth not thy blood thrill at it?

Shakespeare's time in order to show off Falstaff's weight.

FALSTAFF

My own knee? When I was about your age, Hal, my waist was as thin as an eagle's claw. I could have got through any councilman's sealing ring. To hell with sighing and sadness! It makes a man blow up like an inflatable. There's terrible news going around. That was Sir John Bracy, and he was sent here by your father. You must go to court in the morning. Hotspur, that crazy fellow from the north, and that Welshman who beat up Amamon ³⁵, seduced the devil's wife, and caused the devil to swear to be his loyal servant by threatening him with a hooked sword...what the devil is his name again?

³⁵ Amamon is the name of a demon. Falstaff here is hinting at the diabolical nature of Owen Glendower's sorcery.

POINS

Owen Glendower.

FALSTAFF

Owen, Owen, that's it. There's also his son-in-law Mortimer, old Northumberland, and that wonderful, energetic Scotsman, Douglas, who could probably ride a horse up a wall.

PRINCE HENRY

He rides so quickly, and then tries to kill a flying sparrow with his pistol.

FALSTAFF

You've got it exactly right.

PRINCE HENRY

Well if I hit it ³⁶, then Owen Glendower never hit this sparrow.

³⁶ Hal here makes a literal response to Falstaff's previous line.

FALSTAFF

Well, that rascal has a lot of courage in him. He won't run away.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, you're a rascal! You just gave him praise for running!

FALSTAFF

I praised him for running *on horseback*, you simpleton, but when he's fighting on foot he won't move a muscle.

PRINCE HENRY

Yes he will, Jack--his instinct will tell him to.

FALSTAFF

I'll give you that, he'll move if his instinct tells him to. Well, he's there too, and so is a man called Mordake and about a thousand more *Scottish soldiers* ³⁷. Worcester has left London tonight, and your father's beard turned white when he heard the news. Land is becoming as cheap as some stinking fish.

³⁷ Scottish soldiers were known for wearing distinctive blue headwear, which Falstaff refers to in the original text.

PRINCE HENRY

If that's true, then if the weather is hot and the civil war continues, you will be able to *buy women's virtue* ³⁸ like you can buy shoe studs, by the hundreds.

³⁸ Hal is referring here to rape, common in times of war.

FALSTAFF

I swear, you speak the truth. We'll have some good luck if it's like that. But, Hal, tell me--are you very scared? Since you are the heir to the throne, you are going to be the prime target of that wicked Douglas, that lively Percy, and that devil Glendower? Are you not horribly afraid? Don't you shudder with fear at the thought of it?

PRINCE HENRY

Not a whit, i' faith; I lack some of thy instinct.

FALSTAFF

Well, thou wert be horribly chid tomorrow when thou comest to thy father. If thou love me, practice an answer.

360

PRINCE HENRY

Do thou stand for my father and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

FALSTAFF

Shall I? Content. This chair shall be my state, this dagger my scepter, and this cushion my crown.

PRINCE HENRY

365 Thy state is taken for a joined stool, thy golden scepter for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown.

FALSTAFF

Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved.—Give me a cup of sack to make 370 my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept, for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, here is my leg.

FALSTAFF

And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

375 O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

FALSTAFF

Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

O the father, how he holds his countenance!

FALSTAFF

For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen, For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

380 O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see.

FALSTAFF

Peace, good pint-pot. Peace, good tickle-brain.— (to PRINCE HENRY) Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied. For though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, so youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a villainous trick of thine eye and a foolish-hanging of thy nether lip that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point: why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? A question not to be asked. Shall the sun of England prove a thief and take purses? A question to be asked. There is a thing,

PRINCE HENRY

Not at all, truthfully. I must lack some of your instinct.

FALSTAFF

Well, you are going to be scolded horribly tomorrow when you see your father. I beg you, let's practice what you will say to him.

PRINCE HENRY

You can pretend to be my father, and ask me about what's happening in my life.

FALSTAFF

Should I? All right then. This chair will be my throne, this dagger will be my scepter, and this cushion will be my crown.

PRINCE HENRY

Your throne looks more like a stool made from parts, your golden scepter more like a metal dagger, and your precious, rich crown ³⁹ is more of a sad, bald head.

³⁹ Hal puns here on the meaning of the word "crown" in the sense of the royal headdress, and also in the sense of "head" to make a joke out of Falstaff's baldness.

FALSTAFF

Well, if you still have any divine grace in you, you will be stirred emotionally by this. Give me a cup of wine to make my eyes bloodshot, so that it will look like I have been crying. I need to be able to speak with great passion, and I will do it like King Cambyses ⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Cambyses was an exaggerated tyrant character in plays such as Thomas Preston's "Lamentable Tragedy of Cambyses."

PRINCE HENRY

Well then, I make my bow to you.

FALSTAFF

And here is my speech for you. Stand aside, noblemen.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Jesus, this is an excellent game, really!

FALSTAFF

Don't cry, my sweet Queen, your falling tears are pointless.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh look at the father--he's really good at keeping a straight face.

FALSTAFF

For God's sake, lords, take my sad queen away from here. The floodgates of her eyes are now filled up with her tears.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Jesus, he's so much like one of those silly real actors!

FALSTAFF

Enough, good pint of ale. Enough, good liquor-brain.

[To PRINCE HENRY] Harry, I am very surprised at where you're choosing to spend your time, and who you're choosing to spend it with. For, although the camomile grows faster the more it is trodden on, with youth, the more it is wasted, the quicker it fades away. I am trusting that you are my son, partly because your mother says so, partly because I believe it. But mainly because the evil glint in your eye and your hanging lower lip ⁴¹ persuade me of it. If you are my son, then this is my point. If you are my son, then why are you so mocked? Why does the blessed sun ⁴² in heaven waste its time eating blackberries? That's a question I should not need to ask. Should the son of the

⁴¹ Hal may be pouting here, an expression of his disregard.

⁴² As we've seen before, the sun is associated with royalty.

⁴³ Pitch is sticky tar.

Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee, in drink but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also. And yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

PRINCE HENRY

What manner of man, an it like your Majesty?

FALSTAFF

A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage, and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by 'r Lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff. If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me, for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then peremptorily I speak it: there is virtue in that Falstaff; him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

PRINCE HENRY

Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

FALSTAFF

Depose me? If thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poultier's hare.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, here I am set.

FALSTAFF

And here I stand. — (*to the others*) Judge, my masters.

PRINCE HENRY

Now, Harry, whence come you?

FALSTAFF

My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

PRINCE HENRY

The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

FALSTAFF

'Sblood, my lord, they are false.— (*to the others*) Nay, I'll tickle you for a young prince, i' faith.

PRINCE HENRY

Swearest thou? Ungracious boy, henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace. There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man. A tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humors, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropseys, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that gray iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat and cleanly but to carve a capon and eat it? Wherein cunning but in craft? Wherein crafty but in villany? Wherein

King of England be a thief and steal purses? That's a question I do need to ask. There is a thing, Harry, which you will have heard of, called pitch ⁴³. This pitch, as writers have noted, makes you dirty, just like the company you keep. For Harry, now I speak to you not because of the drinking, but actually weeping. I'm not saying this as a joke, but with sincere emotions; not just with words, but in misery, too. Yet, there is one virtuous man that I have often seen you with, but I don't know his name.

PRINCE HENRY

What type of man is he, your Majesty?

FALSTAFF

A handsome, dignified man, indeed, and quite overweight. He always looks cheerful, is quite attractive, and has a very noble demeanor about him. I would say that he is about fifty, or, my goodness, possibly closer to sixty. I remember now--his name is Falstaff. If that man is at all inclined to wickedness, then he has deceived me, Harry, because I see goodness in his character. If a tree is known by its fruit, and the fruit by its tree, then I can positively say that there is a lot of goodness in that Falstaff. Keep him in your company, and get rid of the rest. Tell me now, you naughty boy, tell me--where have you been this last month?

PRINCE HENRY

Is that what a king would say? You pretend to be me, and I'll play my father.

FALSTAFF

You're going to take me off the throne? If you manage to do it even half as sincerely or majestically as I did, in both words and behavior, then hang me up like some baby rabbit for sale in a poultry shop.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, I'm seated and ready.

FALSTAFF

And I'll stand here.

[To the others] Judge what you see, my masters.

PRINCE HENRY

Now, Harry, where have you come from?

FALSTAFF

My noble lord, I have come from Eastcheap.

PRINCE HENRY

I have heard some very serious complaints about you.

FALSTAFF

Damn it, my lord, they're all lies.

[To the others] I'm going to be very funny as the young prince, that's for sure.

PRINCE HENRY

Did you just swear? You rude boy, never look at me again. You have been forcefully turned away from goodness. There is a devil that haunts you and it looks very much like an old, fat man. A ton of man is your companion. Why do you associate yourself with that container of diseases, that sifting bin of beastliness, that swollen crate of disease, that huge case of wine, that stuffed suitcase of stomach, that roasted ox stuffed with pudding, that reverend Vice ⁴⁴, that grey-haired sinner, that elderly swaggerer, that man who has aged with vanity? What is he good for, except to taste wine and then drink it? What is he skilled at besides carving a chicken and eating it? What is he smart about besides scheming? What does he scheme about besides dirty tricks?

⁴⁴ Vice was a comic figure in medieval morality plays, who, among other things, sought to corrupt the innocent hero.

villanous but in all things? Wherein worthy but in nothing?

FALSTAFF

I would your Grace would take me with you. Whom means your Grace?

445

PRINCE HENRY

That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF

My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE HENRY

I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF

450 But to say I know more harm in him than in myself were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity; his white hairs do witness it. But that he is, saving your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked. 455 If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned. If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord, banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins, but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being, as he is old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

460

PRINCE HENRY

I do, I will.

Knocking within. Exeunt BARDOLPH, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and FRANCIS. Enter BARDOLPH, running

BARDOLPH

465 O, my lord, my lord, the Sheriff with a most monstrous watch is at the door.

FALSTAFF

Out, you rogue.—Play out the play. I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

O Jesu, my lord, my lord—

PRINCE HENRY

470 Heigh, heigh, the devil rides upon a fiddlestick. What's the matter?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

The Sheriff and all the watch are at the door. They are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?

FALSTAFF

475 Dost thou hear, Hal? Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit. Thou art essentially made, without seeming so.

PRINCE HENRY

And thou a natural coward without instinct.

FALSTAFF

I deny your major. If you will deny the Sheriff, so; if not, let him enter. If I become not a cart as well as

480

Why is he wicked in all respects? Is he really worth anything?

FALSTAFF

I wish your Grace would explain what you mean a bit better. Who are you talking about, your Grace?

PRINCE HENRY

That evil, horrific corrupter of youth--Falstaff, that old, white-bearded devil.

FALSTAFF

My lord, I know the man.

PRINCE HENRY

I know you do.

FALSTAFF

For me to say that he is worse than I am, would be more than I am able to say. He is old, that's true, and it's a shame--his white hairs prove his age. But to say that he's a--forgive me--a pimp, that I completely deny. If drinking sweet wine is a sin, then God help us all. If being old and cheerful is a sin, then most old innkeepers I know are damned. If it is bad to be fat, then we should all love *Pharaoh's lean cows*

45

. No, my good lord, banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins. As for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, honest Jack Falstaff, brave Jack Falstaff--and he is made more brave, since he is old Jack Falstaff--don't banish him from Harry's company. Don't get rid of him. If you get rid of plump Jack, you'll be getting rid of the entire world.

45 Falstaff makes yet another biblical reference, this time to Genesis 41. There, Pharaoh dreams about seven starving cattle, which turns out to be a sign for the seven years of famine which will follow.

PRINCE HENRY

I know. I will

46 This line is highly significant in that during Henry IV Part II, Hal does banish Falstaff from his own company.

The sound of knocking is heard. BARDOLPH, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and FRANCIS exit. BARDOLPH re-enters, running.

BARDOLPH

Oh my lord, my lord, the Sheriff is at the door with an unusually large group of officers.

FALSTAFF

Get out, you idiot. We need to finish our play. I still have a lot to say on behalf of that Falstaff.

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Jesus, my lord, my lord--

PRINCE HENRY

Hey, hey! What a lot of commotion. What's the matter?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

The Sheriff and a group of officers are at the door. They have come to search the bar. Should I let them in?

FALSTAFF

Did you hear that, Hal? Never call a real piece of gold a fake--you are true and loyal, even if your recent behavior doesn't show it.

PRINCE HENRY

And you are an born coward, with no instinct.

FALSTAFF

I reject your logic. If you are going to reject the Sheriff, then do it. If not, then let him come in. If I'm not as impressive

another man, a plague on my bringing up. I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter as another.

PRINCE HENRY

Go, hide thee behind the arras. The rest walk up above.—
Now, my masters, for a true face and good conscience.

FALSTAFF

485 Both which I have had, but their date is out; and therefore I'll hide me. (*he hides behind the arras*)

Exeunt all but PRINCE HENRY and PETO

PRINCE HENRY

Call in the Sheriff.

Enter SHERIFF and the CARRIER

Now, Master Sheriff, what is your will with me?

SHERIFF

First pardon me, my lord. A hue and cry
490 Hath followed certain men unto this house.

PRINCE HENRY

What men?

SHERIFF

One of them is well known, my gracious lord,
A gross fat man.

CARRIER

As fat as butter.

PRINCE HENRY

495 The man, I do assure you is not here,
For I myself at this time have employed him.
And, Sheriff, I will engage my word to thee
That I will by tomorrow dinner time
Send him to answer thee or any man
500 For any thing he shall be charged withal.
And so let me entreat you leave the house.

SHERIFF

I will, my lord. There are two gentlemen
Have in this robbery lost three hundred marks.

PRINCE HENRY

505 It may be so. If he have robbed these men,
He shall be answerable; and so farewell.

SHERIFF

Good night, my noble lord.

PRINCE HENRY

I think it is good morrow, is it not?

SHERIFF

Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock.

Exeunt SHERIFF and CARRIER

PRINCE HENRY

510 This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's. Go call him forth.

PETO

Falstaff!— (*pulls back the arras*) Fast asleep behind the arras, and snoring like a horse.

on the hangman's cart as the next man, then a curse on my upbringing. I'm as willing to be hanged as any other man.

PRINCE HENRY

Go and hide behind that tapestry  , Falstaff. The rest of you go upstairs. Now, my masters, time to put on an honest face and a clear conscience.

 *Shakespeare will return to this image of a character hiding behind a tapestry in his later play, Hamlet.*

FALSTAFF

I've had both of those, but their lease has expired, and so I think I'll hide. [*He hides behind the tapestry*]

Everyone exits except for PRINCE HENRY and PETO.

PRINCE HENRY

Call in the Sheriff.

The SHERIFF and the CARRIER enter.

Now, Mr. Sheriff, what do you want from me?

SHERIFF

First excuse me, my lord. A group of citizens  have followed some particular men into this bar.

 *The "hue and cry" represent the horns and voices raised as a criminal was followed by citizens.*

PRINCE HENRY

What men?

SHERIFF

One of them is very well known, my gracious lord. He is a large, fat man.

CARRIER

As fat as butter.

PRINCE HENRY

I can assure you that that man isn't here, because I have just sent him on an errand. And, Sheriff, I give you my word that I will send him to appear before you by midday tomorrow with any other man that you need. He will answer to anything that he has been accused of. Now, will you please leave this bar?

SHERIFF

I will, my lord. There are also two gentlemen have lost three hundred marks  in this robbery.

 *Marks are a unit of currency, first referenced in Act 2 Scene 1.*

PRINCE HENRY

I'm sure that's true. If he has robbed these men, then he will be held responsible for it. And so, take care.

SHERIFF

Good night, my noble lord.

PRINCE HENRY

I think it's good morning by now, isn't it?

SHERIFF

Indeed it is, my lord. It is two o'clock in the morning by now.

The SHERIFF and CARRIER exit.

PRINCE HENRY

This shifty rascal is as famous as St. Paul's Cathedral. Go and get him.

PETO

Falstaff! [Pulling back the tapestry] He is fast asleep behind here, and snoring like a horse.

PRINCE HENRY

Hark, how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets.

PETO searcheth his pockets, and findeth certain papers

What hast thou found?

PETO

515 Nothing but papers, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Let's see what they be. Read them.

PETO

(reads) *Item, a capon, ... 2s. 2d.*

Item, sauce, ... 4d.

Item, sack, two gallons, ... 5s. 8d.

520 *Item, anchovies and sack after supper, , , , 2s. 6d.*

Item, bread, ob.

PRINCE HENRY

God, listen to how heavy his breathing is. Search his pockets.

PETO searches his pockets and finds some papers.

What have you found?

PETO

Just some papers, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Let's see what they say. Read them.

PETO

[Reading] *"Item One: A chicken--2 shillings, 2 pence* 50.

Item Two: Sauce--4 pence.

Item Three: Wine, two gallons--5 shillings, 8 pence.

Item Four: Anchovies and wine after dinner--2 shillings, 6 pence.

Item Five: Bread-- half a penny." 51

50 The "d" in the original text is an abbreviation for the Latin word "denarius," which in Shakespeare's time was used to indicate "penny."

51 An "obolus" was a small coin from Ancient Greece, abbreviated in the original text, and taken to mean a halfpenny.

PRINCE HENRY

O monstrous! But one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else, keep close. We'll read it at more advantage. There let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning. We must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honorable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot, and I know his death will be a march of twelve score. The money shall be paid back again with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning, and so good morrow, Peto.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, how horrid! Just half a penny's worth of bread compared to this ridiculous amount of wine! Hold tight to everything else you found; we'll look at it when we have more time. Let him sleep there until the morning, and then I'll go to court. We're all going to have to fight in these wars, and you will all have honorable positions. I'm going to put this fat idiot in charge of some foot soldiers, and I bet he'll be dead before they've traveled even two hundred and forty yards. I will pay back the money that was robbed with interest. Meet me early in the morning and with that, good morning, Peto.

PETO

Good morrow, good my lord.

PETO

Good morning, my good lord.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, Lord MORTIMER, and Owen GLENDOWER

MORTIMER

These promises are fair, the parties sure,
And our induction full of prosperous hope.

HOTSPUR

Lord Mortimer and cousin Glendower,
Will you sit down? And Uncle Worcester—
5 A plague upon it, I have forgot the map.

GLENDOWER

No, here it is. Sit, cousin Percy
Sit, good cousin Hotspur, for by that name
As oft as Lancaster doth speak of you
His cheek looks pale and with a rising sigh
10 He wisheth you in heaven.

HOTSPUR

And you in hell,
As oft as he hears Owen Glendower spoke of.

Shakescleare Translation

HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, Lord MORTIMER, and Owen GLENDOWER enter.

MORTIMER

These offers of support are good, our allies are reliable, and the beginning of our mission seems very hopeful.

HOTSPUR

Lord Mortimer and cousin Glendower, won't you sit down?
And Uncle Worcester--oh damn it! I forgot to bring the map.

GLENDOWER

No, here it is. Sit down, cousin Percy, sit down good cousin Hotspur. For that is the name that King Henry 1 normally calls you by, and when he does he grows pale and with a groan, he wishes you were in heaven.

 Here Glendower refers to King Henry, who was called Duke of Lancaster before ascending the throne.

HOTSPUR

And every time he hears someone speak about Owen Glendower, he wishes that you were in hell.

GLENDOWER

I cannot blame him. At my nativity
 The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
 Of burning cressets, and at my birth
 The frame and huge foundation of the earth
 Shaked like a coward.

HOTSPUR

Why, so it would have done
 At the same season if your mother's cat
 Had but kittened, though yourself had never been born.

GLENDOWER

I say the earth did shake when I was born.

HOTSPUR

And I say the earth was not of my mind,
 If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

GLENDOWER

The heavens were all on fire; the earth did tremble.

HOTSPUR

O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,
 And not in fear of your nativity.
 Disease—d nature oftentimes breaks forth
 In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
 Is with a kind of colic pinched and vexed
 By the imprisonment of unruly wind
 Within her womb, which, for enlargement striving,
 Shakes the old beldam earth and topples down
 Steeples and moss-grown towers. At your birth
 Our grandam earth, having this distemperature,
 In passion shook.

GLENDOWER

Cousin, of many men
 I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
 To tell you once again that at my birth
 The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
 The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
 Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields.
 These signs have marked me extraordinary,
 And all the courses of my life do show
 I am not in the roll of common men.
 Where is he living, clipped in with the sea
 That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
 Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?
 And bring him out that is but woman's son
 Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
 And hold me pace in deep experiments.

HOTSPUR

I think there's no man speaks better Welsh.
 I'll to dinner.

MORTIMER

Peace, cousin Percy. You will make him mad.

GLENDOWER

I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

HOTSPUR

Why, so can I, or so can any man,
 But will they come when you do call for them?

GLENDOWER

Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil.

GLENDOWER

I can't blame him. When I was born the whole sky was full of fiery comets and meteors ², and at my birth, the whole of the earth shook like some kind of coward.

² As we have seen in this play, astronomical events held portentous meaning in the early modern era.

HOTSPUR

The same thing would have happened if your mother's cat had given birth to kittens that day, whether you had been born or not.

GLENDOWER

I am telling you that the earth shook when I was born.

HOTSPUR

And I am saying that if you think the earth shook because it was scared of you, then the earth and I think differently.

GLENDOWER

The sky was on fire, and the earth trembled.

HOTSPUR

Oh, then maybe the earth shook because it saw that the sky was on fire, not because it was scared of your birth. When nature is sick, there are often earthquakes. Often the fertile earth is affected and irritated by a pain in her stomach, because she shelters uncontrollable wind within her, which is trying to break free and so shakes the old, grandmother earth and knocks over steeples and moss-covered towers. When you were born, our grandmother earth, feeling this pain, shook in distress.

GLENDOWER

Cousin, I wouldn't take these kinds of insults from many men. Let me tell you once more that when I was born, the sky was full of fiery comets. The goats ran away from the mountains, and the animals in the fields were stamping in fear. These signs have made me an extraordinary man, and everything that has happened to me in my life proves that I should not be considered alongside ordinary men. Is there anyone on this island--anyone that lives in England, Scotland, or Wales--who can claim to be my teacher? Bring out any mortal who can follow me in doing magic and keep up with me in mysterious experiments.

HOTSPUR

No man speaks better Welsh ³ than you. I'm going to have lunch.

³ Englishmen of Shakespeare's time considered the Welsh language less refined than English. Hotspur here equates Glendower's Welsh with nonsense.

MORTIMER

Stop now, cousin Percy. You will make him angry.

GLENDOWER

I can summon up spirits from the depths of the ocean.

HOTSPUR

Well I can, too, and so can any man. The question is, will they come when you call for them?

GLENDOWER

I can teach you to command the devil.

HOTSPUR

And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil
By telling truth. Tell truth and shame the devil.
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
And I'll be sworn I have power to shame him hence.
O, while you live, tell truth and shame the devil!

MORTIMER

Come, come, no more of this unprofitable chat.

GLENDOWER

Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottomed Severn have I sent him
Bootless home and weather-beaten back.

HOTSPUR

Home without boots, and in foul weather too!
How 'scapes he argues, in the devil's name?

GLENDOWER

70 Come, here's the map. Shall we divide our right
According to our threefold order ta'en?

MORTIMER

The Archdeacon hath divided it
Into three limits very equally:
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
75 By south and east is to my part assigned;
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound
To Owen Glendower; and, dear coz, to you
The remnant northward, lying off from Trent.
80 And our indentures tripartite are drawn,
Which being sealed interchangeably—
A business that this night may execute—
Tomorrow, cousin Percy, you and I
And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth
85 To meet your father and the Scottish power,
As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.
My father Glendower is not ready yet,
Not shall we need his help these fourteen days.
(to GLENDOWER) Within that space you may have drawn
90 together
Your tenants, friends, and neighboring gentlemen.

GLENDOWER

A shorter time shall send me to you, lords,
And in my conduct shall your ladies come,
From whom you now must steal and take no leave,
95 For there will be a world of water shed
Upon the parting of your wives and you.

HOTSPUR

Methinks my moiety, north from Burton here,
In quantity equals not one of yours.
See how this river comes me cranking in
100 And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out.
I'll have the current in this place dammed up,
And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
In a new channel, fair and evenly.
105 It shall not wind with such a deep indent,
To rob me of so rich a bottom here.

GLENDOWER

Not wind? It shall, it must. You see it doth.

HOTSPUR

And I can teach you, pal, how to shame the devil--by telling the truth! "Tell the truth and shame the devil," that's what they say. If you have the power to summon up the devil then do it. I will swear that I have the power to shame him into leaving again. Oh, as long as you're alive, tell the truth and shame the devil!

MORTIMER

Come on now, let's stop this pointless talking.

GLENDOWER

Henry Bolingbroke has taken military action against me three times now. And three time I have sent him back from the banks of the Wye ⁴ River and the sandy bottoms of the Severn River, unsuccessful and defeated by the bad weather.

HOTSPUR

You sent him home without boots, and in bad weather, too?
How did he avoid getting a fever ⁵?

⁴ The rivers Glendower calls attention to—the Wye and the Severn—are located near the border between England and Wales.

⁵ Symptoms of the "ague" in the original text include a high temperature and chills.

GLENDOWER

Come on, here's the map. Should we divide up the land according to our three-way agreement?

MORTIMER

The Archdeacon ⁶ has divided it into three parts very equally. I will take all of England that is south-east of the Trent and Severn Rivers; Owen Glendower, you will take the whole of Wales, and everything that is west of the River Severn, including all of the fertile land in that area.

⁶ According to the historical sources Shakespeare used, the Archdeacon of Bangor's home was the place where the rebels devised their plan to divide up the territory.

[To HOTSPUR] And you, dear cousin, will get everything that is left, north of the River Trent. That is our three-way contract, all drawn up, with our own seals on each copy ⁷. We can all sign the agreement tonight. And then tomorrow, cousin Percy, you, me, and Worcester will set off to meet your father and the Scottish army at Shrewsbury, as we had agreed. My father-in-law ⁸ Glendower is not ready yet, and we won't need his help for another two weeks.

⁷ The original text's use of the word "tripartite" refers to the fact that the agreement is between three men, but could also imply that it has been drawn up in three separate copies, marked with the seal of each man.

⁸ Mortimer is married to Owen Glendower's daughter.

[To GLENDOWER] You have that time to build an army of your workers, your friends, and your neighbors.

GLENDOWER

I will be with you sooner than that, my lords, and I will bring your ladies along with me, and keep them safe. I would advise you to leave now, and don't say goodbye, otherwise they will cry so many tears when you have to go.

HOTSPUR

I don't think that my share of the land, everything north of Burton here is equal to your shares. Look how the river bends here, and cuts out a huge semi-circle—a chunk out of some of my best land. I'm going to build a dam, and force the smooth water of the Trent River to go a different way, to run straighter. That way it won't make such an deep cut into my portion of the land, and won't rob me of the fertile river valley.

GLENDOWER

A river not wind? It has to; it must. You can see that it does.

MORTIMER

Yea, but
Mark how he bears his course, and runs me up
With like advantage on the other side,
Gelding the opposed continent as much
As on the other side it takes from you.

110

WORCESTER

Yea, but a little charge will trench him here
And on this north side win this cape of land,
And then he runs straight and even.

115

HOTSPUR

I'll have it so. A little charge will do it.

GLENDOWER

I'll not have it altered.

HOTSPUR

Will not you?

GLENDOWER

No, nor you shall not.

HOTSPUR

Who shall say me nay?

GLENDOWER

Why, that will I.

HOTSPUR

Let me not understand you, then; speak it in Welsh.

GLENDOWER

I can speak English, lord, as well as you,
For I was trained up in the English court,
Where being but young I framèd to the harp
Many an English ditty lovely well
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament—
A virtue that was never seen in you.

125

HOTSPUR

Marry,
130 And I am glad of it with all my heart:
I had rather be a kitten and cry "mew"
Than one of these same meter balladmongers.
I had rather hear a brazen can'stick turned,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree,
135 And that would set my teeth nothing an edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry.
'Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag.

135

GLENDOWER

Come, you shall have Trent turned.

HOTSPUR

I do not care. I'll give thrice so much land
140 To any well-deserving friend;
But in the way of bargain, mark you me,
I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.
Are the indentures drawn? Shall we be gone?

140

GLENDOWER

The moon shines fair. You may away by night.
145 I'll haste the writer, and withal
Break with your wives of your departure hence.
I am afraid my daughter will run mad,
So much she doteth on her Mortimer.

MORTIMER

Yes, but look at how the Trent carries on its journey, and does a similar thing in my section later on, cutting as large a piece out of my side as it does out of yours.

WORCESTER

Yes, but with a little bit of money, you can dig a trench to divert the river, and will get back this bit of land on the north side of the river. And then it will run straight from then on.

HOTSPUR

Okay, I can do that. It will only take a little bit of money.

GLENDOWER

I don't want the river to be changed.

HOTSPUR

Why not?

GLENDOWER

And I won't let you do it.

HOTSPUR

Oh, are you going to stop me?

GLENDOWER

Yes, I will.

HOTSPUR

Say so in Welsh then, so I don't have to understand what you're saying.

GLENDOWER

My lord, I can speak English as well as you can. For I was raised in the English court, and when I was young I composed many lovely English songs, and my Welsh gave the lyrics something extra--an achievement you never had.

HOTSPUR

Indeed, and I am happy about that. I would rather be a kitten and only be able to say, "meow," than be a hawker of ballads!⁹ I would rather hear the grating sound of a brass candlestick being smoothed down on a lathe, or an un-oiled wheel scraping against an axle. Nothing puts my teeth on edge more than fussy poetry. It's like the painful steps of an old horse.

⁹ Here, Hotspur tries to equate Glendower's courtly musical composition with cheap ballad producers who hawked their metrical wares.

GLENDOWER

Okay then, you can change the course of the Trent.

HOTSPUR

I don't care. I would give three times this amount of land to a friend who deserves it. But when I am negotiating about business, I will argue over the tiniest fraction of a hair, that's for sure. Are the agreements drawn up? Are we ready to go?

GLENDOWER

The moon is bright, so you can leave tonight. I will tell the man writing up the agreements to hurry, and at the same time, I will break the news to your wives that you are leaving. I am afraid my daughter will go crazy at the news, she loves Mortimer so much.

GLENDOWER exits.

Exit GLENDOWER

MORTIMER

Fie, cousin Percy, how you cross my father!

HOTSPUR

I cannot choose. Sometime he angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-winged griffin and a moulten raven,
155 A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith. I tell you what—
He held me last night at least nine hours
In reckoning up the several devils' names
160 That were his lackeys. I cried "Hum," and "Well, go
to,"
But marked him not a word. O, he is as tedious
As a tired horse, a railing wife,
Worse than a smoky house: I had rather live
165 With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far,
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me
In any summerhouse in Christendom.

MORTIMER

In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read and profited
170 In strange concealments, valiant as a lion,
And as wondrous affable, and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?
He holds your temper in a high respect
175 And curbs himself even of his natural scope
When you come cross his humor. Faith, he does.
I warrant you that man is not alive
Might so have tempted him as you have done
Without the taste of danger and reproof.
180 But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

WORCESTER

(to HOTSPUR) In faith, my lord, you are too
willful-blame,
And, since your coming hither, have done enough
To put him quite beside his patience.
You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault.
185 Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood—
And that's the dearest grace it renders you—
Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,
Defect of manners, want of government,
Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain,
190 The least of which, haunting a nobleman,
Loseth men's hearts and leaves behind a stain
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation.

HOTSPUR

Well, I am schooled. Good manners be your speed!
195 Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

Enter GLENOWER with the LADIES PERCY AND MORTIMER

MORTIMER

This is the deadly spite that angers me:
My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

GLENOWER

My daughter weeps; she'll not part with you.
She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

MORTIMER

Damn it, cousin Percy! You made my father-in-law so annoyed!

HOTSPUR

I can't help it. Sometimes he makes me angry, when he talks about ridiculous things, like moles and ants. Like that wizard Merlin ¹⁰ and his prophecies. A dragon. A fish without fins. A wingless griffin ¹¹, and a raven with no feathers. A lion lying down, a cat ready to pounce, and so much other nonsensical talk that I don't know what to believe, including my Christian faith! I tell you what--he made me stay awake for at least nine hours last night, telling me the names of various devils that were his attendants. I said, "Hmm," and "Well, do go on" ¹², at various moments. But I didn't pay attention to a word he was saying. Oh, he is as boring as a tired horse, or a complaining wife ¹³. He's worse than a house filled with smoke! I would rather live in a windmill, and only eat cheese and garlic ¹⁴, than feed on delicacies and have to talk to him in any nice house in the countryside.

¹⁰ Merlin is the sorcerer featured in the legends surrounding the mythical King Arthur.

¹¹ A griffin was a mythical beast--half lion, half eagle.

¹² In the original text, Shakespeare uses the phrase "go to," which can express impatience, disapproval, or disbelief.

¹³ Just as in his interaction with his wife Kate in Act 2, Scene 3, Hotspur is quick to use the stereotype of wives as nagging scolds.

¹⁴ Cheese and garlic were foods typically associated with the poor.

MORTIMER

Yet, indeed, he is a very worthy gentleman. He is incredibly well read, and skilled in the occult. He is as courageous as a lion, friendly, and as generous as the mines of India ¹⁵. And you know what, cousin? He greatly respects your character, and restrains himself from getting angry—even though that is his first instinct—when you provoke him. I promise he does. I am telling you that there is not a man alive who could have provoked him like you do without getting a dangerous reaction from him. Don't make a habit of it though—I'm begging you.

¹⁵ Mortimer refers here to the plentiful gold mines of the Indies.

WORCESTER

[To HOTSPUR] Truthfully, my lord, you are wrong to be so stubborn. Ever since you got here, you have done more than enough to test his patience. You should learn to stop doing this as much, my lord. Sometimes it does reveal greatness, courage, and spirit—and that's an advantage for you. Yet, it also demonstrates anger, bad manners, lack of self-control, pride, arrogance, judgment, and hatred. Any of these traits, if they become associated with a nobleman, will make him lose the support of other men. And they will leave behind a stain on his beautiful accomplishments, cheating him out of praise.

HOTSPUR

Well, I've learned my lesson. May your good manners bring you success! Here come our wives. Let's prepare to leave them.

GLENOWER enters, with LADY PERCY and LADY MORTIMER.

MORTIMER

This is the awful annoyance that makes me angry--my wife doesn't speak any English, and I don't speak any Welsh.

GLENOWER

My daughter is crying because she doesn't want to be parted from you. She says that she wishes that she was a soldier too, so that she could go to war with you.

MORTIMER

200 Good father, tell her that she and my aunt Percy
Shall follow in your conduct speedily.

GLENDOWER speaks to THE LADY in Welsh, and she answers him in the same

GLENDOWER

She is desperate here, a peevish self-willed harlotry,
One that no persuasion can do good upon.

THE LADY speaks again in Welsh

MORTIMER

I understand thy looks. That pretty Welsh
205 Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens
I am too perfect in, and but for shame
In such a parley should I answer thee.

THE LADY speaks again in Welsh

I understand thy kisses and thou mine,
And that's a feeling disputation;
210 But I will never be a truant, love,
Till I have learned thy language; for thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penned,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
With ravishing division, to her lute.

GLENDOWER

215 Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad.

THE LADY speaks again in Welsh

MORTIMER

O, I am ignorance itself in this!

GLENDOWER

She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you
220 And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night
The hour before the heavenly harnessed team
225 Begins his golden progress in the east.

MORTIMER

With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing.
By that time will our book, I think, be drawn

GLENDOWER

Do so;
And those musicians that shall play to you
230 Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,
And straight they shall be here. Sit, and attend.

HOTSPUR

Come, Kate, thou art perfect in lying down.
Come, quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap.

LADY PERCY

Go, you giddy goose.

MORTIMER

Good father-in-law, tell her that she and my aunt Percy ¹⁶
will come along with you very soon.

¹⁶ The original text refers to Lady Percy, Hotspur's wife, as Mortimer's aunt.

GLENDOWER speaks to LADY MORTIMER in Welsh, and she answers him in the same language.

GLENDOWER

She is miserable now, a bad-tempered, headstrong hussy.
No-one's going to be able to change that.

LADY MORTIMER speaks again in Welsh.

MORTIMER

I understand you by looking at your face. I understand only
too well those pretty Welsh tears that pour from your
heavenly eyes. And I would answer in the same language, if
it wasn't shameful for me to cry ¹⁷.

¹⁷ Mortimer is worried that crying will make him look unmanly, in accordance with gender stereotypes of the day.

LADY MORTIMER speaks again in Welsh.

I understand your kisses, and you understand mine--and
that is an emotional conversation. I will never abandon my
studies, my love, until I have learned your language. For
your tongue makes the Welsh language sound as sweet as
the best songs ever written, sung by a beautiful queen in
summer's garden, with the lovely accompaniment of her
lute.

GLENDOWER

Be careful, if you show your feelings too much, you'll make
her go crazy.

LADY MORTIMER speaks again in Welsh.

MORTIMER

Oh, I have no clue what she's saying!

GLENDOWER

She asks you to lie down on the floor, covered thick
with reeds ¹⁸, and rest your soft head on her lap. She will
sing you whichever song you would like to hear until your
eyelids droop, and you fall asleep. She will charm you so
that you will feel pleasantly heavy, somewhere in between
being awake and being asleep--like the change from day to
night, that hour before the sun begins its golden journey in
the east.

¹⁸ Green rushes were usually used to cover floors in houses during the Middle Ages.

MORTIMER

I would love to sit and hear her sing. By the time she's done,
our final documents should be ready.

GLENDOWER

Please, do. The musicians who are going to play for you are
currently hanging in the air about a thousand leagues ¹⁹
from here, and will be here very soon. Sit down and wait for
them.

¹⁹ A league is a unit of length. One league equals about 3.5 miles.

HOTSPUR

Come on Kate, you are good at lying down. Come on, quick,
quick, so that I can rest my head in your lap ²⁰.

²⁰ Hotspur's language is charged with sexual overtones, as the words "head" and "lap" were Elizabethan slang terms for male and female genitalia. This interaction recalls a famous moment in Hamlet, in which the Danish prince lays his head in Ophelia's lap and makes similarly bawdy remarks.

LADY PERCY

Stop that, you silly goose.

*The music plays***HOTSPUR**

235 Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh,
And 'tis no marvel he is so humorous.
By 'r Lady, he is a good musician.

LADY PERCY

Then should you be nothing but musical, for you are
altogether governed by humors. Lie still, you thief, and
240 hear the lady sing in Welsh.

HOTSPUR

I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish.

LADY PERCY

Wouldst thou have thy head broken?

HOTSPUR

No.

LADY PERCY

Then be still.

HOTSPUR

245 Neither,'tis a woman's fault.

LADY PERCY

Now God help thee!

HOTSPUR

To the Welsh lady's bed.

LADY PERCY

What's that?

HOTSPUR

Peace, she sings.

Here THE LADY sings a Welsh song

HOTSPUR

250 Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.

LADY PERCY

Not mine, in good sooth.

HOTSPUR

Not yours, in good sooth! Heart, you swear like a
comfit-maker's wife! "Not you, in good sooth," and "as
true as I live," and "as God shall mend me," and "as
sure as day"—
And givest such saracenet surely for thy oaths
As if thou never walk'st further than Finsbury.
Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath, and leave "in sooth,"
260 And such protest of pepper-gingerbread,
To velvet-guards and Sunday citizens.
Come, sing.

LADY PERCY

I will not sing.

*Music plays.***HOTSPUR**

Now I can see that the devil understands Welsh.²⁴ It's no
wonder he's so unpredictable. By God, he's a good
musician.

²⁴ Hotspur is making a joke here
about the fact that Glendower said
that the musicians were a thousand
leagues away, and so must been
spirits from Hell.

LADY PERCY

Then it's a wonder you're not more musical, for you are the
most unpredictable man there is. Lie still, you thief and
listen to the lady singing in Welsh.

HOTSPUR

I would rather hear my dog Lady howl in Irish.²⁵

²⁵ Englishmen in Shakespeare's time
thought of the Irish nation and
language as unpleasant and alien.

LADY PERCY

Would you like to have your head broken?

HOTSPUR

No.

LADY PERCY

Then be quiet.

HOTSPUR

I'll never be quiet--it's women who are meant to be silent.²³

²³ During the Elizabethan era, social
norms required women to be silent, as
a sign of modesty and obedience.

LADY PERCY

God help you!

HOTSPUR

Into the Welsh lady's bed.

LADY PERCY

What did you say?

HOTSPUR

Be quiet! She's singing.

LADY MORTIMER sings a Welsh song.

HOTSPUR

Come on, Kate—I'd like to hear your song, too.

LADY PERCY

Not mine, darn it.

HOTSPUR

"Not mine, darn it?" Goodness, you swear like a candy-
maker's wife! "Not you, darn it." And "I swear on my life,"
and "God will forgive me," and "as clear as day." Your
swearing is as weak as a light silk, you would think that you
had never been further than Finsbury.²⁴ Swear like the
lady you are Kate, so that it fills your mouth. Leave out
words like "darn it," and outrage at spicy, rude language²⁵,
that should be left for citizens wearing their Sunday best,
trimmed with velvet. Come on, sing for us.

²⁴ Finsbury was an area due north of
the city of London, and a place
Hotspur links to everyday London
citizens. Hotspur thinks his wife, a
noblewoman who has the rank of
"lady," has the right to use
 swearwords—particularly to
 distinguish herself from the ordinary
 wives of the emerging middle class
 who don't swear.

²⁵ "Pepper-gingerbread" was a spicy
candy with a rough texture, a
metaphor in the original text for spicy,
coarse language.

LADY PERCY

I will not sing.

HOTSPUR

'Tis the next way to turn tailor, or be red-breast
teacher. An the indentures be drawn, I'll away within
these two hours, and so come in when ye will.
265

Exit HOTSPUR

GLENOWER

Come, come, Lord Mortimer; you are as slow
As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.
By this our book is drawn. We'll but seal,
270 And then to horse immediately.

MORTIMER

With all my heart.

Exeunt

HOTSPUR

It's the easiest way to become a tailor 26, or be a teacher of birds. If our agreements are drawn up, I will leave within the next two hours. Come find me whenever you want.

26 Like the psalm-singing weaver that Falstaff alludes to in Act 2, Scene 4, tailors were widely believed to be musical in Shakespeare's time.

HOTSPUR exits.

GLENOWER

Come on, Lord Mortimer, you are as reluctant to leave as the eager Lord Percy is burning to go. Our agreements have now been drawn up. We just need to sign them, and then we should leave right after.

MORTIMER

I will, with all my heart.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, and others

KING

Lords, give us leave; the Prince of Wales and I
Must have some private conference, but be near at hand,
For we shall presently have need of you.

Exeunt lords

I know not whether God will have it so
5 For some displeasing service I have done,
That, in his secret doom, out of my blood
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me.
But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that thou art only marked
10 For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven
To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society
15 As thou art matched withal, and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood,
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

PRINCE HENRY

So please your Majesty, I would I could
Quit all offenses with as clear excuse
20 As well as I am doubtless I can purge
Myself of many I am charged withal.
Yet such extenuation let me beg
As, in reproof of many tales devised,
Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear,
25 By smiling pickthanks and base newsmongers,
I may for some things true, wherein my youth
Hath faulty wandered and irregular,
Find pardon on my true submission.

KING

God pardon thee. Yet let me wonder, Harry,
30 At thy affections, which do hold a wing
Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,
And art almost an alien to the hearts
35 Of all the court and princes of my blood.
The hope and expectation of thy time

Shakescleare Translation

The KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, lords, and attendants enter.

KING

Lords, leave us alone for a bit. I need to talk in private with my son. But stay close though, because we will need you again soon.

The lords exit.

I don't know if it's because I've done something to annoy him, but God has decided, with his sharp judgement, to turn my own offspring into an instrument of vengeance and torture for me. But the way you are living your life makes me believe that you God destined you only to punish me for all my missteps. Tell me, how else would someone with such noble blood be associated with such inappropriate and base desires; such poor, such wretched, such vulgar and appalling actions; such pointless pleasures and such vile companions--and still think they are on the same level as you, a prince?

PRINCE HENRY

If I may please speak, your Majesty, I wish I could prove my innocence against all of these charges. And I am confident that I can clear myself of many of them. Yet, let me beg one thing of you. Do not believe all of the false things you have heard about me, stories that smiling informers and silly gossips love to tell great men like you. With this in mind, try and forgive me for the things which I will admit are true--the offenses that I have committed in my reckless and foolish youth.

KING

God forgive you. But, I am surprised, Harry, at your tendencies, which are so different from any of your ancestors. Your rude behavior 1 has lost you your place in the Council, and now your younger brother holds that position. You are almost a stranger in the hearts of all the members of the court, and the other members of our family. All the hope and the expectations for your life have been lost, and in their hearts every man anticipates your

1 Shakespeare alludes here to a violent incident that the *Chronicles record*--Hal was removed from the Council for hitting a judge.

Is ruined, and the soul of every man
Prophetically doth forethink thy fall.
Had I so lavish of my presence been,
40 So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
45 A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But like a comet I was wondered at;
That men would tell their children "This is he."
Others would say "Where? Which is Bolingbroke?"
50 And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dressed myself in such humility
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
Even in the presence of the crowned King.
55 Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,
My presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen but wondered at, and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
And won by rareness such solemnity.
60 The skipping King, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded his state,
Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
Had his great name profanèd with their scorns,
65 And gave his countenance, against his name,
To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push
Of every beardless vain comparative;
Grew a companion to the common streets,
Enfeoffed himself to popularity,
70 That, being daily swallowed by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey and began
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
More than a little is by much too much.
So, when he had occasion to be seen,
75 He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes
As, sick and blunted with community,
Afford no extraordinary gaze
Such as is bent on sunlike majesty
80 When it shines seldom in admiring eyes,
But rather drowsed and hung their eyelids down,
Slept in his face, and rendered such aspect
As cloudy men use to their adversaries,
Being with his presence gluttoned, gorged, and full.
85 And in that very line, Harry, standest thou,
For thou has lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation. Not an eye
But is awarey of thy common sight,
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more,
90 Which now doth that I would not have it do,
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

PRINCE HENRY

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.

KING

For all the world
95 As thou art to this hour was Richard then
When I from France set foot at Ravensburgh,
And even as I was then is Percy now.
Now, by my scepter, and my soul to boot,
He hath more worthy interest to the state
100 Than thou, the shadow of succession.
For of no right, nor color like to right,
He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,
Turns head against the lion's armèd jaws,
And, being no more in debt to years than thou,
105 Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
To bloody battles and to bruising arms.
What never-dying honor hath he got
Against renowned Douglas, whose high deeds,

downfall. If I had been so visible in public--considered so cheap and vulgar in men's eyes--and so friendly with the common masses, then the public opinion which helped me to get this crown, would have instead stayed loyal to Richard. I would have been left in exile, a man with no reputation, or promise of success. But because I stayed away from the public eye, I could only be admired, like a comet 2, when I did appear. Men tell their children, "That's him." Others say "Where? Which one is Bolingbroke?" I became almost a godlike figure, and behaved with such modesty that I won the support of men's hearts and the loud shouts and tributes from their mouths, even when King Richard himself was present. This is how I keep myself fresh and new. My presence is like a bishop's robe--admired on the infrequent occasions it is seen--and my public appearances, although they are rare, are magnificent, like a feast which wins great respect because of its rarity. Frivolous King Richard, he skipped everywhere with shallow clowns and flashy, superficial jokers. Like brushwood, he burned out almost as quickly as he was lit. He destroyed his kingdom by mixing royalty with prancing idiots. His reputation was destroyed because he was scorned for the fools he associated with. And he lost respect 3 by laughing with these joking boys and exposing himself to the mockery of every young joker around. He got used to spending time in common places, and committed himself to being popular. Soon they saw him every day, and he became like the taste of too much honey--when you start to hate the taste, and even a little bit of it is too much. In the end, when he was seen, he was like a cuckoo in June 4 --people heard him but they didn't pay attention. When people's eyes are so used to seeing something, they don't pay much attention to it. They didn't look with a special gaze, like they would when the sun shines into their wondering eyes, as it does so rarely. Instead, they lost interest, and looked at the ground. It was as like they were asleep in front of him, and looked at him with the same sort of expression that frowning men use for their enemies, as they were so crammed full, stuffed, and full with his presence. And that is where you currently stand, Harry. For you have lost your status as a prince by hanging out with vulgar people. There's not an eye in this world that isn't tired of seeing you. Except mine, which would like to see you more, yet now act against instructions, by filling with tears.

2 Once again, we see Shakespeare alluding to comets as good omens, which Glendower also associated with himself in Act 3, Scene 1.

3 Shakespeare in the original text uses the word "countenance" in part to mean face--much like the colloquial expression we have for losing respect, "to lose face."

4 This is a proverbial expression. Cuckoos were commonly seen in the month of June. Because the cuckoos were everywhere, people would no longer pay attention to their song.

PRINCE HENRY

I will try and behave more like myself from now on, my gracious father.

KING

I must say that up to now, you have acted like Richard did when I first returned to Ravensburgh from France. I recognize that Percy is acting a lot like I did then 5. Now, on my sword, and on my soul as well, he has a more valid claim to the kingdom than you do, as you are a poor imitation of a successor. For without a right to the throne--without anything which even resembles a right to the throne--he has filled our fields with troops. He leads an army against the King, into the jaws of a lion. And even though he is no older than you, he leads old lords and distinguished bishops into bloody battles and violent deeds. He has received such honor already from defeating the renowned Douglas! Hotspur's noble actions, his fierce assaults, and his great military reputation have meant he is known in every Christian country as one of the best soldiers

5 Like Hotspur, King Henry's claim to Richard's throne was based more on his abilities as a ruler than on his parentage. King Henry is telling Hal that Hotspur is behaving more like a King than Hal, who is the rightful successor to the throne on account of his inheritance.

6 Mars was the ancient Roman god of war.

Whose hot incursions and great name in arms,
 110 Holds from all soldiers chief majority
 And military title capital
 Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ.
 Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathing clothes,
 This infant warrior, in his enterprises
 115 Discomfited great Douglas, ta'en him once,
 Enlarg'd him, and made a friend of him,
 To fill the mouth of deep defiance up
 And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
 And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,
 120 The Archbishop's Grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,
 Capitulate against us and are up.
 But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?
 Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
 Which art my nearest and dearest enemy?
 125 Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
 Base inclination, and the start of spleen,
 To fight against me under Percy's pay,
 To dog his heels, and curtsy at his frowns,
 To show how much thou art degenerate.

PRINCE HENRY

130 Do not think so. You shall not find it so.
 And God forgive them that so much have swayed
 Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me.
 I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
 135 And, in the closing of some glorious day,
 Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
 When I will wear a garment all of blood
 And stain my favors in a bloody mask,
 Which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it.
 140 And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
 That this same child of honor and renown,
 This gallant Hotspur, this all-praisèd knight,
 And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
 For every honor sitting on his helm,
 145 Would they were multitudes, and on my head
 My shames redoubled! For the time will come
 That I shall make this northern youth exchange
 His glorious deeds for my indignities.
 Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
 150 To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf.
 And I will call him to so strict account
 That he shall render every glory up,
 Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
 Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
 This in the name of God I promise here,
 155 The which if He be pleased I shall perform,
 I do beseech your Majesty may salve
 The long-grown wounds of my intemperance.
 If not, the end of life cancels all bands,
 And I will die a hundred thousand deaths
 160 Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

KING

A hundred thousand rebels die in this.
 Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.

Enter BLUNT

How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of speed.

BLUNT

So hath the business that I come to speak of.
 165 Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
 That Douglas and the English rebels met
 The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury.
 A mighty and a fearful head they are,
 If promises be kept on every hand,
 170 As ever offered foul play in the state.

there is. This Hotspur, this Mars ⁶ in baby clothes, this infant warrior, has defeated Douglas three times, captured him once, freed him again, and now made him an ally. Now they pose a huge problem in rebelling against my throne. What do you have to say about this? Percy, Northumberland, The Archbishop of York, Douglas, Mortimer-- they all have formed a league against us and are openly rebelling. But why am I telling you about my foes, when you are my closest and most loved enemy? With your lowly fear, your base behavior, and your bad temper, you are very likely to fight against me under Percy. I wouldn't be surprised if you followed Hotspur at his heels like a dog, and bowed to him when he frowns--that is how corrupt you are.

PRINCE HENRY

Don't think that. It won't happen. May God forgive whoever has turned your good opinion against me! I will make up for everything that I have done by killing Percy, and at the triumphant end of some battle I will be worthy of calling myself your son. Only when I am wearing clothes covered in blood and my face is stained with blood, will I be able to wash this away and wash my shame away with it. That will be the day, whenever it comes, that this honorable and renowned child, this brave Hotspur--a knight who is praised for everything and by everyone--will happen to meet with the disregarded Harry. If only every honor he had could be multiplied and every shame on my head could be doubled! For there will come a time when I will make this youth from the north give me his glorious honors in exchange for my offenses. Percy is like my agent, my lord, collecting glorious honors on my behalf. And I will make sure that he gives back every honor to me, even the smallest one, or I will tear it from his heart instead by killing him. I promise this to you here, in the name of God. And if God is willing, I will do these things, and I ask you to forgive the long-standing wounds I have caused with my lack of self-control. If not, death will cancel all of my promises. I would rather die a hundred thousand deaths than break even the smallest part of this promise.

KING

A hundred thousand rebels will die because of this promise that you have made. You will have command and royal responsibility from now on.

BLUNT enters.

How is it going, good Blunt? You look like you have something urgent to say.

BLUNT

The news that I have come to tell you is urgent. Lord Mortimer of Scotland has sent word that Douglas and the English rebels met at Shrewsbury on the eleventh of this month. If they all keep their promises, their army will be as big and as terrifying as any army that has ever rebelled against this kingdom.

KING

The Earl of Westmoreland set forth today,
With him my son, Lord John of Lancaster,
For this advertisement is five days old.—
On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set forward.
175 On Thursday we ourselves will march. Our meeting
Is Bridgenorth. And, Harry, you shall march
Through Gloucestershire; by which account,
Our business valued, some twelve days hence
Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.
180 Our hands are full of business. Let's away.
Advantage feeds him fat while men delay.

*Exeunt***KING**

This news is five days old. The Earl of Westmoreland and my son, Lord John of Lancaster 7, left today. You will leave next Wednesday, Harry. Then on Thursday, I will leave. We will meet at Bridgenorth 8. And, Harry, you will march through Gloucestershire. Therefore, considering what we have to do, we should be able to meet at Bridgenorth in twelve days with our full forces. We have a lot to do, so let's go. Our enemies will take advantage if we are slow.

7 Lord John of Lancaster is Hal's younger brother.

8 Bridgenorth is a town near Shrewsbury, where the play's final battle will take place.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH***FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? Do I not bate? Do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an like an old lady's loose gown. I am withered like an old applejohn. Well, I'll repent, 5 and that suddenly, while I am in some liking, I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse. The inside of a church! Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

BARDOLPH

Sir John, you are so fretful you cannot live long.

FALSTAFF

Why, there is it. Come sing me a bawdy song, make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be, virtuous enough: swore little; diced not above seven times—a week; went to a bawdy house once in a quarter—an hour; paid money that I borrowed, three or four times; lived well and in good compass; and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

BARDOLPH

Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

FALSTAFF

Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life. Thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee. Thou art the knight of the burning lamp.

BARDOLPH

Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

FALSTAFF

No, I'll be sworn, I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a death's-head or a *memento mori*. I never see thy face but I think upon hellfire and Dives that 30 lived in purple, for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would

Shakescleare Translation*FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH enter.***FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, haven't I completely shrunk since that robbery? Haven't I become so thin? Look, my skin is hanging off me like an old lady's loose dress. I am wasting away like an old, withered apple. Well, I'll repent for all the bad things I have done, and I should do it immediately, while I still can. I will be a bad condition soon, and I won't have the strength to repent. If I haven't forgotten what the inside of a church looks like, I'm a small and shriveled berry, a tired and worn-out horse. The inside of a church! I've been ruined by the company, the bad company, I keep.

BARDOLPH

Sir John, if you keep fretting this much, you aren't going to live very long.

FALSTAFF

Well, that's true. Come on, sing me a rude song, and cheer me up. I have lived a good life, like any other gentleman—well, good enough at least. I only swore a little bit, didn't gamble more than seven times...well, seven times a week, that is. I went to a brothel never more than once every fifteen...minutes. I paid back my debts! Well, at least three or four times. I lived well and in moderation, and I now I live a bad life, all out of moderation.

BARDOLPH

Sir John, you are so fat that everything about you is out of moderation, moderation wouldn't work for you, Sir John.

FALSTAFF

Well if you fix your face, then I will fix my life. You are the man at the front of our fleet, standing on the deck with a lantern, but instead of a lantern it's your nose 1. You are the *Knight of the Burning Lamp* 2!

1 Again, Bardolph's friend makes fun of him for his red nose.

2 This is a parody of titles taken on by wandering knights in chivalric romances.

BARDOLPH

But, Sir John, my face can't hurt you.

FALSTAFF

No, that's true, I can get some good use out of it, if I think of it like a skull or a reminder of death 3. I've never looked at your face and not thought of the fiery pits of hell and Dives, that rich man in purple from the Bible who burned forever. If there was anything good or virtuous about you, I would

3 *Memento mori*—literally in Latin, “remember death”—meant an image of a skull, or a skull itself. People in Shakespeare's time used the *memento mori* to remind themselves of their own mortality.

swear by thy face. My oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel." But thou art altogether given over, and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rankest up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an *ignis fatuus*, or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern: but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two and forty years, God reward me for it.

BARDOLPH

'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

FALSTAFF

Godamercy, so should I be sure to be heart-burned!

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

How now, Dame Partlet the hen, have you enquired yet who picked my pocket?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

50 Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John, do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched, I have enquired, so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant. The tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

FALSTAFF

55 You lie, hostess. Bardolph was shaved and lost many a hair; and I'll be sworn my pocket was picked. Go to, you are a woman, go.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Who, I? No; I defy thee! God's light, I was never called so in mine own house before.

FALSTAFF

60 Go to, I know you well enough.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

No, Sir John, you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

FALSTAFF

65 Dowlas, filthy dowlas. I have given them away to bakers' wives; they have made bolters of them.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now, as I am a true woman, holland of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four and twenty pound.

FALSTAFF

(points at BARDOLPH) He had his part of it. Let him pay.

swear oaths at your face. My oath would be something like, "Standing by this fire, that's God's angel." But you are completely committed to wickedness that you would be the son of utter darkness, if it wasn't for that light from your red nose. When you ran up Gadshill in the middle of the night to get my horse, I was certain I was seeing a will-o'-the-wisp ⁴

or a firework running. Oh, you are like a permanent festival of torches, an everlasting bonfire! You must have saved me about a thousand marks that I would have had to spend on torches, just by walking with me from bar to bar. Yet, the amount of wine you have drunk would have bought me lights from the most expensive candle-maker's in Europe. I have put up with that nose of yours ⁵ and kept it burning for thirty-two years. I deserve some heavenly reward for that.

BARDOLPH

God! I wish my face was in your belly ⁶!

FALSTAFF

God no! Then I would definitely have heart-burn!

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

How is it going, Dame Partlet the hen ⁷? Have you figured out who robbed me yet?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Why, Sir John? What do you think has happened, Sir John? Do you think that I keep thieves in this bar? I have searched for you, and I have asked around, and so has my husband. We have asked every man, every boy, and every servant. The slightest part of something has never been lost here before.

FALSTAFF

That's a lie, hostess. Bardolph has been shaved here, so has lost many hairs. And I am certain that I have been robbed. Damn you, you're just a woman, damn you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, me? No, you won't get a way with that! God, I've never been spoken to like that in my own bar.

FALSTAFF

Leave off, I know all about you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

No, Sir John, you don't know everything about me. I know everything about you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John. And now you argue with me and try to trick me out of it. I bought you a dozen shirts to wear.

FALSTAFF

They were awful, made of coarse linen. I had to give them away to bakers' wives to sift flour with--that was all those shirts were good for.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

No they weren't! As I am an honest woman, they were made of fine linen and were worth eight shillings an ell ⁸. You owe me money as well, Sir John, for the food and drink you have had here--and the twenty four pounds that I lent you.

FALSTAFF

[Pointing at BARDOLPH] He had some of that, let him pay you.

⁴ The "ignis fatuus" in the original text translates to "will-o'-the-wisp," which is phosphorescent gas commonly seen during the night over marshes or swamps.

⁵ The original text refers to a "salamander," a small lizard that was believed to live in fire.

⁶ Bardolph employs a famous proverb used to suggest irritation.

⁷ A traditional name for a hen, derived from a story in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. When used on women, it could indicate a fashionable ruff of the day.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

He? Alas, he is poor. He hath nothing.

FALSTAFF

How, poor? Look upon his face. What call you rich? Let them coin his nose. Let them coin his cheeks. I'll not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker of me? Shall I not take mine case in mine inn but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

FALSTAFF

How? The Prince is a jack, a sneak-up. 'Sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and PETO, marching, and FALSTAFF meets them laying on his truncheon like a fife

How now, lad, is the wind in that door, i' faith? Must we all march?

BARDOLPH

Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My lord, I pray you, hear me.

PRINCE HENRY

What sayest thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband? I love him well; he is an honest man.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Good my lord, hear me.

FALSTAFF

Prithee, let her alone, and list to me.

PRINCE HENRY

What say'st thou, Jack?

FALSTAFF

The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras, and had my pocket picked. This house is turned bawdy house; they pick pockets.

PRINCE HENRY

What didst thou lose, Jack?

FALSTAFF

Wilt thou believe me, Hal, three or four bonds of forty pound apiece, and a seal ring of my grandfather's.

PRINCE HENRY

A trifle, some eightpenny matter.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

So I told him, my lord, and I said I heard your Grace say so. And, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouthed man as he is; and said he would cudgel you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Him? No, he is poor. He has nothing.

FALSTAFF

How is he poor? Look at his face. If that's not rich, I don't know what is. Let them sell his nose, or make money out of his cheeks ⁹. I won't pay a denier ¹⁰. Do you think I'm some kind of bumpkin? Can I not relax in a bar without having my pocket picked? I have lost my grandfather's ring with his seal on it, which is worth forty marks.

⁹ Once Again, Falstaff makes a joke of Bardolph's red face—he could make money off of his nose and cheeks because they are like red precious stones.

¹⁰ A denier was a French copper coin, worth even less than a penny.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Jesus, I've heard the Prince tell him so many times that that ring was just copper!

FALSTAFF

What? The Prince is a fool, a sneak. I swear to God, if he was here, I would beat him like a dog if he said that.

PRINCE HENRY and PETO enter, marching like soldiers. FALSTAFF joins them, holding his cudgel like a military flute.

How's it going Hal, is this what we're doing? Do we all have to march?

BARDOLPH

Yep, two-by-two, like prisoners on their way to Newgate ¹¹.

¹¹ Newgate Prison was one of the main prisons in London where convicts would be taken before they were hanged.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My lord, please, listen to me.

PRINCE HENRY

What are you saying Mistress Quickly? How is your husband doing? I like him a lot; he is an honorable man.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My good lord, please listen to me.

FALSTAFF

Hal, leave her alone, and listen to me.

PRINCE HENRY

What are you saying, Jack?

FALSTAFF

The other night I fell asleep behind these curtains and was robbed. This bar is like a brothel; they steal your things.

PRINCE HENRY

What did you lose, Jack?

FALSTAFF

Would you believe it, Hal? Three or four promises of money, worth forty pounds each, and a signet ring that was my grandfather's.

PRINCE HENRY

That ring's nothing—it's barely worth eight pennies.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

That's what I told him, my lord, and I said I had heard your Grace say so. Then, my lord, he said vile things about you, like the foul-mouthed man he is, and he said he would beat you!

PRINCE HENRY

105 What, he did not!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

FALSTAFF

There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune,
nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox, and for
womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the
ward to thee. Go, you thing, go.

110

PRINCE HENRY

What? He did?!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Either he said that, or I'm not faithful, honest, or womanly
at all.

FALSTAFF

There's about as much faith in you as there is in a whore ¹²,
about as much truth as a fox running after a piece of bait.
And as for your womanhood, a boy in a dress ¹³ is more
likely to be the deputy's wife ¹⁴ than you are. Get out, you
thing, go.

¹² Falstaff uses the words "stewed prune" in the original to suggest that Mistress Quickly is a prostitute. In Shakespeare's time, stewed prunes were served as a dish in brothels, perhaps because people believed they fought against sexually transmitted infections. Further, "stew" was another word for a brothel, because houses of prostitution had origins as steam bath houses.

¹³ Maid Marian was a clownish character from a morris dance—a traditional folk dance in the British Isles—and was usually played by a boy. The joke is also funny because in Shakespeare's time, women were not allowed to act on the public stage, so female roles like that of Mistress Quickly were played by men in drag.

¹⁴ Here Falstaff makes a jibe at Mistress Quickly's respectability. The deputy of the ward was a visible, public position, and so he and his wife would have to behave honorably, as model citizens.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Say, what thing, what thing?

FALSTAFF

What thing! Why, a thing to thank God on.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I am no thing to thank God on, I would thou shouldst
know it! I am an honest man's wife, and, setting thy
knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call me so.

115

FALSTAFF

Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say
otherwise.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

FALSTAFF

What beast? Why, an otter.

PRINCE HENRY

120 An otter, Sir John. Why an otter?

FALSTAFF

Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not
where to have her.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Thou art an unjust man in saying so. Thou or any man
knows where to have me, thou knave, thou.

PRINCE HENRY

125 Thou sayest true, hostess, and he slanders thee most
grossly.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Thing? What thing?

FALSTAFF

What thing?! Why a thing to thank God for.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I am no thing to thank God for, you'd better believe it! I am
the wife of an honorable man, and ignoring my respect for
your title of knight, you are a villain to call me that.

FALSTAFF

Ignoring your womanhood, you are just a beast, then.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What beast, you dishonest man?

FALSTAFF

What beast? Why, an otter.

PRINCE HENRY

An otter, Sir John. Why an otter?

FALSTAFF

Well she's not quite a fish and not quite a mammal ¹⁵—a
man wouldn't know what to do with her.

¹⁵ An otter is ambiguous in terms of its characterization—it is a mammal but swims in the water and has webbed feet and fin-like legs.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

You are a horrible man for saying a nasty thing like that. You
or any other man would know what to do with me, you
rascal, you.

PRINCE HENRY

You speak truthfully, hostess, and he has greatly offended
you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

So he doth you, my lord, and said this other day you owed him a thousand pound.

PRINCE HENRY

Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

FALSTAFF

130 A thousand pound, Hal? A million. Thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Nay, my lord, he called you "jack," and said he would cudgel you.

FALSTAFF

Did I, Bardolph?

BARDOLPH

135 Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

FALSTAFF

Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

PRINCE HENRY

I say 'tis copper. Darest thou be as good as thy word now?

FALSTAFF

140 Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare, but as thou art Prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of a lion's whelp.

PRINCE HENRY

And why not as the lion?

FALSTAFF

The King is to be feared as the lion. Dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? Nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle break.

PRINCE HENRY

150 O, if it should, how would thy guts fall about thy knees! But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine. It is all filled up with guts and midriff. Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket? Why, thou whoreson, impudent, embossed rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern reckonings, memorandums of bawdy houses, and one poor pennyworth, of sugar candy to make thee long-winded, if thy pocket were enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a villain. And, yet you will stand to it! You will not pocket up wrong! Art thou not ashamed?

FALSTAFF

160 Dost thou hear, Hal? Thou knowest in the state of innocence Adam fell, and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villany? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man and therefore more frailty. You confess, then, you picked my pocket?

PRINCE HENRY

It appears so by the story.

FALSTAFF

165 Hostess, I forgive thee. Go make ready breakfast, love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests. Thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason. Thou

MISTRESS QUICKLY

He also offends you, my lord, and he said the other day that you owe him a thousand pounds.

PRINCE HENRY

Sir, do I owe you a thousand pounds?

FALSTAFF

A thousand pounds, Hal? More like a million. But since your love is worth a million pounds, you just owe me your love.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

That's not true, my lord, he called you a fool and said that he would beat you.

FALSTAFF

Did I, Bardolph?

BARDOLPH

Yes, Sir John, that's what you said.

FALSTAFF

Yes, but I only said I'd do this if he said my ring was trash and was just made of copper.

PRINCE HENRY

I do say it's trash and just made of copper. Are you going to honor your promise and beat me then?

FALSTAFF

Hal, you know that if you were only a man, I would honor my promise. But since you're the Prince, I'm scared, like I'm scared of the roaring of a lion's cub.

PRINCE HENRY

Why am I not the lion?

FALSTAFF

The King is the only man as scary as a lion. Do you think I'm as scared of you as I am of your father? No, and if I was, I hope my girdle would break!¹⁶

¹⁶ The breaking of one's girdle belt was considered to be an omen of bad luck.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, if your girdle broke, your stomach would be hanging around your knees! But sir, there's no room in your chest for loyalty, honesty, or the truth. Your chest is all filled up with guts and stomach. You are going to accuse an honest woman of robbing you? Why, you son-of-a-whore! You shameless, fat liar! I bet that the only things in your pockets were tavern bills, notes about brothels, and about a penny's worth of sweet candy to give you enough energy to keep going. If your pockets had anything in them except these things, then I'm a liar. And yet, you continue to lie! You will not accept criticism! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

FALSTAFF

Don't you understand, Hal? You know that Adam fell even when living in the innocent world of Eden, so what chance does poor Jack Falstaff have in these evil times? You can see that I have more flesh than most other men, and that makes me more frail.¹⁷ Are you confessing then, that it was you who robbed me?

¹⁷ Falstaff plays on the proverbial connection of frailty with flesh, or the body's weakness in resisting temptation.

PRINCE HENRY

So it seems, since I told you what was in your pockets.

FALSTAFF

Hostess, I forgive you. Go and get breakfast ready, love your husband, take care of your servants, and look after your

seest I am pacified still. Nay, prithee, be gone.

Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now, Hal, to the news at court. For the robbery, lad, how is that answered?

PRINCE HENRY

170 O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee. The money is paid back again.

FALSTAFF

O, I do not like that paying back. 'Tis a double labor.

PRINCE HENRY

I am good friends with my father and may do anything.

FALSTAFF

Rob me the Exchequer the first thing thou dost, and do it with unwashed hands too.

BARDOLPH

Do, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

FALSTAFF

I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can steal well? O, for a fine thief of the age of 180 two and twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels. They offend none but the virtuous. I laud them; I praise them.

PRINCE HENRY

Bardolph!

BARDOLPH

185 My lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, To my brother John; this to my Lord of Westmoreland.

Exit BARDOLPH

Go, Peto, to horse, to horse, for thou and I have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time.

Exit PETO

190 Jack, meet me tomorrow in the Temple hall
At two o'clock in the afternoon;
There shalt thou know thy charge, and there receive
Money and order for their furniture.
The land is burning. Percy stands on high,
195 And either we or they must lower lie.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF

Rare words, brave world!—Hostess, my breakfast, come.—
O, I could wish this tavern were my drum.

Exit

guests. You will find me an agreeable man normally. See how easily pleased I am. Now, please, get going!

MISTRESS QUICKLY exits.

Hal, tell me about the news at court. Was anything said about our robbery?

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, I will always be your protector, you fresh piece of meat. The money has been paid back.

FALSTAFF

Oh, I don't like the whole "paying back" thing—it's twice the amount of work.

PRINCE HENRY

I am good friends with my father again, and so I can do anything.

FALSTAFF

Then start by robbing the royal treasury, and do it right now, without even washing your hands.

BARDOLPH

Do it, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

I have found you some foot soldiers to command, Jack.

FALSTAFF

I wish they could have been cavalrymen instead of foot soldiers. Where am I going to find a good thief? Oh, if only I had a great thief who was about twenty-two years old! I am awfully ill-equipped. Well, thank God for these rebels. They only go against the good people. I give them praise and honor for that.

PRINCE HENRY

Bardolph!

BARDOLPH

My lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Go and give this letter to my brother, Lord John of Lancaster. Take this one to the Lord of Westmoreland.

BARDOLPH exits.

Go to the horses Peto, to the horses. You and I have thirty miles to ride before lunchtime.

PETO exits.

Jack, meet me at Temple Hall ¹⁸ at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon, and I will give you a list of your troops then, as well as money and instructions about their equipment. This land is on the verge of destruction, and Percy has risen up against us all. At this stage, one of us must die.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

¹⁸ Temple Hall was the hub of London's legal community.

FALSTAFF

Well said! What an amazing world this is! Hostess, bring me my breakfast. Oh, if only I could lead my troops from this bar.

He exits.

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, and DOUGLAS

HOTSPUR

Well said, my noble Scot. If speaking truth
In this fine age were not thought flattery,
Such attribution should the Douglas have
As not a soldier of this season's stamp
Should go so general current through the world.
By God, I cannot flatter. I do defy
The tongues of soothsayers. But a braver place
In my heart's love hath no man than yourself.
Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.

5

DOUGLAS

Thou art the king of honor.
No man so potent breathes upon the ground
But I will beard him.

10

HOTSPUR

Do so, and 'tis well.

Enter a MESSENGER with letters

What letters hast thou there? (to DOUGLAS) I can but
thank you.

15

MESSENGER

These letters come from your father.

HOTSPUR

Letters from him! Why comes he not himself?

MESSENGER

He cannot come, my lord. He is grievous sick.

HOTSPUR

Zounds, how has he the leisure to be sick
In such a jostling time? Who leads his power?
Under whose government come they along?

20

MESSENGER

His letters bear his mind, not I, my lord.

WORCESTER

I prithee, tell me, doth he keep his bed?

25

MESSENGER

He did, my lord, four days ere I set forth,
And, at the time of my departure thence,
He was much feared by his physicians.

WORCESTER

I would the state of time had first been whole
Ere he by sickness had been visited.
His health was never better worth than now.

30

HOTSPUR

Sick now? Droop now? This sickness doth infect
The very lifeblood of our enterprise.
'Tis catching hither, even to our camp.
He writes me here that inward sickness—
And that his friends by deputation
Could not so soon be drawn, nor did he think it meet
To lay so dangerous and dear a trust
On any soul removed but on his own;
Yet doth he give us bold advertisement

Shakescleare Translation

HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, and DOUGLAS enter.

HOTSPUR

Well said, you wonderful Scotsman. If people
nowadays didn't think that speaking the truth was the
same thing as flattery, I would tell them that you, Douglas,
should be praised more than any other soldier fighting right
now, having gained such an impressive reputation already.
Heaven knows, I'm not normally a flatterer. I hate people
who constantly flatter others with their words. But you have
a better place in my heart than any other man. Now test me
on this love; make me prove it, my lord.

DOUGLAS

You are an incredibly honorable man, but there is no-one,
however powerful, that I cannot defy.

HOTSPUR

Do it then. That would be good.

A MESSENGER carrying letters enters.

What are those letters?

[To DOUGLAS] I can only thank you.

MESSENGER

These are letters from your father.

HOTSPUR

Just letters? Why hasn't he come to see me himself?

MESSENGER

He can't come my lord, he is incredibly sick.

HOTSPUR

God, how can he have the freedom to be sick at such a time
of conflict?! Who is leading his army? Who is bringing them
here?

MESSENGER

His letters will reveal his thoughts more than I can, my lord.

WORCESTER

Please, tell me, is he bedridden?

MESSENGER

He was, my lord, when I set off four days ago. When I was
leaving, the doctors were very worried about him.

WORCESTER

I wish this sickness could have come after this present
situation has been settled. His health has never been as
important to us as it is now.

HOTSPUR

He is sick now? He weakens now? This sickness infects the
entire mission, then . And it will even infect us here, in
our camp. He tells me in his letter about this internal
sickness--and that his troops couldn't be assembled quickly
enough by his deputies. He also didn't think that it was
appropriate to let anyone other than himself carry out such
a dangerous and important task. Yet, he does tell us to be
confident and to go ahead with our small number of troops
to see what our fortunes will be. He writes that now is not a

1 Hotspur will use his father's illness as a metaphor for the weakening of their military effort.

That with our small conjunction we should on
 To see how fortune is disposed to us,
 For, as he writes, there is no quailing now,
 Because the King is certainly possessed
 Of all our purposes. What say you to it?

WORCESTER

Your father's sickness is a maim to us.

HOTSPUR

A perilous gash, a very limb lopped off!
 And yet, in faith, it is not. His present want
 Seems more than we shall find it. Were it good
 To set the exact wealth of all our states
 All at one cast? To set so rich a main
 On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour?
 It were not good, for therein should we read
 The very bottom and the soul of hope,
 The very list, the very utmost bound
 Of all our fortunes.

DOUGLAS

Faith, and so we should, where now remains
 A sweet reversion. We may boldly spend
 Upon the hope of what is to come in.
 A comfort of retirement lives in this.

HOTSPUR

A rendezvous, a home to fly unto,
 If that the devil and mischance look big
 Upon the maidenhead of our affairs.

WORCESTER

But yet I would your father had been here.
 The quality and hair of our attempt
 Brooks no division. It will be thought
 By some that know not why he is away
 That wisdom, loyalty, and mere dislike
 Of our proceedings kept the Earl from hence.
 And think how such an apprehension
 May turn the tide of fearful faction
 And breed a kind of question in our cause.
 For well you know, we of the off'r'ing side
 Must keep aloof from strict arbitrament,
 And stop all sight-holes, every loop from whence
 The eye of reason may pry in upon us.
 This absence of your father's draws a curtain
 That shows the ignorant a kind of fear
 Before not dreamt of.

HOTSPUR

You strain too far.
 I rather of his absence make this use:
 It lends a luster and more great opinion,
 A larger dare, to our great enterprise
 Than if the Earl were here, for men must think
 If we without his help can make a head
 To push against a kingdom, with his help
 We shall o'return it topsy-turvy down.
 Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are whole.

DOUGLAS

As heart can think. There is not such a word
 Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.

Enter Sir Richard VERNON

HOTSPUR

My cousin Vernon, welcome, by my soul.

VERNON

Pray God my news be worth a welcome, lord.
 The Earl of Westmoreland, seven thousand strong,
 Is marching hitherwards, with him Prince John.

time to be losing courage, since the King certainly knows about our plans to attack. What do you have to say about this?

WORCESTER

Your father's sickness is a crippling injury to us.

HOTSPUR

A dangerous wound, almost like one of our limbs has been chopped right off! Yet, actually, it doesn't have to be. His absence now seems worse than it really is. Was it good for us to gamble everything that we have on a single throw of the dice? Was it right to bet so much on the chance of one uncertain hour? No, it wasn't good, since it meant that we had used up all of our hope, and pushed the absolute limit and boundary of our luck.

DOUGLAS

That's true, especially when you consider the hope of the inheritance we can expect. We should be bold now, in the hope of what is to come in the future. And the fact that we now we have some help in case we need to retreat.

HOTSPUR

Yes, it gives us a refuge, somewhere to retreat to, if things look like they are going badly in the first stages of our mission.

WORCESTER

Still, I do wish that your father was here. The nature of our mission needs us all to be united together. Some people, who don't know that he is sick, will just think that the Earl stayed away out of wisdom, loyalty, and absolute dislike of what we are doing. And think about how these thoughts would affect people who are already scared, and raise doubts among our followers. For as you very well know, since we are the side making the attack, we have to try to avoid careful scrutiny. We have to close up all holes, all loopholes that people who are more rational might look through to criticize us. The fact that your father is not here opens the curtains, and shows ignorant people things that they had never been scared of before.

HOTSPUR

You are exaggerating. I would rather think of his absence in this way: it makes our mission better. It gives our mission a better reputation, more boldness than if the Earl was here. It will make men think that if we can raise an army to stand against the King without his help, when he does join in the fighting, we will be able to topple the kingdom completely. Everything is okay, we still have all of our limbs.

DOUGLAS

I should hope so. We don't understand the word fear in Scotland.

Sir Richard VERNON enters.

HOTSPUR

Welcome, kinsman Vernon. Truly, you are welcome.

VERNON

I wish to God that the news I bring was worth such a welcome, my lord. The Earl of Westmoreland is marching

HOTSPUR

No harm, what more?

VERNON

And further I have learned,
The King himself in person is set forth,
Or hitherwards intended speedily,
With strong and mighty preparation.

HOTSPUR

He shall be welcome too. Where is his son,
The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales,
And his comrades, that daffed the world aside
And bid it pass?

VERNON

All furnished, all in arms,
All plumed like ostriches that with the wind
Baited like eagles having lately bathed,
Glittering in golden coats like images,
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer,
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly armed
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

HOTSPUR

No more, no more! Worse than the sun in March
This praise doth nourish argues. Let them come.
They come like sacrifices in their trim,
And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war
All hot and bleeding will we offer them.
The mailèd Mars shall on his altar sit
Up to the ears in blood. I am on fire
To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh
And yet not ours. Come, let me taste my horse,
Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales.
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corpse.
O, that Glendower were come!

VERNON

There is more news.
I learned in Worcester, as I rode along,
He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.

DOUGLAS

That's the worst tidings that I hear of yet.

WORCESTER

Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound.

HOTSPUR

What may the King's whole battle reach unto?

VERNON

To thirty thousand.

HOTSPUR

Forty let it be.
My father and Glendower being both away,
The powers of us may serve so great a day.
Come, let us take a muster speedily.
Doomsday is near. Die all, die merrily.

here with seven thousand men, accompanied by Prince John.

HOTSPUR

That's not an issue. What else?

VERNON

I have also found out that the King himself has set off, and is on his way here quickly, with a huge, strong army.

HOTSPUR

Well then, we will welcome him too. Where is his son, that quick-footed, foolish Prince of Wales, and his friends, who don't care about anything in this world?

VERNON

They are all prepared, all armed and ready. They are dressed up like feathered ostriches, they look like eagles beating their wings impatiently after they have just bathed. Their coats ² are shining like golden statues. They are as energetic as the month of May, and are as beautiful as the midsummer sun. They are as excited as young goats, and as wild as young bulls. I saw young Harry with his helmet on, and the armor already on his thighs. Bravely armed with weapons, he rose from the ground like the messenger Mercury ³ and jumped onto his horse so easily. It almost looked like an angel had fallen out of the sky, ready to ride on the fiery Pegasus ⁴ and bewitch the world with his excellent riding.

² "Coats" refers to sleeveless outer coats with rich embroidery, worn over armor.

³ Mercury was the ancient Roman messenger god, often depicted with feathered sandals.

⁴ Pegasus was an ancient Greek mythological horse with wings.

HOTSPUR

Stop talking! No more! This glowing praise makes me shudder more than the sun does in March ⁵. Let them come. They come here dressed up and ready to be sacrificed, and we will offer them up, hot and bleeding, to the fiery goddess of war, Bellona ⁶. The god of war Mars will sit at his altar, up to his ears in blood. I am impatient, knowing that this prize is so close, and yet it is still not ours. Come, let me test my horse, ready to charge like a thunderbolt against this Prince of Wales. This Harry Percy will meet that Prince Harry, our horses will also meet, and we will not leave until one of us drops dead. Oh, if only Glendower was already here!

⁵ This relates to the belief that the spring sun increased the amount of fevers with chills--or "agues"--that affected people.

⁶ The "fiery-eyed maid of smoky war" in the original may refer to Bellona, who is the goddess of war in Roman mythology.

VERNON

I have more news for you. I found out when I was riding along in Worcester ⁷ that Glendower won't be able to assemble his army for two weeks!

DOUGLAS

That is the worst news yet.

WORCESTER

Yes, certainly, that is discouraging.

HOTSPUR

How many troops does the King have in total?

VERNON

About thirty thousand.

HOTSPUR

Why not let it be forty thousand?! Even though my father's and Glendower's men are not here, the troops that we do have could still be enough to win. Come, let's assemble and review our forces quickly. It's almost Doomsday ⁸. If we are going to die, let's do it cheerfully!

⁷ Worcester here refers not to the character, but the city on the Severn River, south of Shrewsbury where the armies will meet.

⁸ Doomsday refers to the end of the world. In a religious context, it is specifically the day of the Last

Judgment. By using this word, Hotspur is highlighting the upcoming battle's decisive deadliness.

DOUGLAS

Talk not of dying, I am out of fear
Of death or death's hand for this one half year.

Exeunt

DOUGLAS

Don't talk about dying, I'm not going to be scared of death
for the next six months.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, get thee before to Coventry. Fill me a bottle
of sack. Our soldiers shall march through. We'll to
Sutton Coldfield tonight.

BARDOLPH

Will you give me money, captain?

FALSTAFF

5 Lay out, lay out.

BARDOLPH

This bottle makes an angel.

FALSTAFF

An if it do, take it for thy labor. An if it make
twenty, take them all. I'll answer the coinage. Bid my
lieutenant Peto meet me at town's end.

BARDOLPH

10 I will, captain. Farewell.

Exit BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF

If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a souised
gurnet. I have misused the King's press damnably. I have
got, in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three
hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good
householders, yeomen's sons; inquire me out contracted
bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns;
such a commodity of warm slaves—as had as lief hear the
devil as a drum, such as fear the report of a caliver
worse than a struck fowl or a hurt wild duck. I pressed
20 me none but such toasts-and-butter, with hearts in their
bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have
bought out their services, and now my whole charge
consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen
of companies—slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted
cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores; and
such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded,
unjust servingmen, younger sons to younger brothers,
25 revolted tapsters, and ostlers tradefallen, the cankers
of a calm world and a long peace, ten times more

Shakesclare Translation

FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH enter.

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, go ahead of me to Coventry 1 and get me a
bottle of wine. Our soldiers will keep marching but we'll go
to Sutton Coldfield tonight.

1 Falstaff mentions the towns of Coventry and Sutton Coldfield, both of which are on the road towards Shrewsbury.

BARDOLPH

Will you give me money for it, captain?

FALSTAFF

Pay for it yourself.

BARDOLPH

That will make me an angel 2.

2 The bottle of white wine, or sack, will cost, or "make," an "angel," a coin with the archangel Michael imprinted onto it, worth about 7 shillings. But Bardolph puns here, commenting on the fact that by doing a good deed for his friend he will be good like a heavenly angel.

FALSTAFF

Well if it does, then keep it for your trouble. Even if it earns
you twenty shillings, then keep them all, I can pay you for it.
Tell my lieutenant Peto to meet me at the edge of the town.

BARDOLPH

I will, captain. Goodbye then.

BARDOLPH exits.

FALSTAFF

If I'm not ashamed of my soldiers, then I'm a pickled fish 3!
I have misused my position with the King terribly. In return
for the one hundred and fifty men I have made fight in the
army, I have received over three hundred pounds! All the
men I have found have been good house-owners and the
sons of successful farmers. I found men who were engaged
to be married, men whose weddings had already been
announced twice 4 in church. I found a group of such
privileged cowards, that they would rather hear the devil
talk than hear the drums of war; they are more scared when
they hear gunfire than a bird or a duck that has actually
been shot! I only looked for the pampered citizens, whose
hearts were about the same size as a pin-head, and they
paid me so that they wouldn't have to fight. So now my
whole section is made up of flag-bearers, corporals,
lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, and crooks who
looked as disgusting as that cheap painted wall hanging of
Lazarus 5, where the dogs are licking the sores on his
body. These men were never meant to be soldiers--they are

3 A "soused gurnet," or a pickled gurnet, was a small fish, eaten as a delicacy. This is another example of Falstaff's obsession with food.

4 In the original text, Falstaff refers to the "banns"--a notice read out on two successive Sundays in a parish church, announcing an intended marriage and giving the opportunity for objections.

5 Here Falstaff recalls a depiction on a painted wall hanging (more cheaply produced than a woven tapestry) of the Biblical story told in Luke 16:19-31. The story describes a poor beggar called Lazarus, who sat outside a house belonging to a rich man, or "glutton." The rich man's dogs

dishonorable-ragged than an old feazed ancient; and such have I to fill up the rooms of them that have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draf^t and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat. Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs as if they had gyves on, for indeed I had the most of them out of prison. There's not a shirt and a half in all my company, and the half shirt is two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at Saint Albans or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

servants who have been fired for lying, they are younger sons to younger brothers⁶, runaway barmen, and unemployed stable boys. They are like diseases in a world full of calm and peace, they are ten times more dishonorable and disgusting than a tattered old flag. And I've had to replace the men who have bribed me with these idiots. You would think that I had found a hundred and fifty men⁷, dirty from looking after pigs and from eating scraps and husks. One crazy guy saw us all marching and told me that it looked like I had taken all of the dead bodies from the gallows and made them fight again-- no-one has even seen something so terrifying⁸! I can't march through Coventry with them, that's for sure. These men march with their legs wide apart, as if they had chains on their ankles, which makes a lot of sense, as I got most of them from prison. There's only about one and a half shirts between the lot of them, and the half shirt is really just two napkins tied together and thrown over his shoulders like some kind of herald in a sleeveless coat. Even the whole shirt, to tell you the truth, was stolen from the bar owner at Saint Albans⁹ or from the red-nosed innkeeper at Daventry. But that doesn't matter, they should be able to steal people's laundry out of their hedges¹⁰.

were supposed to have licked Lazarus' open sores on his body.

⁶ In Shakespeare's time, the first-born son would inherit his family's property, leaving the younger brothers in a diminished financial position. That Falstaff refers to younger brothers' younger sons means that his soldiers are quite financially disempowered.

⁷ In the original text, Falstaff uses the term "prodigal" to allude to another famous tale from the Bible, from Luke 15.11-32. In that story, a rich man's son asks for and promptly spends all of his inheritance, and resorts to a job as a swineherd, envying the pigs for their miserable scraps of food in his hunger.

⁸ Scarecrows were supposed to scare away crows from feeding on crops. The implication here is that the men Falstaff has recruited are terrifying to look at.

⁹ Both Saint Albans and Daventry were situated on the main road from London to Coventry.

¹⁰ In Shakespeare's time, people would leave their laundry to dry outside on a hedge, rather than on the clotheslines we recognize today.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and Lord WESTMORELAND

PRINCE HENRY

How now, blown Jack? How now, quilt?

PRINCE HENRY and Lord WESTMORELAND enter.

PRINCE HENRY

How are you doing fat¹¹ Jack? How are you, you padded¹² thing?

¹¹ In the original text, "blown" is taken to mean swollen, as a reference to Falstaff's weight.

¹² The word "quilt" in the original likely refers to a quilted or a padded jacket.

FALSTAFF

What, Hal, how now, mad wag? What a devil dost thou in Warwickshire?—My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you mercy: I thought your Honor had already been at Shrewsbury.

FALSTAFF

Is it you Hal, how are you, my crazy joker?! What in the devil's name are you doing in Warwickshire? Oh! My good Lord of Westmoreland, I beg your forgiveness, I thought that you would already be in Shrewsbury.

WESTMORELAND

Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there and you too, but my powers are there already. The King, I can tell you, looks for us all. We must away all night.

WESTMORELAND

Don't worry, Sir John, I really should be there already and so should you, but at least my men are there already. The King is certainly expecting us. We will have to travel all night.

FALSTAFF

Tut, never fear me. I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

FALSTAFF

Oh, don't you worry about me! I am as alert as a cat is when it's trying to steal cream.

PRINCE HENRY

I think to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?

PRINCE HENRY

I think you must have stolen cream, because whatever you steal turns to fat. Tell me, Jack, whose men are these?

FALSTAFF

Mine, Hal, mine.

FALSTAFF

Mine, Hal, they are mine.

PRINCE HENRY

I did never see such pitiful rascals.

PRINCE HENRY

I've never seen such a pitiful bunch.

FALSTAFF

Tut, tut, good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder. They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush,

FALSTAFF

Oh hush, they are good enough to die--they are cannon fodder¹³, just cannon fodder. They can be thrown into a

man, mortal men, mortal men.

WESTMORELAND

Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly.

70

FALSTAFF

Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they had that, and for their bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

PRINCE HENRY

No, I'll be sworn, unless you call three fingers in the ribs bare. But, sirrah, make haste. Percy is already in the field.

Exit PRINCE.

FALSTAFF

What, is the King encamped?

WESTMORELAND

75 He is, Sir John. I fear we shall stay too long.

FALSTAFF

Well,
To the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast
Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest.

Exeunt

mass grave just the same as better men. They're still men, mortal men.

describe soldiers who are regarded as material to be exploited in war.

WESTMORELAND

That might be so, Sir John, but they look incredibly poor and thin, almost like beggars.

FALSTAFF

Well, I don't know where they got their poverty from, and as for their thinness, I know for certain that they didn't get that from me.

PRINCE HENRY

No, definitely not, unless you think that having layers of fat over your ribs makes you thin. But come on, sir, let's hurry. Percy is already at the battlefield.

The PRINCE exits.

FALSTAFF

What? Is the King already camped out and ready for battle?

WESTMORELAND

He is, Sir John. I'm afraid if we don't hurry, we'll get there too late.

FALSTAFF

Well, an excited guest gets to a feast early, whereas a bad fighter gets to a battle as late as he can!

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, DOUGLAS, and VERNON

HOTSPUR

We'll fight with him tonight.

WORCESTER

It may not be.

DOUGLAS

You give him then advantage.

VERNON

Not a whit.

HOTSPUR

5 Why say you so? Looks he not for supply?

VERNON

So do we.

HOTSPUR

His is certain; ours is doubtful.

WORCESTER

Good cousin, be advised. Stir not tonight.

Shakescleare Translation

HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, DOUGLAS, and VERNON enter.

HOTSPUR

We will fight with King Henry tonight.

WORCESTER

We can't.

DOUGLAS

Then you are giving him the advantage by waiting until morning.

VERNON

Not at all.

HOTSPUR

Why do you say that? Isn't he looking for extra reinforcements?

VERNON

Yes, but we are, too.

HOTSPUR

He will definitely find reinforcements, but we probably won't.

WORCESTER

Good nephew, listen to me. Do not fight tonight.

VERNON

(to HOTSPUR) Do not, my lord.

DOUGLAS

10 You do not counsel well.
You speak it out of fear and cold heart.

VERNON

Do me no slander, Douglas. By my life
(And I dare well maintain it with my life),
If well-respected honor bid me on,
15 I hold as little counsel with weak fear
As you, my lord, or any Scot that this day lives.
Let it be seen tomorrow in the battle
Which of us fears.

DOUGLAS

Yea, or tonight.

VERNON

20 Content.

HOTSPUR

Tonight, say I.

VERNON

Come, come it may not be. I wonder much,
Being men of such great leading as you are,
That you foresee not what impediments
25 Drag back our expedition. Certain horse
Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up.
Your Uncle Worcester's horse came but today,
And now their pride and mettle is asleep,
Their courage with hard labor tame and dull,
30 That not a horse is half the half of himself.

HOTSPUR

So are the horses of the enemy
In general journey-bated and brought low.
The better part of ours are full of rest.

WORCESTER

The number of the King exceedeth ours.
35 For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in.

The trumpet sounds a parley

BLUNT

I come with gracious offers from the King,
If you vouchsafe me hearing and respect.

HOTSPUR

Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt, and would to God
You were of our determination.
40 Some of us love you well, and even those some
Envoy your great deservings and good name
Because you are not of our quality
But stand against us like an enemy.

BLUNT

And God defend but still I should stand so,
45 So long as out of limit and true rule
You stand against anointed majesty.
But to my charge. The king hath sent to know
The nature of your griefs, and whereupon
You conjure from the breast of civil peace
50 Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land
Audacious cruelty. If that the king

VERNON

(To HOTSPUR) Do not, my lord.

DOUGLAS

You are not giving him good advice. You are only saying this
because you are scared and nervous.

VERNON

Don't slander me, Douglas. I swear on my life, and will
prove it with my life: if a thoughtfully considered sense of
honor inspires me to fight, I will be no more scared than
you, my lord, or any other Scotsman living. We will see in
tomorrow's battle which one of us is afraid.

DOUGLAS

Yes, or tonight.

VERNON

Enough.

HOTSPUR

I say we attack tonight.

VERNON

Come on, we can't do that. I don't understand how you can
be such great leaders and not see the obvious problems
that slow us down. My cousin Vernon and his cavalry
haven't arrived yet. Your Uncle's Worcester and his men
only arrived today, and now their pride and bravery is
asleep. Their courage has been tamed and weakened by
their long journey! There isn't a horse in their army that has
even a quarter of its usual strength!

HOTSPUR

They enemy's horses are also tired and weak from their
long journey. Many of our other horses are well-rested.

WORCESTER

The King has many more soldiers than we do. For God's
sake, nephew, wait until more men are here.

The trumpet sounds a parley

 A "parley" was an off-stage trumpet call that announced the arrival of a messenger from the opposing army.

Enter BLUNT

BLUNT enters.

BLUNT

I come here with a gracious offer from the King, if you will
listen to what I have to say and treat this offer with respect.

HOTSPUR

Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt. If only you were on our side of
this battle. Many of us are very fond of you, although we
also resent your noble behavior and your good reputation
because you are not on our side, but instead you are
fighting against us like an enemy.

BLUNT

And I pray I will continue to do so for as long as you stand
against the anointed  King, ignoring the boundaries of
natural order and good government. But now to my task.
The King has sent me to find out what your complaints are,
and why you are starting another war in a time of peace,
encouraging such violence and cruelty across his loyal land.
If the King has forgotten about any of your good deeds, of
which he knows there are many, he asks you to name your

 At the beginning of his reign, a king's forehead was smeared, or "anointed," with oil in a ceremony, as a reminder of his divine duties as ruler.

Have any way your good deserts forgot,
Which he confesseth to be manifold,
He bids you name your griefs, and with all speed
55 You shall have your desires with interest
And pardon absolute for yourself and these
Herein misled by your suggestion.

HOTSPUR

The King is kind, and well we know the king
Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.
60 My father and my uncle and myself
Did give him that same royalty he wears,
And when he was not six-and-twenty strong,
Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,
A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,
65 My father gave him welcome to the shore;
And when he heard him swear and vow to God
He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,
To sue his livery, and beg his peace,
With tears of innocence and terms of zeal,
70 My father, in kind heart and pity moved,
Swore him assistance and performed it too.
Now when the lords and barons of the realm
Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,
The more and less came in with cap and knee,
75 Met him in boroughs, cities, villages,
Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,
Laid gifts before him, proffered him their oaths,
Gave him their heirs as pages, followed him
Even at the heels in golden multitudes.
80 He presently, as greatness knows itself,
Steps me a little higher than his vow
Made to my father while his blood was poor
Upon the naked shore at Ravensburgh,
And now forsooth takes on him to reform
85 Some certain edicts and some strait decrees
That lie too heavy on the commonwealth,
Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep
Over his country's wrongs, and by this face,
This seeming brow of justice, did he win
90 The hearts of all that he did angle for,
Proceeded further—cut me off the heads
Of all the favourites that the absent King
In deputation left behind him here
When he was personal in the Irish war.

BLUNT

95 Tut, I came not to hear this.

HOTSPUR

Then to the point.
In short time after, he deposed the King,
Soon after that deprived him of his life
And, in the neck of that, tasked the whole state.
100 To make that worse, suffered his kinsman March
(Who is, if every owner were well placed,
Indeed his king) to be engaged in Wales,
There without ransom to lie forfeited,
Disgraced me in my happy victories,
105 Sought to entrap me by intelligence,
Rated mine uncle from the council board,
In rage dismissed my father from the court,
Broke oath on oath, committed wrong on wrong,
And in conclusion drove us to seek out
110 This head of safety, and withal to pry
Into his title, the which we find
Too indirect for long continuance.

BLUNT

Shall I return this answer to the King?

HOTSPUR

Not so, Sir Walter. We'll withdraw awhile.
115 Go to the King, and let there be impawned
Some surety for a safe return again,

grievances. He will quickly give you what you want and more, and will completely pardon you and the followers you have misled.

HOTSPUR

The King is kind, and we know that the King makes good promises and sticks to them. My father, my uncle, and I were the ones who made him King in the first place! When he barely had twenty-six men fighting with him, when he was weak and no-one cared about him, just a poor, unnoticed criminal trying to get home, my father welcomed him back ³. When my father heard him swearing a promise to God, weeping and speaking with passion, that he had only come back to claim his title from his father's inheritance ⁴, and reconcile himself to King Richard, he felt sorry for him and offered to help him. When the important men in the kingdom noticed that Northumberland, my father, was supporting him, they all came to see him and bow to him. They met him in towns, cities, villages, they waited for him on bridges, they stood in roads, they gave him gifts, promised to be loyal to him, gave him their children as attendants and even followed him around like slaves. Very quickly, as he became aware of his own importance, he began to forget the promise he had made to my father on the beach at Ravensburgh when he was still humble and thankful to be accepted. Now indeed, he has even decided to change certain laws and some strict decrees that *burden* the kingdom. He speaks out against the abuses we are facing and seems to cry about the bad things happening in the country. It is this show of sympathy, this pretense of justice, that he won over the hearts of all of the people he was aiming to. He then went even further! He cut off the heads of all of the advisors that Richard II had left behind to run the country, when he went to fight in the Irish war.

³ Henry IV returned from exile in France in 1399.

⁴ Richard II claimed Henry's rightful inheritance, bequeathed after Henry's father, John of Gaunt, died.

BLUNT

Enough. I didn't come to hear this.

HOTSPUR

Now to my point. Shortly after this, Henry took the throne from Richard, and quickly had him killed. Immediately after that he made the whole country pay more taxes. To make things even worse, he let his kinsman Mortimer—who would be the king if everyone actually had the position they were entitled to—be held hostage in Wales, forced to stay there without ransom. He shamed me for the battles I had won, he tried to catch me out with spies. He forced my uncle to leave the Council and in anger removed my father from his court. He broke promise after promise and did one bad thing after another. And finally, he forced us to build this army to protect ourselves, and also to question his right to rule, which we do not think is direct enough to carry on.

BLUNT

Is this what you want me to say to the King?

HOTSPUR

No, Sir Walter. We will hold off on battle for a while. Go back to the King, and my uncle will bring our reply early

And in the morning early shall my uncle
Bring him our purposes. And so farewell.

BLUNT

I would you would accept of grace and love.

HOTSPUR

120 And maybe so we shall.

BLUNT

Pray God you do.

Exeunt

tomorrow morning, as long as you pledge that he will be able to return safely. Goodbye then.

BLUNT

I wish you would accept the King's graceful and loving offer.

HOTSPUR

Maybe we will.

BLUNT

I pray to God that you do.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter the ARCHBISHOP of York and SIR MICHAEL

ARCHBISHOP

Hie, good Sir Michael, bear this sealèd brief
With winged haste to the Lord Marshal,
This to my cousin Scrope, and all the rest
To whom they are directed. If you knew
5 How much they do import, you would make haste.

SIR MICHAEL

My good lord, I guess their tenor.

ARCHBISHOP

Like enough you do.
Tomorrow, good Sir Michael, is a day
Wherein the fortune of ten thousand men
10 Must bide the touch. For, sir, at Shrewsbury,
As I am truly given to understand,
The King with mighty and quick-raisèd power
Meets with Lord Harry. And I fear, Sir Michael,
What with the sickness of Northumberland,
15 Whose power was in the first proportion,
And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,
Who with them was a rated sinew too
And comes not in, o'er-ruled by prophecies,
I fear the power of Percy is too weak
20 To wage an instant trial with the King.

SIR MICHAEL

Why, my good lord, you need not fear.
There is Douglas and Lord Mortimer.

ARCHBISHOP

No, Mortimer is not there.

SIR MICHAEL

But there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord Harry Percy,
25 And there is my Lord of Worcester and a head
Of gallant warriors, noble gentlemen.

ARCHBISHOP

And so there is. But yet the King hath drawn
The special head of all the land together:
The Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster,
30 The noble Westmoreland, and warlike Blunt,
And many more corrivals and dear men
Of estimation and command in arms.

Shakescleare Translation

The ARCHBISHOP of York and SIR MICHAEL enter.

ARCHBISHOP

Hurry, good Sir Michael, and take this sealed letter as quickly as you can to the Lord Marshal , this sealed letter to Scrope , and the rest of the letters to whom they are addressed. If you knew how important these letters were, you would hurry.

 The Archbishop refers to Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshall, and third earl of Nottingham.

 The Scrope family was a large and prominent family at the time, although it is not clear which family member Shakespeare refers to here.

SIR MICHAEL

My good lord, I can guess what they are about.

ARCHBISHOP

I'm sure you can. Good Sir Michael, tomorrow is a day which will test the fortunes of ten thousand men. I have been told sir, that the King and his big and quickly-collected army will fight Hotspur at Shrewsbury. I am scared, Sir Michael, as Northumberland is sick, and his army was the biggest. And Owen Glendower is still not here, even though he is being counted on, because prophecies have told him to stay away. I am afraid that Percy is not strong enough to fight the King right now.

SIR MICHAEL

Why, my good lord, you don't need to be scared. There are still Douglas and Lord Mortimer.

ARCHBISHOP

No, Mortimer is not there.

SIR MICHAEL

Well then there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord Harry Percy. There is also my Lord of Worcester, and a whole bunch of brave warriors, all noble gentlemen.

ARCHBISHOP

That's true. But the King has assembled noble warriors from all over the land: The Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, the noble Westmoreland, the warlike Blunt, and many more comrades and honorable men who are valued and good in battle.

SIR MICHAEL

Doubt not, my lord, they shall be well opposed.

ARCHBISHOP

I hope no less, yet needful 'tis to fear;
 35 And to prevent the worst, Sir Michael, speed.
 For if Lord Percy thrive not, ere the King
 Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,
 For he hath heard of our confederacy,
 And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against him:
 40 Therefore make haste. I must go write again
 To other friends. And so farewell, Sir Michael.

Exeunt

SIR MICHAEL

It's certain that they will face strong opposition.

ARCHBISHOP

I hope so, but I still feel afraid. Hurry Sir Michael, hurry now to stop something very bad from happening. For if Lord Percy does not win this battle, the King will come to look for us before he dismisses his army. He has heard that we are part of the opposition, and so it is a good idea for us to prepare to face him. Therefore, hurry now! I need to go and write more letters to other friends. Goodbye, Sir Michael.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter the KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, Lord John of LANCASTER, Earl of WESTMORELAND, BLUNT, and FALSTAFF

KING

How bloodyly the sun begins to peer
 Above yon busky hill. The day looks pale
 At his distemp'rature.

PRINCE HENRY

The southern wind
 5 Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,
 And by his hollow whistling in the leaves
 Foretells a tempest and a blust'ring day.

KING

Then with the losers let it sympathize,
 For nothing can seem foul to those that win.

The trumpet sounds. Enter WORCESTER and VERNON

10 How now, my Lord of Worcester? 'Tis not well
 That you and I should meet upon such terms
 As now we meet. You have deceived our trust
 And made us doff our easy robes of peace
 To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel.
 15 This is not well, my lord; this is not well.
 What say you to it? Will you again unknit
 This churlish knot of all-abhorred war
 And move in that obedient orb again?
 Where you did give a fair and natural light,
 20 And be no more an exhaled meteor,
 A prodigy of fear and a portent
 Of broached mischief to the unborn times?

WORCESTER

Hear me, my liege:
 For mine own part I could be well content
 25 To entertain the lag end of my life
 With quiet hours. For I do protest
 I have not sought the day of this dislike.

KING

You have not sought it? How comes it then?

FALSTAFF

Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.

Shakescleare Translation

The KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, Lord John of LANCASTER, the Earl of WESTMORELAND, BLUNT, and FALSTAFF enter.

KING

How bloody the sun looks as it peers over that looming hill.
 The day looks pale and sick because it has seen the unhealthy appearance of the sun.

PRINCE HENRY

The southern wind is a trumpeter, announcing the motives of the sun. And the whistling of the breeze in the leaves makes it clear that it is going to be a stormy and windy day.

KING

Then let it sympathize with the losing side, since nothing seems bad to people who have just won a battle.

A trumpet sounds. WORCESTER and VERNON enter.

How is it going, my Lord of Worcester? It's not right for us to meet like this. You have betrayed our trust and made us take off the robes we wear in peaceful times to crush our old bodies into uncomfortable armor again. This is not good, my lord, this is not good. What do you have to say for yourself? Will you untie this uncivil knot of detested war and stop it from happening? Will you be loyal to me again and act like an obedient globe, orbiting your King, shining beautifully and naturally? Or will you continue to be a fireball, a terrible omen and a sign of the trouble which can be expected in the future?

WORCESTER

Listen to me, my lord. I would much prefer to spend the last years of my life in peace and quiet. I am telling you that I did not seek this day of conflict.

KING

You didn't seek it? Then how did it happen?

FALSTAFF

Rebellion was right in front of him, so he found it by accident, he didn't *seek it*.

PRINCE HENRY

30 Peace, chewet, peace.

WORCESTER

(*to the KING*) It pleased your Majesty to turn your looks
Of favour from myself and all our house;
And yet I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.
For you my staff of office did I break
In Richard's time, and posted day and night
To meet you on the way, and kiss your hand
When yet you were in place and in account
Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.
It was myself, my brother, and his son
That brought you home and boldly did outdare
The dangers of the time. You swore to us,
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,
That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state,
Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right,
The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster.
To this we swore our aid. But in short space
It rained down fortune show'ring on your head,
And such a flood of greatness fell on you—
What with our help, what with the absent King,
What with the injuries of a wanton time,
The seeming sufferances that you had borne,
And the contrarious winds that held the King
55 So long in his unlucky Irish wars
That all in England did repute him dead—
And from this swarm of fair advantages
You took occasion to be quickly wooed
To gripe the general sway into your hand,
60 Forget your oath to us at Doncaster;
And being fed by us, you used us so
As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow—did oppress our nest,
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
65 That even our love durst not come near your sight
For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
We were enforced for safety sake to fly
Out of sight and raise this present head,
Whereby we stand opposèd by such means
70 As you yourself have forged against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

KING

These things indeed you have articulate,
75 Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches,
To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine color that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
80 Of hurlyburly innovation.
And never yet did insurrection want
Such water colors to impaint his cause,
Nor moody beggars starving for a time
Of pell-mell havoc and confusion.

PRINCE HENRY

85 In both your armies there is many a soul
Shall pay full dearly for this encounter
If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew,
The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world
In praise of Henry Percy. By my hopes,
90 This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant, or more valiant-young,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.
95 For my part, I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry,
And so I hear he doth account me too.

PRINCE HENRY

Be quiet, you chatterer. Be quiet.

WORCESTER

[*To the KING*] Your Majesty was happy to turn your back on me and all of my family. Yet, I must remind you, my lord, that we were your first and your dearest friends. I left the role that I had during Richard's reign for you, and rode all day and night to meet you on the road and kiss your hand. Even though you were less powerful than me and your reputation was far weaker than mine, it was me, my brother, and his son that took you home and ignored the danger that went with that. When we were at Doncaster you swore an oath to us that you were not interested in the throne, that you just wanted to claim your recently inherited title--your father Gaunt's estate, the dukedom of Lancaster. We promised to help you with this. But, very quickly luck poured down on you and a flood of greatness fell upon you. What with our help, King Richard's absence and the abuses people had been suffering under his rule, you seemed like you had suffered unfairly. Also, because of bad winds, the King had spent so long fighting in the unsuccessful Irish wars that most people in England thought that he was dead. You made the most of these opportunities and were persuaded to take control of the entire kingdom. You forgot the oath that you had made to us at Doncaster. We fed you and kept you alive, but you just used us, like the aggressive cuckoo-bird uses the sparrow. We let you stay in our nest, but you grew so big that even we, the people who loved you, didn't want to come anywhere near you in case you swallowed us up. We were forced to run away for our own safety and raise this army in secret. Now we are here with this army, forced to stand against you because of your actions. You have treated us badly, your behavior has been threatening, and you have broken the promises and vows that you swore to us when you were younger.

KING

You have said these things already, you have announced them in markets, you have lectured on them in churches. You have done everything you can to make rebellion look better and to please the eyes of fickle turncoats ¹ and poor unhappy people, who laugh and are delighted ² at news of revolution. Rebellion has never lacked thin excuses in support of a cause. And angry beggars are eager to support a time of chaotic fighting and confusion.

 *We can take Shakespeare's original term "changeling" to refer to people who switch sides in battle.*

 *In the original text, to "rub the elbow" is a gesture of delight, in which a person hugs him or herself.*

PRINCE HENRY

Both of our armies contain many men who will sacrifice their lives for this battle, once it starts. Tell your nephew that the Prince of Wales agrees with the whole world in praising Henry Percy. I swear on my hopes of salvation, that except for his current actions, I don't think there's another man alive who is as brave, courageous, daring, or bold as him, or has acted as nobly. As for me, I should be ashamed of how I have acted. I have avoided my noble position, and I know he agrees with me about that. Yet, with my father here as witness, I would like to challenge him to fight me in single combat, to save the amount of men who are killed on either side. I am aware that because of his fame and great reputation he is the favorite to win.

Yet this before my father's majesty:
I am content that he shall take the odds
100 Of his great name and estimation,
And will, to save the blood on either side,
Try fortune with him in a single fight.

KING

And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,
Albeit considerations infinite
105 Do make against it.— No, good Worcester, no,
We love our people well, even those we love
That are misled upon your cousin's part.
And, will they take the offer of our grace,
Both he and they and you, yea, every man
110 Shall be my friend again, and I'll be his.
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
What he will do. But if he will not yield,
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,
And they shall do their office. So begone.
115 We will not now be troubled with reply.
We offer fair. Take it advisedly.

Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON

PRINCE HENRY

It will not be accepted, on my life.
The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

KING

120 Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge,
For on their answer will we set on them,
And God befriend us as our cause is just.

Exeunt all but PRINCE HENRY and FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride me,
so;
125 'tis a point of friendship.

PRINCE HENRY

Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship.
Say thy prayers, and farewell.

FALSTAFF

I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and all well.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, thou owest God a death.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF

130 'Tis not due yet. I would be loath to pay Him before
His day. What need I be so forward with Him that calls
not on me? Well, 'tis no matter. Honour pricks me on.
Yea, but how if honor prick me off when I come on? How
then? Can honor set to a leg? no. Or an arm? no. Or take
away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in
surgery, then? No. What is honor? A word. What is in
135 that word "honor"? What is that "honor"? Air. A trim
reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth
he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible,
then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the
living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it.
Therefore, I'll none of it. Honor is a mere scutcheon.
And so ends my catechism.

Exit

KING

And, Prince of Wales, I should let you stake your life on this,
even though there are countless reasons why I shouldn't.
No, good Worcester, no. We love our people very much,
even the people who have been led astray by Hotspur's
influence. If they will accept our pardon, then he, they, you,
and in fact every man will be my friend again, and I will be
his. Tell your nephew this, and bring us back his reply. If he
will not accept this pardon then we will have to respond
with harsh punishments. So, leave. I don't want to listen to
anything else you have to say right now. Our offer is fair.
Consider it carefully.

WORCESTER and VERNON exit.

PRINCE HENRY

He isn't going to accept—I could bet my life on it. Douglas
and Hotspur are confident that they could fight against the
whole world and win.

KING

Well then, every leader get to your unit and as soon as they
reply, we will attack! God be with us, for our cause is just!

Everyone exits except for PRINCE HENRY and FALSTAFF.

FALSTAFF

Hal, if you see me fall down during the battle, stand over me
to defend me from further harm. It's what a friend would
do.

PRINCE HENRY

Only a giant would be able to be that friend for you. Say
your prayers, and goodbye.

FALSTAFF

I wish it was just bedtime, Hal, and that everything was
okay.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, you owe God a death 3.

3 Hal here refers to a common proverb about the inevitability of death.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

Not yet I don't. I don't want to pay God before I have to.
Why would I be so eager to pay God before he even asks for
it? Well, it doesn't matter anyway. Honor drives me forward.
Yes, but what if honor also picks me out to die when I go
bravely forward? What then? Can honor reattach a leg? No.
Or an arm? No. Or take away the pain of a wound? No.
Honor can't do surgery then? No. What is honor? A word.
Well what's in that word "honor"? What is that "honor?"
Just air. What a great deal! Who has it? That guy who died
on Wednesday. Does he feel it? No. Does he hear it? No. Is it
something which the sense can't be felt by the senses then?
Well, at least not by the dead. But won't it exist with the
living? No. Why? Slander will not allow it. Therefore I will
have none of it. Honor is just a gravestone, and that
concludes my examination 4 of the subject.

4 The "catechism" of the original text was a series of questions and answers on basic Christian principles which students in Shakespeare's day would memorize.

He exits.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter WORCESTER and Sir Richard VERNON

WORCESTER

O no, my nephew must not know, Sir Richard,
The liberal and kind offer of the King.

VERNON

'Twere best he did.

WORCESTER

Then are we all undone.
 5 It is not possible, it cannot be
 The King should keep his word in loving us.
 He will suspect us still and find a time
 To punish this offense in other faults.
 Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes,
 10 For treason is but trusted like the fox,
 Who, never so tame, so cherished and locked up,
 Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.
 Look how we can, or sad or merrily,
 Interpretation will misquote our looks,
 15 And we shall feed like oxen at a stall,
 The better cherished still the nearer death.
 My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;
 It hath the excuse of youth and heat of blood,
 And an adopted name of privilege—
 20 A hairbrained Hotspur governed by a spleen:
 All his offenses live upon my head
 And on his father's. We did train him on,
 And, his corruption being ta'en from us,
 We as the spring of all shall pay for all.
 25 Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry know
 In any case the offer of the King.

VERNON

Deliver what you will; I'll say 'tis so.

Enter HOTSPUR and DOUGLAS

Here comes your cousin.

HOTSPUR

My uncle is returned.
 30 Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.—
 Uncle, what news?

WORCESTER

The King will bid you battle presently.

DOUGLAS

Defy him by the Lord of Westmoreland.

HOTSPUR

Lord Douglas, go you and tell him so.

DOUGLAS

35 Marry, and shall, and very willingly.

Exit DOUGLAS

WORCESTER

There is no seeming mercy in the King.

Shakescleare Translation

WORCESTER and Sir Richard VERNON enter.

WORCESTER

Oh no, Sir Richard! My nephew cannot know about this kind and generous offer from the King.

VERNON

It would be better if he did.

WORCESTER

The we would be ruined. There is no way that the King is going to keep his word and forgive us. He will always be suspicious and will find another reason to punish us for this rebellion. This suspicion will always be watching over us. Treason is like a fox--however tame it is, however cared for, even locked up, it still will have the inherited trait of savageness from its ancestors. Whether we look sad or happy, people will lie about our looks. And we will have to act like oxen at their stalls, only treated better when we are close to being slaughtered. My nephew's disloyalty might be forgotten with time, since it could be put down to youth and a bad temper. Also, his nickname lets him act like this--he is just the hare-brained Hotspur, controlled by his rash impulses. All of his offenses are going to be blamed on me and on his father. We encouraged him. And since we were the ones who originally convinced him to start this rebellion, we are the ones who will have to pay for it. Therefore, good Vernon, let's not tell Harry what the King has offered.

VERNON

Say what you think is best; I will back you up.

HOTSPUR and DOUGLAS enter.

Here comes your nephew.

HOTSPUR

My uncle has returned. Let the Lord of Westmoreland  go.
 What's the latest, uncle?

 Westmoreland was being held captive by Percy until Worcester returned safely from the King.

WORCESTER

The King said that he will soon fight you in battle. 

 Concealing the King's offer of pardon, Worcester lies here in order to motivate Hotspur to fight.

DOUGLAS

Send a message of defiance in response. Send it with the Lord of Westmoreland.

HOTSPUR

Lord Douglas, go and tell him this.

DOUGLAS

Indeed, I will, and gladly.

DOUGLAS exits.

WORCESTER

The King doesn't seem to be very forgiving.

HOTSPUR

Did you beg any? God forbid!

WORCESTER

I told him gently of our grievances,
Of his oath-breaking, which he mended thus
40 By now forswearing that he is forsworn.
He calls us "rebels," "traitors," and will scourge
With haughty arms this hateful name in us.

Enter DOUGLAS

DOUGLAS

Arm, gentlemen; to arms. For I have thrown
A brave defiance in King Henry's teeth,
45 And Westmoreland, that was engaged, did bear it,
Which cannot choose but bring him quickly on.

WORCESTER

The Prince of Wales stepped forth before the King,
And, nephew, challenged you to single fight.

HOTSPUR

O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,
50 And that no man might draw short breath today
But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,
How showed his tasking? Seemed it in contempt?

VERNON

No, by my soul. I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly,
55 Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms.
He gave you all the duties of a man,
Trimmed up your praises with a princely tongue,
Spoke your deservings like a chronicle,
60 Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valued in you,
And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
65 As if he mastered there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
There did he pause: but let me tell the world:
If he outlive the envy of this day,
England did never owe so sweet a hope,
70 So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

HOTSPUR

Cousin, I think thou art enamored
On his follies. Never did I hear
Of any Prince so wild a liberty.
But be he as he will, yet once ere night
75 I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,
That he shall shrink under my courtesy.—
Arm, arm with speed, and, fellows, soldiers, friends,
Better consider what you have to do
Than I that have not well the gift of tongue
80 Can lift your blood up with persuasion.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

My lord, here are letters for you.

HOTSPUR

I cannot read them now.—
O gentlemen, the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely were too long
85 If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
An if we live, we live to tread on kings;
If die, brave death, when princes die with us.

HOTSPUR

Did you ask for forgiveness? I hope not.

WORCESTER

I told him politely why we were annoyed, about how he had broken his promises. He answered by denying all of it and swearing that he is innocent of his treachery. He called us "rebels" and "traitors," and said that his proud army will make us suffer for what we have done.

DOUGLAS enters.

DOUGLAS

Get your weapons gentlemen, get your weapons! I have sent a bold message of defiance to King Henry, and our recent hostage Westmoreland will deliver it to him. This is only going to make the battle start even sooner.

WORCESTER

The Prince of Wales stepped forward before his father, and challenged you, nephew, to fight him in single combat.

HOTSPUR

Oh, I wish that the whole fight could just be between the two of us, and that the only people who would have to die today would be me and Harry Monmouth ³! Tell me, tell me, how did he make this challenge? Did it seem like he did it out of hatred for me?

 "Monmouth" is a surname applied to Hal, deriving from his birthplace at Monmouth in Wales.

VERNON

No, on my life. I have never heard a challenge made with more grace. It felt like it was a brother daring another brother to practice fighting with him. He gave you all the respect that a man deserves, spoke your praises like a true prince. He spoke of how deserving you are, as if he knew your entire life history. He claimed that you were even better than praise itself, since words weren't enough to complement your heroic actions. He also spoke of himself very modestly, which was fitting for a prince, and criticized his foolish youth with such grace it was almost like he was both a responsible adult teaching and a foolish child learning at the same time. He stopped there. But let me tell you, if he manages to survive this battle, England has a very hopeful future and he has been very misunderstood because of his wild behavior.

HOTSPUR

Cousin, I think you might have been enchanted by his foolishness. I've never heard of a Prince who used his freedom so irresponsibly. But whatever he is really like, before this night is over I will embrace him with a soldier's arms, and he will tremble when I do. Get your weapons, get your weapons quickly! Friends, soldiers, partners, think about what you have to do in this battle as I am not a good enough speaker to motivate you with my words alone.

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

My lord, here are letters for you.

HOTSPUR

I can't read them now. Oh, gentlemen, life is short. If you spend your short life doing stupid things you are wasting your time. Even if life only lasted one hour ⁴, it would always end too soon. If we live, we will triumph over kings. If we die, it will be a glorious death to die with princes. Now, as for this battle, it is perfectly okay for us to bear arms because we are fighting for a just cause.

 A "dial's point" refers to the hand of an Elizabethan clock or sundial, measuring time by the hour.

Now, for our consciences, the arms are fair
 90 When the intent of bearing them is just.

Enter another MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER

My lord, prepare. The King comes on apace.

HOTSPUR

I thank him that he cuts me from my tale,
 For I profess not talking. Only this:
 Let each man do his best. And here draw I a sword,
 95 Whose temper I intend to stain
 With the best blood that I can meet withal
 In the adventure of this perilous day.
 Now, Esperance! Percy! And set on.
 Sound all the lofty instruments of war,
 100 And by that music let us all embrace,
 For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall
 A second time do such a courtesy.

Here they embrace. The trumpets sound.

Exeunt

Another MESSENGER enters.

SECOND MESSENGER

Get ready my lord. The King is almost here.

HOTSPUR

I am thankful that he has stopped me from saying anymore,
 since I am not good with words. I will just say this--each
 man should do his best. And with that I will draw my sword.
 During this battle, on this dangerous day, I hope to stain my
 shining sword with the blood of all the noble men I
 encounter. Now, be hopeful ! Percy! Let's go! Let the
 trumpets of war sound, and when they do, let's embrace
 each other. It's certain that some of us will never get to
 embrace one another again.

 As we have seen earlier,
 "Esperance" is the Percy family's
 motto.

They embrace. The trumpets sound.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 3

Shakespeare

The KING enters with his power and they cross the stage. Alarum to the battle.

Then enter DOUGLAS and Sir Walter BLUNT, disguised as the KING

BLUNT

What is thy name that in the battle thus
 Thou crossest me? What honor dost thou seek
 Upon my head?

DOUGLAS

Know then, my name is Douglas,
 5 And I do haunt thee in the battle thus
 Because some tell me that thou art a king.

BLUNT

They tell thee true.

DOUGLAS

The Lord of Stafford dear today hath bought
 Thy likeness, for instead of thee, King Harry,
 10 This sword hath ended him. So shall it thee,
 Unless thou yield thee as my prisoner.

BLUNT

I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot,
 And thou shalt find a king that will revenge
 Lord Stafford's death.

They fight. DOUGLAS kills BLUNT. Enter HOTSPUR

HOTSPUR

15 O Douglas, hadst thou fought at Holmedon thus,
 I never had triumphed upon a Scot.

DOUGLAS

All's done, all's won; here breathless lies the King.

Shakescleare Translation

*The KING and his army enter, and move across the stage.
 The trumpets sound the call for battle.*

DOUGLAS and Sir Walter BLUNT, disguised as the KING, enter.

BLUNT

What is your name, you who attacked me in battle? What honor are you going to get by fighting me?

DOUGLAS

I will tell you. My name is Douglas, and I was following you in the battle because I have been told that you are a king.

BLUNT

That is true.

DOUGLAS

The Lord of Stafford has paid heavily today for his resemblance to you, since my sword killed him instead of you, King Harry. Now finally my sword will kill you, unless you surrender to being my prisoner.

BLUNT

I wasn't born to surrender, you smug Scotsman. Now you will see a king taking revenge for Lord Stafford's death.

They fight. DOUGLAS kills BLUNT. HOTSPUR enters.

HOTSPUR

Oh, Douglas, if only you had fought like this at the battle of Holmedon, I would never have been able to beat a Scotsman like you!

DOUGLAS

It's done. The battle has been won! Here is the dead King.

HOTSPUR

Where?

DOUGLAS

Here.

HOTSPUR

20 This, Douglas? No, I know this face full well.
A gallant knight he was; his name was Blunt,
Semblably furnished like the King himself.

DOUGLAS

(to BLUNT) A fool go with thy soul whither it goes!
A borrowed title hast thou bought too dear.
25 Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king?

HOTSPUR

The King hath many marching in his coats.

DOUGLAS

Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats.
I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece,
Until I meet the King.

HOTSPUR

30 Up and away!
Our soldiers stand full fairly for the day.

Exeunt

Alarum. Enter FALSTAFF alone.

FALSTAFF

Though I could 'scape shot-free at London, I fear the
shot here. Here's no scoring but upon the pate.— Soft,
who are you? Sir Walter Blunt. There's honor for you.
35 Here's no vanity. I am as hot as molten lead, and as
heavy too. God keep lead out of me; I need no more
weight than mine own bowels. I have led my ragamuffins
where they are peppered. There's not three of my hundred
and fifty left alive, and they are for the town's end,
40 to beg during life. But who comes here?

Enter PRINCE HENRY

PRINCE HENRY

What, stand'st thou idle here? Lend me thy sword.
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unrevenged. I prithee,
45 Lend me thy sword.

FALSTAFF

O Hal, I prithee, give me leave to breathe awhile. Turk
Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have done
this day. I have paid Percy; I have made him sure.

PRINCE HENRY

He is indeed, and living to kill thee.
50 I prithee, lend me thy sword.

FALSTAFF

Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou gett'st
not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

PRINCE HENRY

Give it to me. What, is it in the case?

HOTSPUR

Where?

DOUGLAS

Here.

HOTSPUR

This body, Douglas? No, I recognize this man's face. He was
a brave knight called Blunt. He is simply dressed to look like
the King.

DOUGLAS

[To BLUNT] Wherever your soul is going, may the name of
"fool" go with it! You have given your life for a borrowed
title. Why did you tell me that you were a king?

HOTSPUR

The King has made many soldiers march in his clothes.

DOUGLAS

Now, I swear by my sword that I will kill everyone wearing
his coats [1]. I will murder his entire wardrobe, one by one,
until I get to the King himself.

HOTSPUR

Get going then! Our soldiers are on the verge of victory!

They exit.

*The trumpets sound the call for battle. FALSTAFF enters
alone.*

FALSTAFF

Although I managed to escape without paying [2] in
London, I am scared I won't escape so easily here. Here
everything is taken on the head. Wait, who is this? Sir
Walter Blunt. There's honor for you, but there's no vanity. I
am as hot as liquid lead, and as heavy as lead as well.
Please God keep the lead out of me. I'm fat enough as it is
without extra lead in my stomach. I've led my pathetic
troops into battle, and they've all been killed. There's only
about three of my one hundred and fifty left alive, and
they're only fit to beg on the outskirts of town. Wait, who's
this?

PRINCE HENRY enters.

PRINCE HENRY

What? Are you standing around doing nothing? Lend me
your sword. Many noble men are lying stiff and dead under
the horses of our boastful enemies, and their deaths have
not yet been revenged. I ask you again, lend me your
sword.

FALSTAFF

Oh, Hal, just give me a second to catch my breath. Even
Turk Gregory [3] never fought as heroically as I have done
today. I have killed Percy, now it's okay.

[1] The King had instructed a number of soldiers to wear surcoats like his own to trick the enemy.

[2] The wordplay being used here is between "shot-free" and "scot-free," as Falstaff is telling how he escaped from London without paying his tavern bill ("scot-free"), but doesn't think he will be so lucky in battle.

PRINCE HENRY

He is certainly okay, and will now be coming to kill you.
Come on, lend me your sword.

FALSTAFF

No, I can't Hal! If Percy is still alive, then you can't have my
sword. But take my gun if you want.

[3] Turks were regarded by English people in Shakespeare's time to be unusually cruel and ferocious in battle. Editors have suggested Gregory may refer to one of two popes whom Protestants authors of Shakespeare's day accused of violence.

PRINCE HENRY

Give it to me. Is it in its holster?

FALSTAFF

Ay, Hal, 'tis hot, 'tis hot. There's that will sack a city. (PRINCE HENRY draws it out and finds it to be a bottle of sack)

PRINCE HENRY

What, is it a time to jest and dally now?

He throws the bottle at him.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF

Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honor as Sir Walter hath. Give me life, which if I can save, so: if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there's an end.

Exit

FALSTAFF

Yes, Hal, it's hot, very hot--it could sack ⁴ a city. [PRINCE HENRY draws it out and finds it to be a bottle of white wine]

⁴ Here the pun is made on "sack," meaning to plunder a city, and also the name of Falstaff's favorite wine.

PRINCE HENRY

What?! Do you think now is a time for jokes?

He throws the bottle at him.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

Well, if Percy is still alive, I'll stab him, especially if he runs right at me. If he doesn't run right at me, then I will gladly run at him and let him cut me up like a piece of meat ⁵. I don't want the same kind of insignificant honor that Sir Walter had. Let me have life, and if I can have that, great. If not, then I will get honor without looking for it. There, that's an ending ⁶.

He exits.

60

⁵ The original text's "carbonado" was meat cut with a knife before it was boiled.

⁶ Falstaff puns here on the ending of a life, and also the ending of his speech.

Act 5, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Alarum. Excursions. Enter the KING, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, and the Earl of WESTMORELAND

KING

I prithee, Harry, withdraw thyself. Thou bleedest too much.
Lord John of Lancaster, go you with him.

LANCASTER

Not I, my lord, unless I did bleed too.

PRINCE HENRY

5 I beseech your Majesty, make up,
Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.

KING

I will do so.—My Lord of Westmoreland,
Lead him to his tent.

WESTMORELAND

Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.

PRINCE HENRY

10 Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help,
And God forbid a shallow scratch should drive
The Prince of Wales from such a field as this,
Where stained nobility lies trodden on,
And rebels' arms triumph in massacres.

LANCASTER

15 We breathe too long. Come, cousin Westmoreland,
Our duty this way lies. For God's sake, come.

Exeunt Lord John of LANCASTER and WESTMORELAND

Shakescleare Translation

*The trumpets sound the battle call.
Various sword fights are occurring on stage ¹. The KING, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, and the Earl of WESTMORELAND enter.*

¹ The term "Excursions" is used to represent the ongoing action of the battle.

KING

Harry, I beg you to withdraw from the battle. You are bleeding too much. Lord John of Lancaster, go with him.

LANCASTER

My lord, I won't--not unless I am bleeding too.

PRINCE HENRY

Your Majesty, I beg you--please keep your troops moving forward! Your men will be alarmed if they think you are retreating.

KING

Okay, I will. My Lord of Westmoreland, take him to his tent.

WESTMORELAND

Come on, my lord, I'll take you to your tent.

PRINCE HENRY

Take me, my lord? I don't need your help. And I'm certainly not going to let a slight scratch keep The Prince of Wales away from a battlefield like this, where the blood-stained bodies of noblemen are being trampled on, and the rebels and their weapons are triumphing in their attacks.

LANCASTER

We have taken too long of a break. Come on, Westmoreland; we are needed this way. For God's sake, come on!

Lord John of LANCASTER and WESTMORELAND exit.

PRINCE HENRY

By God, thou hast deceived me, Lancaster.
I did not think thee lord of such a spirit.
Before, I loved thee as a brother, John,
But now, I do respect thee as my soul.

20

KING

I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point
With lustier maintenance than I did look for
Of such an ungrown warrior.

PRINCE HENRY

O, this boy lends mettle to us all.

*Exit**Enter DOUGLAS***DOUGLAS**

25 Another king! they grow like Hydra's heads.—
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those
That wear those colors on them. What art thou
That counterfeit'st the person of a king?

KING

The King himself, who, Douglas, grieves at heart,
30 So many of his shadows thou hast met
And not the very king. I have two boys
Seek Percy and thyself about the field,
But, seeing thou fall'st on me so luckily,
I will assay thee. And defend thyself.

DOUGLAS

35 I fear thou art another counterfeit,
And yet, in faith, thou bear'st thee like a king.
But mine I am sure thou art, whoe'er thou be,
And thus I win thee.

They fight. The KING being in danger, enter PRINCE HENRY of Wales

PRINCE HENRY

Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
40 Never to hold it up again. The spirits
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt are in my arms.
It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee,
Who never promiseth but he means to pay.

They fight. DOUGLAS flieth

Cheerly, my lord. How fares your Grace?
45 Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succor sent,
And so hath Clifton. I'll to Clifton straight.

KING

Stay, and breathe awhile.
Thou hast redeemed thy lost opinion
And showed thou mak'st some tender of my life
50 In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.

PRINCE HENRY

O God, they did me too much injury
That ever said I hearkened for your death.
If it were so, I might have let alone
The insulting hand of Douglas over you,
55 Which would have been as speedy in your end
As all the poisonous potions in the world,
And saved the treacherous labor of your son.

KING

Make up to Clifton. I'll to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

*Exit the KING***PRINCE HENRY**

By God, you have deceived me, Lancaster. I didn't think that
you had such courage. I used to love you like a brother,
John. But now I regard you are my soulmate.

KING

Lancaster had Lord Percy at sword's length and act with
more aggression than I could have expected from a soldier
of his age. 2

2 At the time of this battle John of
Lancaster was only thirteen-years-old.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, this boy gives us all hope!

*PRINCE HENRY exits.**DOUGLAS enters.***DOUGLAS**

Another king! They grow like the heads of Hydra 3! I am
Douglas, and I will murder anyone who wears that coat of
arms. Who are you, dressed up like the King?

3 The Hydra was a character from
Greek mythology, a beast which
supposedly grew two new heads for
every one that was cut off.

KING

I am the King himself. Douglas, it upsets me that you have
met so many men disguised as me, without meeting the
true King. I have two sons fighting in this battle who are
looking for Percy, and for you. But, since you were lucky
enough to find me first, I will fight you now. Defend yourself.

DOUGLAS

I am still worried that you are just another fake, and yet it
must be said that you do behave like a king. Whoever you
are, you are mine, and I will defeat you.

They fight. When The KING is in danger, PRINCE HENRY of Wales enters.

PRINCE HENRY

Look at me, you vile Scotsman, or you will never look at
anyone again. The spirits of brave Shirley, Stafford, and
Blunt empower me. It is the Prince of Wales who threatens
you, and I will always fulfill the promises I make.

They fight. DOUGLAS runs away.

[To KING Henry] Cheer up, my lord! How are you feeling,
your Grace? Sir Nicholas Gawsey has sent for help, and so
has Clifton. I will go and help Clifton.

KING

Stay here, and rest for a while. You have redeemed your
awful reputation, and by rescuing me, you have shown that
you do care about my life.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh God! Anyone who said that I wanted you to die has done
me a great offense. If I had wanted you to die, I would have
left you to fight against Douglas alone. That would have
guaranteed your death quicker than any poisons in this
world, and saved me from having to do anything
treacherous.

KING

Go to Clifton. I'll go to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

The KING exits.

*Enter HOTSPUR***HOTSPUR**

If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

PRINCE HENRY

60 Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.

HOTSPUR

My name is Harry Percy.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, then I see
A very valiant rebel of the name.
I am the Prince of Wales; and think not, Percy,
To share with me in glory any more.
65 Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere,
Nor can one England brook a double reign,
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

HOTSPUR

Nor shall it, Harry, for the hour is come
70 To end the one of us, and would to God
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine.

PRINCE HENRY

I'll make it greater ere I part from thee,
And all the budding honors on thy crest
I'll crop, to make a garland for my head.

HOTSPUR

75 I can no longer brook thy vanities.

*They fight**Enter FALSTAFF***FALSTAFF**

Well said, Hal! To it Hal! Nay, you shall find no boys'
play here, I can tell you.

Enter DOUGLAS. He fighteth with FALSTAFF, who falls down as if he were ead.

*Exit DOUGLAS**PRINCE HENRY killeth HOTSPUR***HOTSPUR**

O Harry, thou hast robbed me of my youth.
I better brook the loss of brittle life
80 Than those proud titles thou hast won of me.
They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh.
But thoughts, the slave of life, and life, time's fool,
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop. O, I could prophesy,
85 But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust,
And food for— (*he dies*)

PRINCE HENRY

For worms, brave Percy. Fare thee well, great heart.
Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk!
90 When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it was too small a bound,
But now two paces of the vilest earth
Is room enough. This earth that bears thee dead
Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.
If thou wert sensible of courtesy,
95 I should not make so dear a show of zeal.
But let my favors hide thy mangled face;

*HOTSPUR enters.***HOTSPUR**

If I am not mistaken, you are Harry Monmouth.

PRINCE HENRY

You speak like I would deny my own name.

HOTSPUR

My name is Harry Percy.

PRINCE HENRY

Why then, you must be the brave rebel I am looking for with the same name. I am the Prince of Wales and you can't share in my glory any longer, Percy. Two stars can't fit into one orbit, and likewise, England can't handle a double reign, with both Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales in charge.

HOTSPUR

Well it won't have to, Harry. For it is time for one of us to die. If only your reputation for fighting was as good as mine is.

PRINCE HENRY

My reputation will greatly improve before we part today. I am going to pick all of the tokens  from your helmet, and make them into a wreath for my head.

 The "honors" of the original next literally refer to the chivalric tokens that were adorned on helmets, for those with worthy reputations in battle.

HOTSPUR

I can't listen to any more of your vain boasts.

*They fight.**FALSTAFF enters.***FALSTAFF**

Well done, Hal! Keep it up! This is no child's play, I can tell you that.

DOUGLAS enters. He fights with FALSTAFF, who falls down as if he is dead.

*DOUGLAS exits.**PRINCE HENRY kills HOTSPUR.***HOTSPUR**

Oh, Harry, you have taken away my youth. I can handle the fact that my fragile life is over, but I can't deal with all of the honors you have won from me. The thought of that hurts me more than the physical wound your sword has left. Thoughts need life, life depends on time, and even time, which watches over our world, has to have an end. Oh, I could tell prophecies, but the pale and cold hand of death stops me from talking. No, Percy. You are dust, and food for— [*He dies*]

PRINCE HENRY

For worms, brave Percy. Goodbye, brave thing. It's amazing how much your excessive ambition has already shrunk! When that body was alive, a whole kingdom wasn't even enough to contain your ambition. But now this small patch of dirty ground is enough room. The same ground that your dead body lies upon doesn't have a single living man on it who is anywhere near as brave as you. If you were able to hear these compliments, I wouldn't be so enthusiastic in giving you them. But now I will cover your injured face with my scarf, and I will thank myself on your behalf for doing

And even in thy behalf I'll thank myself
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.
100 Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven.
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
But not remembered in thy epitaph.

He spieth FALSTAFF on the ground

What, old acquaintance, could not all this flesh
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell.
105 I could have better spared a better man.
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee
If I were much in love with vanity.
Death hath not struck so fat a deer today,
Though many dearer in this bloody fray.
110 Emboweled will I see thee by and by;
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF riseth up

FALSTAFF
Embowed? If thou embowel me today, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too tomorrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie. I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valor is discretion, in the which better part I have saved my life. Zounds, I am afraid of this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead. How if he should counterfeit too and rise? By my faith, I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit.
125 Therefore I'll make him sure, yea, and I'll swear I killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. Therefore, sirrah, (*stabs the body*) with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me. (*he takes up HOTSPUR on his back*)

Enter PRINCE HENRY and Lord John of LANCASTER

PRINCE HENRY
Come, brother John. Full bravely hast thou fleshed thy maiden sword.

LANCASTER
But soft, whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

PRINCE HENRY
135 I did; I saw him dead,
Breathless and bleeding on the ground.—Art thou alive?
Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?
I prithee, speak. We will not trust our eyes
Without our ears. Thou art not what thou seem'st.

FALSTAFF
140 No, that's certain. I am not a double man. But if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a jack. There is Percy. If your father will do me any honor, so; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you.

PRINCE HENRY
145 Why, Percy I killed myself, and saw thee dead.

these acts of respect. Farewell, and I hope you can take your praises with you to heaven! Let your shame stay with you in your grave, but keep it away from your tombstone.

He sees FALSTAFF on the ground.

What? My old friend? Even with all of this flesh, you couldn't manage to hold on to a little bit of life? Poor Jack, goodbye. I would rather have lost a better soldier than lost you. Oh, I would really miss you, if I were in love with vanity. Death hasn't claimed anyone as fat as you today, but this battle has claimed many men more noble than you. I will make sure that you are disemboweled  soon; until then, lie here next to the noble Percy in his blood.

 Hal promises to ensure that the internal organs will be removed from Falstaff's corpse ("disemboweled"), in preparation for embalming and burial.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF gets up.

FALSTAFF
Disemboweled? If you disembowel me today, I'll let you preserve my body in salt and eat me for dinner tomorrow! God, I had to pretend to be dead, or that savage Scotsman would have definitely killed me. A fake? No, I am not a fake. To die is to be a faker, because a dead body is an impersonation of a living one. However, pretending to be dead when you are actually alive is not being a faker, but is actually being the best kind of living person you can be. The most important thing about bravery is being careful with it, and by being careful, I saved my life. Heavens, I am still afraid this explosive Percy, even though he is dead. What if he's faking too, and he just gets up? I reckon he'd be a better faker than I was. So, I'll just make sure he's dead, and then I can say that I killed him. Why couldn't he just get up, like I did? No-one could deny this but me, and there is no-one else here. Therefore, sir, [*He stabs the body*] with this new wound in your thigh you are coming with me. [*He picks up HOTSPUR and carries him on his back*]

PRINCE HENRY and Lord John of LANCASTER enter.

PRINCE HENRY
Come on John, my brother. You have fought very bravely in your first battle.

LANCASTER
Hang on, who do we have here? Didn't you tell me that this fat man was dead?

PRINCE HENRY
I did. I saw him dead, breathless and bleeding on the ground.

[*To FALSTAFF*] Are you alive? Or is this some kind of illusion, playing tricks on our eyes? Please, speak to us. We won't trust what we see unless we also hear your voice. You are not what you seem.

FALSTAFF
No, that's for certain. I am not an apparition. But if I am not Jack Falstaff, then I'm a villain. Here is Percy. If your father will give me the honor I deserve, let him do so. If not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I expect to be made either an earl or a duke, that's for sure.

PRINCE HENRY
I killed Percy myself, and I saw you dead on the ground.

FALSTAFF

Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying. I grant you, I was down and out of breath, and so was he, but we rose both at an instant and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, so; if not, let them that should reward valor bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh. If the man were alive and would deny it, zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

LANCASTER

155 This is the strangest tale that ever I heard.

PRINCE HENRY

This is the strangest fellow, brother John.— Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back. For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

A retreat is sounded

160 The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours. Come, brother, let us to the highest of the field To see what friends are living, who are dead.

Exeunt PRINCE HENRY and Lord John of LANCASTER

FALSTAFF

I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He that rewards me, God reward him. If I do grow great, I'll grow less, for I'll purge and leave sack and live cleanly as a nobleman should do.

Exit

FALSTAFF

Did you? Lord, Lord! How people love to lie. I will admit, I fell down and was out of breath and so was he. But we both got up at the same time and fought each other for a long hour according to the Shrewsbury clock. If you believe me, great. If not, let the people that don't believe me feel guilty for not giving me the honor I deserve for my bravery. I swear on my life, I gave him this wound in his thigh. If Percy was alive and denied it, heavens, I would make him eat a bit of my sword.

LANCASTER

This is the strangest story I've ever heard.

PRINCE HENRY

This is the strangest man alive, brother John. Come on then, carry that body with pride on your back. As for me, if lying is going to help your case, then I will support you however I can.

The trumpets sound a call to retreat.

The trumpet calls for a retreat; we must have won! Come on, brother, let's get to the top of the hill and see which of our friends are still alive and which are dead.

PRINCE HENRY and Lord John of LANCASTER exit.

FALSTAFF

I'll follow them, but only to get my reward. Let God reward whoever rewards me. If I become a powerful nobleman, I'll get thinner. I'll diet, stop drinking, and live a good, clean life like a nobleman should.

He exits.

Act 5, Scene 5

Shakespeare

The trumpets sound. Enter the KING, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, Earl of WESTMORELAND, with WORCESTER and VERNON prisoners

KING

Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke.— Ill-spirited Worcester, did not we send grace, Pardon, and terms of love to all of you? And wouldst thou turn our offers contrary, 5 Misuse the tenor of thy kinsman's trust? Three knights upon our party slain today, A noble earl, and many a creature else Had been alive this hour, If like a Christian thou hadst truly borne 10 Betwixt our armies true intelligence.

WORCESTER

What I have done my safety urged me to. And I embrace this fortune patiently, Since not to be avoided it falls on me.

KING

Bear Worcester to the death, and Vernon too. 15 Other offenders we will pause upon.

Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON under guard

How goes the field?

Shakescleare Translation

The trumpets sound. The KING, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, and the Earl of WESTMORELAND enter, with WORCESTER and VERNON as prisoners.

KING

Rebellions will always end in defeat and punishment. Oh, evil-minded Worcester, didn't we send you a kind offer of pardon, and the possibility for a restored friendship? Yet, haven't you said that we did the exact opposite  , and exploited Hotspur's trust in you by lying to him about this? Three of our knights killed today, an earl, and many more men would still be alive if you had acted like a Christian, and delivered my true message to your leader.

 King Henry reveals here that he has heard about Worcester's lie to Hotspur, dramatized in Act 5, Scene 2.

WORCESTER

I did what I had to do to protect myself; and I will accept my punishment willingly, as I know there is nothing that I can do to avoid it.

KING

Kill Worcester, and Vernon too. I will decide about the other offenders later.

WORCESTER and VERNON exit with guards.

How is the battle going?

PRINCE HENRY

The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw
The fortune of the day quite turned from him,
The noble Percy slain, and all his men
20 Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest,
And, falling from a hill, he was so bruised
That the pursuers took him. At my tent
The Douglas is, and I beseech your Grace
I may dispose of him.

KING

25 With all my heart.

PRINCE HENRY

Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you
This honorable bounty shall belong.
Go to the Douglas, and deliver him
Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free.
30 His valor shown upon our crests today
Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds,
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.

LANCASTER

I thank your Grace for this high courtesy,
Which I shall give away immediately.

KING

35 Then this remains, that we divide our power.
You, son John, and my cousin Westmoreland,
Towards York shall bend you with your dearest speed
To meet Northumberland and the prelate Scroop,
Who, as we hear, are busily in arms.
40 Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.
Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,
Meeting the check of such another day.
And since this business so fair is done,
45 Let us not leave till all our own be won.

Exeunt

PRINCE HENRY

When Lord Douglas, that brave Scotsman, saw that the battle was not going as planned, that Hotspur had been killed and his men were fleeing in fear, he ran away with them. While he was running, he fell from a hill and was so bruised that we managed to catch him. Douglas is now being held prisoner in my tent. And I would like to ask for permission, my lord, to decide what to do with him.

KING

I do, with all my heart.

PRINCE HENRY

Then brother, John of Lancaster, I am giving you the honor of this great task. Go to Douglas and set him free, without a ransom. His courage when fighting against us today must be acknowledged, even if he was fighting with our enemies.

LANCASTER

Your Grace, I thank you very much for this honor, and will go and do this immediately.

KING

Then all that remains to do is for us to split up our army. John and Westmoreland, you must quickly take your armies towards York to confront Northumberland and that Archbishop Scroop who are preparing for battle as we speak. Harry, my son--you and I will travel towards Wales to fight with Glendower and Mortimer. Any rebels in this land will be stopped, if they lose another battle like they lost today. So since we have already been very successful, let's not stop until we have won every battle, and reclaimed what is ours.

They exit.

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