

Act 1 Scene 1

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 frightened peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in strands afar remote.

5 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,
10 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,
15 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—
20 Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross
We are impressèd and engaged to fight—

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

KING

Despite how shaken and pale with worry we are, let's take advantage of this moment of peace to catch our breath, and as we pant we'll speak about the battles we'll soon fight in foreign lands. England will no longer be wet with her own people's blood. War will no longer damage her fields, and warhorses will no longer trample her flowers. The soldiers on either side of this vicious civil war were countrymen and brothers, as similar to one another as shooting stars. They may have clashed recently, but now they will march together in beautiful formation, no longer struggling against family and friend. War is like a mishandled knife: it can cut its owner, but it will no longer cut us. My friends, we are now soldiers for Christ, and we take his blessed cross as our battle flag. We'll raise a new army of Englishmen and march all the way to the Holy Land. Our soldiers were born to chase non-believers from that holy ground touched by Jesus' feet—feet which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nailed to the cross for our sins.

Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were molded in their mothers' womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
25 Over whose acres walked those blessed 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.
30 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,
35 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
40 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
45 By those Welshwomen done, as may not be

But that's been my plan for a year now, so there's no point in telling you all this again. That's not the issue at hand. So tell me, my noble kinsman Westmoreland, what my royal advisors decided last night about this important undertaking.

WESTMORELAND

Your Highness, there was hot debate about this urgent mission, and many responsibilities had just been assigned when we were suddenly cut off by a messenger with bad news from Wales. The worst of it was that the noble Mortimer, who was leading the men of Herefordshire in battle against that barbarian Glendower, was captured. A thousand of his men have been butchered, their dead corpses desecrated by the Welsh women. The things they did were so horrible that I'm too ashamed to report them.

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.
50 For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the north and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood Day, the gallant Hotspur there,
Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,
That ever valiant and approvèd Scot,
55 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.

KING

I suppose this news disrupts our plans to invade the Holy Land.

WESTMORELAND

This and other things, your Highness: even more unsettling and unwelcome news has arrived from the north. On Holy Cross Day, the heroic young Harry Percy—who we know as Hotspur—fought at Holmeden against Archibald, Earl of Douglas, that brave and battle-proven Scotsman. The two of them fought a long and bloody battle there, judging by the way the guns were firing. The messenger who brought the news left when the battle was at its height, so he couldn't say for sure who had won.

KING

My loyal, hard-working friend Sir Walter Blunt has arrived here at court, fresh off his horse and covered with the mud of every town from Holmedon to here. He's brought us very welcome news. The Earl of Douglas has been defeated. Blunt saw ten thousand Scotsmen and twenty-two knights piled up in their

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.

own blood on the fields of Holmedon. Hotspur took these men prisoner: Douglas' son Mordake, the Earl of Fife; as well as the Earls of Athol, Murray, Angus, and Menteith. That's a valuable group! A fantastic catch, isn't it, kinsman?

WESTMORELAND

Truly, that's a conquest to make even a prince brag.

KING

Yes, and that makes me sad. Seeing Lord Northumberland with such a blessed son makes me commit the sin of envy. When honor speaks, it speaks about Hotspur. In a grove of trees, Hotspur stands straightest. He is the favorite darling of Fortune. When I see how he is praised, I can only see my own son, Harry, and his reputation for wildness and dishonor. If only it could be proven that a fairy had come to their cradles at night and switched them! Then the Percy family would have my Harry, and we Plantagenets would have Hotspur! But stop thinking about Harry now. Westmoreland, what do you make of young Percy's arrogance? He says he'll keep all the [prisoners](#) he captured for himself, and will only send me Mordrake, Earl of Fife.

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 utteredèd.

WESTMORELAND

I will, my liege.

Exeunt

WESTMORELAND

His uncle Worcester put him up to that. It is just like Worcester to act against you in all ways. He's the one making Hotspur behave like this, flaunting his youth in the face of your dignified age.

KING

I've sent for Hotspur to explain himself. We'll have to postpone the plans for our crusade to Jerusalem. Go tell my advisers that our next meeting will be Wednesday at Windsor. Then hurry back here. There's more to be said and done, but I'm too angry now to speak.

WESTMORELAND

I will, my lord.

They exit.

Act 1 Scene 2

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 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 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 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

HENRY, PRINCE of Wales and Sir John FALSTAFF enter.

FALSTAFF

Hal, what time is it, my boy?

PRINCE HENRY

You are so wasted from drinking booze and loosening your pants after lunch and sleeping on benches all afternoon that you don't even remember how to ask for what you really want to know. What the hell does it matter to you what time it is? Unless hours were glasses of wine, minutes were chickens, clocks were whores' tongues, sundials were whorehouse signs and the sun itself were a hot woman in a flame-colored dress, I don't see any reason why you would need to know the time.

FALSTAFF

Now you're talking, Hal. Thieves like us operate at night, by the moon and stars, and not by the sun. I hope, pretty boy, that when you become king, God save your Grace—or maybe I should just call you "Your Majesty," since you don't have any grace—

PRINCE HENRY

None?

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

20 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, 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 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 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.

FALSTAFF

No, I swear. Not even enough to say grace before a snack.

PRINCE HENRY

Come on, out with it. Get to the point.

FALSTAFF

Okay then, pretty boy. Whey you become king, don't let those of us who work at night be blamed for wasting daylight by sleeping through it. Give us fancy names: "Servants of the Moon Goddess Diana;" "Gentlemen of Shadows;" "Lunar Laborers." Make people admire us for being well behaved. After all, we're governed by the same force that governs the tides—the pale and cool moon, who lights our way as we sneak around.

PRINCE HENRY

Well said. And you're right—our luck ebbs and flows like the tide, because, like the sea, we're governed by the moon. I'll prove it. Imagine a bag of gold, brilliantly swiped on a Monday night and extravagantly spent on a Tuesday morning. You snatch it, shouting, "Hand it off!" and spend it, calling, "Bring it on!" It's like the gallows: one minute you're at the bottom of the ladder—low tide. The next, you're swinging from the top—high tide!

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

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

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

45 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.

By God that's right, my boy! And by the way, isn't the [hostess of the tavern](#) a delicious woman?

PRINCE HENRY

Sweet as honey from [Hybla](#), you dirty old man. And isn't a sheriff's uniform a pretty durable outfit?

FALSTAFF

What's that supposed to mean, you crazy man? You're in the mood for jokes? Why are you talking to me about a sheriff's uniform?

PRINCE HENRY

Well, why the hell are you asking me about the hostess of the tavern?

FALSTAFF

You've asked her for the [bill](#) enough times.

PRINCE HENRY

Did I ever ask you to pay for any of it?

FALSTAFF

No. I've got to admit, you've settled with her all by yourself.

PRINCE HENRY

And not just with her, but wherever my cash was good. And when I ran out, I switched to credit.

FALSTAFF

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

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

PRINCE HENRY

55 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

For obtaining of suits?

FALSTAFF

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

FALSTAFF

And you've stretched that so far that if it weren't "here apparent" that you're the "heir apparent," your credit wouldn't be worth a thing. But listen, pretty boy. Will England still have hangmen when you're king? And will a thief's courage still be thwarted by that nasty old clown, the law? When you're king, don't hang thieves.

PRINCE HENRY

No. You will.

FALSTAFF

I will? Excellent! By God, I'll be a great judge.

PRINCE HENRY

You've judged wrong already. I mean, you'll be in charge of hanging thieves, and become a superb hangman.

FALSTAFF

All right, Hal. I'll tell you this: in a way, being a hangman agrees with me just as well as hanging around the court.

PRINCE HENRY

Waiting to get your *suits* granted?

FALSTAFF

Exactly. I've got plenty of those, just like the hangman has plenty of suits—the suits he takes off the dead men he hangs.

lugged bear.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

Thou hast the most unsavory similes, and art indeed the most comparative, rascaliest, sweet young Prince. But, Hal, I comparative, rascaliest, 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.

—Damn, I'm as depressed as a tomcat or a dancing bear in chains.

PRINCE HENRY

Or an old lion, or a guitar playing a sad lovesong.

FALSTAFF

Or the wailing of a bagpipe.

PRINCE HENRY

How about a rabbit, or a trip to [Moorditch](#)?

FALSTAFF

You have a knack for foul images. You are the most metaphorical and rascally, sweet young Prince. But Hal, please stop corrupting me with frivolous matters. I wish to God that you and I knew where we could buy a supply of good reputations. The other day, an elderly lord on the King's Council came up to me in the street and lectured me about you, but I didn't pay any attention. He spoke wisely, but I ignored him. But he made sense, and in the street, too.

PRINCE HENRY

You did well. You know the scripture: "Wisdom cries out in the street but no man listens."

FALSTAFF

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 not, I am a villain. I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

PRINCE HENRY

85 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

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

FALSTAFF

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

Enter POINS

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

FALSTAFF

Oh, you have a wicked talent for wrongly quoting scripture, you really could corrupt a saint. You've deeply harmed me, Hal, and God forgive you for it! Before I met you, I was innocent. And now, if I can speak truly, I'm no better than a sinner. I've got to change my life, and I will change my life, by God. If I don't, I'm an evildoer. I won't be damned, not for any king's son in the universe.

PRINCE HENRY

Where should we go stealing tomorrow, Jack?

FALSTAFF

For God's sake, wherever you want, boy. I'll be one of the gang. If I'm not, call me evildoer and string me up.

PRINCE HENRY

I see you've changed your life, alright. From praying to pursesnatching.

FALSTAFF

It's my calling, Hal. It's no sin for a man to follow his calling.

POINS enters.

Poins! Now we'll find out whether Mr. Gadshill has planned a robbery. If good deeds bring a man to heaven, there's no hell

enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried "Stand!" to a true man.

PRINCE HENRY

Good Morrow, Ned.

POINS

Good Morrow, sweet Hal.—What says Monsieur Remorse? 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

¹⁰⁵ Else he had been damned for cozening the devil.

POINS

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

hot enough for Poins. This is the most incredible villain, whoever said "Stick 'em up!" to an honest man.

PRINCE HENRY

Morning, Ned.

POINS

Morning, sweet Hal. What's Mr. Feelbad got to say? What's going on, Sir John, Wino Jack? How's your deal with the devil coming along? You sold him your soul last Good Friday for some cold chicken and a glass of cheap wine, right?

PRINCE HENRY

The devil will get what's coming to him. Sir John's a man of his word, and he never disagrees with a proverb. He will "give the devil his due."

POINS

(to FALSTAFF) Then you're damned for keeping your word with the devil.

PRINCE HENRY

His only other choice is to be damned for cheating the devil.

POINS

But boys, boys! Four o'clock tomorrow morning some pilgrims are going to pass by Gad's Hill. They'll be on their way to Canterbury Cathedral with expensive offerings, and traders will

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

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.

be heading to London with bags of money. I've got masks for you, you've got horses for yourselves. Mr. Gadshill is spending tonight in Rochester, and I've already ordered tomorrow night's dinner in Eastcheap. We could do this in our sleep. If you come, I'll make you rich. If not, stay home and hang yourselves.

FALSTAFF

Listen, Yedward. If I stay home and don't go, I'll hang you — for going.

POINS

You will, fatface?

FALSTAFF

Hal, are you in?

PRINCE HENRY

Who? Me, a robber? Me, a thief? Not me. No way.

FALSTAFF

If you don't dare to fight for ten shillings, there's no honesty, manhood, or friendship in you, and you never came from royal blood.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, okay. For once in my life, I'll be a little crazy.

FALSTAFF

There you go.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

I care not.

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

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 shall find me in Eastcheap.

PRINCE HENRY

135 Farewell, thou latter spring. Farewell, All-hallown summer.

Exit FALSTAFF

POINS**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, you know what? I'll stay home.

FALSTAFF

By God, then I'll be a traitor when you become king.

PRINCE HENRY

I don't care.

POINS

Sir John, do me a favor: leave me and the Prince alone. I'll spell out such good reasons for this adventure, he's sure to join.

FALSTAFF

May God give you the power of persuasion and him the good sense to listen, so that what you say will affect him and what he hears will sink in. This way, the true prince will turn into false thief, just for laughs. After all, all the poor, little vices of the age need encouragement. So long; you'll find me in Eastcheap.

PRINCE HENRY

Farewell, you second spring! Farewell, you summer-in-November!

FALSTAFF exits.

POINS

Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us tomorrow. I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone. 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

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

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

Now, my good sweet honey sir, come with us tomorrow. I have an idea for a practical joke, and I can't do it by myself. Falstaff, Peto, Bardolph, and Mr. Gadshill will rob the travelers we're planning to ambush, but you and I won't be there. If you and I don't rob them once they have the loot, then chop off my head!

PRINCE HENRY

But we're all planning to leave together. How will you and I separate ourselves?

POINS

We'll leave before them, or after them. We'll tell them to meet us someplace, but then we won't show up. They'll pull off the robbery by themselves, and the second they've done it, we'll attack them.

PRINCE HENRY

Sure, but they'll recognize our horses, our clothes, and all our other things.

POINS

Psh! They won't see our horses, because I'll tie them in the forest. We'll put on new masks after we leave them. And, just for this occasion, I've made cloaks out of rough buckram cloth, to cover our regular clothes.

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. 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

Farewell, my lord.

Exit POINS

PRINCE HENRY

165 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,

Okay. But I'm afraid they'll be too tough for us.

POINS

Well, I know that two of them are the biggest cowards who ever turned and ran. As for the third, if he fights even a second longer than is absolutely necessary, I promise to never fight again. The best part about this joke will be listening to the outlandish lies this fat clown will tell when we meet for dinner —how he fought at least thirty men, how he defended himself, how he got hit, what he endured. The funniest part will be when we call him on it.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay. I'll go. Get everything together and meet me in Eastcheap tomorrow. I'll eat there. Farewell.

POINS

Farewell, my lord.

POINS exits.

PRINCE HENRY

I understand all of you. For now, I'll put on the rowdy behavior of your good-for-nothing ways. But in this way, I'll be like the sun, who allows the vulgar, corrupting clouds to hide his beauty from the world. Then, when the sun wants to be

170 That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mist
Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.

If all the year were playing holidays,
175 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 promisèd,
180 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
185 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

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

KING

himself again, he breaks through the foul mists and vapors that seemed to be strangling him.

And because people have missed him so much, they are that much more impressed when he finally appears. If every day were a vacation, playing would grow as tedious as working. But when it's rare, it's looked forward to. Nothing is as precious as the unexpected occurrence. So when I throw off this wild behavior and accept the responsibilities of being king—a destiny I didn't choose but was born into—I'll suddenly seem like a far better man. In this way, I'll give everyone the wrong expectation of me. Like a bright metal on a dark background, my reformation will shine even more brilliantly when it's set against my wicked past. I'll be so wild, I'll make wildness an art form, then redeem myself when the world least expects me to.

He exits.

Act 1 Scene 3

*The KING, NORTHUMBERLAND, WORCESTER, HOTSPUR, Sir
Walter BLUNT and others enter.*

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 help to make so portly.

NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord—

KING

Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see
15 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.
You have good leave to leave us. When we need
20 Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

I've been too calm and even-tempered, unwilling to react angrily to these indignities. You have discovered this, and so you've walked all over my patience. Know this: from now on, I'm going to be my royal self again, powerful and frightening. My natural condition, which was as smooth as oil and soft as feathers, has lost me the respect that powerful people only pay to the similarly powerful.

WORCESTER

My lord, the [Percy family](#) does not deserve to bear the brunt of your anger and power, especially since we helped you become so powerful in the first place.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Your Highness —

KING

Worcester, get out. I see danger and disobedience in your eyes. You carry yourself too boldly and proudly, and royalty should never have to endure a servant's frowning face. You have my permission to leave now. When I need you or your advice, I'll call for you.

Exit WORCESTER

(to NORTHUMBERLAND) You were about to speak.

NORTHUMBERLAND

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
25 As is delivered to your Majesty:
Either envy, therefore, or misprison
Is guilty of this fault, and not my son.

HOTSPUR

My liege, I did deny no prisoners.
But I remember, when the fight was done,
30 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,
Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reaped
Showed like a stubble land at harvest home.
35 He was perfumèd like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took 't away again,
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
40 Took it in snuff; and still he smiled and talked.

WORCESTER exits.

(to NORTHUMBERLAND) You were about to speak.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Yes, my Lord. The prisoners you asked for, which my son Harry Percy captured at Holmedon, were not kept from you in anger. He's already told you that. Whoever told you my son meant to defy you was either mistaken or trying to make trouble. He's done nothing wrong.

HOTSPUR

Sir, I didn't hold back any prisoners. But I remember this: when the battle ended, I was exhausted with rage and exertion. I was out of breath, dizzy and bent over. All of a sudden a man approached me, neat, clean, and tidily dressed, like a bridegroom. His beard was freshly shaven, like a newly plowed field. He wore fancy cologne and he carried a perfume box, which he kept raising to his nose as he smiled and talked on. Whenever soldiers walked past, bearing dead bodies, he called them rude hoodlums for bringing a foul, disgusting corpse within breathing distance of him. He interrogated me, with his fancy language, and demanded that I give him my prisoners, to be taken on your behalf. There I was, with the cold aggravating all my wounds, being pestered by this idiot. In my

And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He called them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.

45 With many holiday and lady terms

He questioned me; amongst the rest demanded
My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pestered with a popinjay,

50 Out of my grief and my impatience

Answered neglectingly I know not what—
He should, or he should not; for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman

55 Of guns, and drums, and wounds—God save the mark!—

And telling me the sovereignest thing on earth
Was parmacety for an inward bruise,
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villanous saltpeter should be digged

60 Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,

Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed
So cowardly, and but for these vile guns
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,

65 I answered indirectly, as I said,

grief and impatience, I gave him some kind of answer. I don't even remember what I said—he could take them, or he couldn't.

I was so angry, looking at him all shiny and sweet-smelling, and speaking like a squeamish woman about guns and battle drums and wounds—God almighty! —and telling me the best thing for an injury is [parmaceti](#), and that it was a shame that the blameless earth had to be dug up to find saltpeter for the gunpowder, when so many good, brave men had been cowardly destroyed by guns, and that if it hadn't been for those disgusting guns, he would have been a soldier himself. All this trivial, incoherent talk I answered offhandedly, as I've already told you. So I beg you: please don't take his word as evidence

And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high Majesty.

BLUNT

The circumstance considered, good my lord,
70 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,
May reasonably die and never rise
To do him wrong or any way impeach
75 What then he said, so he unsay it now.

KING

Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer,
80 Who, on my soul, hath willfully betrayed
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damned Glendower,
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers then
85 Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?
Shall we buy treason and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?
No, on the barren mountains let him starve,

that there's anything wrong between you and me, your
Majesty.

BLUNT

Given the circumstances, my lord, whatever Harry Percy may
have said to a man like that, in a place and time like that,
should be allowed to die and never be spoken of again. It
should never be used against Harry in any way, since he has
taken it all back now.

KING

But he still won't turn over his prisoners unless he can add
these stipulations and exceptions. He wants me, at my own
cost, to pay ransom for his brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer,
a man who, on my life, willfully betrayed his own men, whom
he had led in fighting against that great magician, the damned
Glendower. And now we hear that Mortimer has married
Glendower's daughter! Should the treasury be emptied to
ransom a traitor? Should I pay for treason, and bargain for a
coward, when it was Mortimer who lost himself? No. Let him
starve in the wilderness. No man who asks me to spend one
penny on that traitor Mortimer can ever be a friend of mine.

For I shall never hold that man my friend
90 Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

HOTSPUR

Revolted Mortimer!
He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war. To prove that true
95 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
In single opposition hand to hand
He did confound the best part of an hour
100 In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breathed, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood,
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds
105 And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Bloodstainèd with these valiant combatants.
Never did bare and rotten policy
Color her working with such deadly wounds,
Nor could the noble Mortimer
110 Receive so many, and all willingly.
Then let not him be slandered with revolt.

HOTSPUR

"That traitor Mortimer!" He never faltered, my lord, except through an accident of war. I'll prove it, by speaking about the many wounds he heroically suffered when he spent an hour in brutal hand-to-hand combat against Glendower on the grassy banks of the Severn River. They broke three times from fighting, and they drank three times from the Severn. The river itself was frightened by their horrible looks. Its water became discolored with the blood of these brave fighters, and the Severn ran off, as if to hide itself in the weeds on its banks. Treachery has never used deadly wounds to cover its operations, and Mortimer could never have willingly suffered so many injuries. Do not let him be slandered by calling him a traitor.

KING

KING

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
115 As Owen Glendower for an enemy.
Art thou not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth
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
120 As will displease you.—My lord Northumberland,
We license your departure with your son.—

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
125 And tell him so, for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

Enter WORCESTER

HOTSPUR

You speak wrongly about him, Percy, you speak wrongly! He never fought Glendower. I tell you, he would just as soon dare to meet the devil himself as fight Glendower. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Don't ever let me hear you speak of Mortimer again. Send me your prisoners as quickly as possible, or you'll hear about it from me, and you won't like what I have to say. Northumberland, I give you and your son permission to leave now.

Send your prisoners, or you'll hear about it.

KING Henry, BLUNT, and the attendants exit.

HOTSPUR

Even if the devil himself comes screaming for them, I won't send those prisoners. I'm going to go after him and tell him so; it will ease my heart, though it might cost me my head.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What, drunk with anger? Wait a minute. Here comes your uncle.

WORCESTER enters.

HOTSPUR

Speak of Mortimer?

Zounds, I will speak of him, and let my soul

130 Want mercy if I do not join with him.

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.

135 As this ingrate and cankered Bolingbroke.

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

WORCESTER

Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

HOTSPUR

He will forsooth have all my prisoners,

140 And when I urged the ransom once again

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

145 By Richard, that dead is, the next of blood?

NORTHUMBERLAND

Talk about Mortimer? God damn, I will talk about him. And damn my soul if I don't join him! I'll empty out my veins for him, and I'll pour my precious blood onto the ground, drop by drop! And I'll lift this put-upon Mortimer as high up as this ungrateful King, this ungenerous, rotten Bolingbroke!

NORTHUMBERLAND

(to WORCESTER) Brother, the King's driven your nephew crazy.

WORCESTER

Who started this trouble after I left?

HOTSPUR

He wants all my prisoners, for God's sake! And when I asked again for him to ransom my brother-in-law, he looked pale, and he shot me a look that could kill. Just the mention of Mortimer's name makes him shake.

WORCESTER

I don't blame him. Didn't the late King Richard II proclaim that Mortimer should be next in line for the throne?

NORTHUMBERLAND

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;
150 From whence he, intercepted, did return
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
155 Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
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
160 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,

He did; I heard the proclamation. That was when the wretched King Richard (may God forgive us for wronging him!) set out to invade Ireland. When that was interrupted, he returned to England, only to be deposed and then murdered.

WORCESTER

And for our part in his death, the whole world is scandalized by us, and speaks ill of us.

HOTSPUR

Stop a moment, please. Did King Richard really proclaim that my brother-in-law Edmund Mortimer was next in line for the throne?

NORTHUMBERLAND

He did. I heard it myself.

HOTSPUR

Then I can't blame King Henry for wishing for him to starve in the wilderness. But is it right that you—who put the crown on Henry's forgetful head, and who carry the accusations of murder for Henry's sake—should be the target of the world's curses? When you were only accomplices and instruments? Is it right to blame the ropes, the ladder, or the hangman for a man's death? Forgive me for mentioning that you two are like those sordid objects, having been exploited by this conniving

165 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,

170 Or fill up chronicles in time to come,

That men of your nobility and power

Did gage them both in an unjust behalfe
(As both of you, God pardon it, have done)
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
175 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

180 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

185 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,

King. But will you stand by while people today speak of your shame?

While history books record that men of your nobility and power dedicated themselves to as unjust a cause (which, God forgive you, you both did) as the overthrowing of Richard, that sweet lovely rose, and the planting of this thorn, this weed, Bolingbroke in Richard's place? Will you listen as people say that you are fools, and that you've been tossed away by the very person you shamed yourselves to help? No. There is still time for you to redeem your reputations and restore your good names in the eyes of the world. Take revenge against this King who mocks and scorns you. He thinks constantly about how to repay you for all you did—by putting you to death. So I say—

WORCESTER

Quiet, nephew; don't say any more. I have a secret for you, which is hidden like a book with a lock. I will open the book

And to your quick-conceiving discontents
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
190 As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud
On the unsteady footing of a spear.

HOTSPUR

If he fall in, good night, or sink or swim!
Send danger from the east unto the west,
195 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
Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

HOTSPUR

200 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,
And pluck up drownèd honor by the locks,
205 So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities.
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

and read you a dark, dangerous story that will appeal to your righteous anger. It's full of peril and adventure, as risky as walking across a churning, thundering river while balanced unsteadily on a spear.

HOTSPUR

If he falls in, then it's all over, whether he sinks or swims. The honor of the struggle is all that counts, no matter what the danger is or where it comes from. It takes more courage to wake a sleeping lion than to frighten a rabbit!

NORTHUMBERLAND

Dreaming about this heroic exploit is driving him past his patience.

HOTSPUR

By God, I think it would be easy to jump up and grab honor off of the moon's pale face, or to dive into the deepest ocean and pull up honor by its hair.
Then the man who rescues honor can wear her glory alone, without rivals. To hell with sharing the glory!

WORCESTER

(to NORTHUMBERLAND) He apprehends a world of figures here,

But not the form of what he should attend.—

210 (to HOTSPUR) Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

HOTSPUR

I cry you mercy.

WORCESTER

Those same noble Scots

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.

215 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,

Forbad my tongue to speak of Mortimer.

220 But I will find him when he lies asleep,

(to NORTHUMBERLAND) He sees a world built by his imagination, but that world is not the one he should be paying attention to. (to HOTSPUR) Nephew, listen to me a minute.

HOTSPUR

I beg your pardon.

WORCESTER

These Scotsmen that you've taken prisoner —

HOTSPUR

I'll keep them all. By God, the King won't get a single Scot, even if having a Scot would save his soul! I'll keep them, I swear.

WORCESTER

You're off again and not listening to me. You will get to keep the prisoners —

HOTSPUR

Yes, I will; there's no doubt about it. The King said he would not pay ransom for Mortimer. He forbid me from speaking of Mortimer. But I'll find him when he's sleeping, and I'll shout "Mortimer!" into his ears. No; I'll get a bird and teach it to say

And in his ear I'll hollo "Mortimer."

Nay,

I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak

Nothing but "Mortimer," and give it him

225 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.

And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales—

230 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

When you are better tempered to attend.

NORTHUMBERLAND

235 (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,

nothing but "Mortimer," and I'll give it to the King to anger him forever.

WORCESTER

Listen, nephew, please.

HOTSPUR

From now on, all other pursuits I'll cast aside, except for scheming how to aggravate this Bolingbroke and his son, the lowlife Prince of Wales. If it weren't for the fact that I suspect Henry doesn't love his son, and that he'd be glad to see misfortune befall him, I'd poison the Prince's ale.

WORCESTER

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

NORTHUMBERLAND

(to HOTSPUR) You are an impatient and short-tempered fool to start nattering on like a woman, not listening to any voice but your own!

HOTSPUR

Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear
240 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,
His uncle York; where I first bowed my knee
245 Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke.

'Sblood, when you and he came back from Ravensburgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND

At Berkley Castle.

HOTSPUR

You say true.
Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
250 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!
Good uncle, tell your tale. I have done.

WORCESTER

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

HOTSPUR

I have done, i' faith.

Listen, I feel like I'm being whipped with sticks and stung by ants when I hear about this vile politician, Bolingbroke. When Richard was alive—what is that place called? Damn, it's in Gloucestershire; it's where that crazy duke's uncle lived, his uncle York. It's where I first met this lying Bolingbroke, and bowed to him.—Shoot!—It happened when you and Bolingbroke came back from Ravensburgh.

NORTHUMBERLAND

At Berkley castle.

HOTSPUR

Right. What great courtesy that flattering dog paid me! "The promise of his childhood has come true," he said. "Gentle Harry Percy," he called me, and "kind kinsman." To hell with liars like him! — I'm sorry. Uncle, go on. I'm done.

WORCESTER

No, if you're not done yet, keep going. We'll wait until you're ready.

HOTSPUR

I'm done. I swear.

WORCESTER

Then once more to your Scottish prisoners:

Deliver them up without their ransom straight,

And make the Douglas' son your only mean

260 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,

Your son in Scotland being thus employed,

Shall secretly into the bosom creep

265 Of that same noble prelate, well beloved,

The Archbishop.

HOTSPUR

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

270 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.

WORCESTER

Then go back to your Scottish prisoners. Release them at once, without ransom. Make friends with Douglas, and use his influence to gather an army in Scotland. He'll gladly help you for many reasons, which I'll write you about soon. (to

NORTHUMBERLAND) Now you, sir. While your son is busy in Scotland, you will strike up a close alliance with the Archbishop, that noble, well-beloved churchman.

HOTSPUR

He is the Archbishop of York, no?

WORCESTER

Yes, and he's sorely upset about his brother, Lord Scroop, whom Bolingbroke put to death in Bristol. I'm not merely speculating; I'm telling you what I know for a fact has been considered, plotted, and set into motion. They're only waiting now for the right moment to strike.

HOTSPUR

I get it. And it's good, I bet my life on it!

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

HOTSPUR

275 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

And 'tis no little reason bids us speed
280 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,
Till he hath found a time to pay us home.
285 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.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Look, you've let your dogs slip off of their leashes before the hunt has even begun.

HOTSPUR

There's no way this excellent plan won't work. And the armies of Scotland and York will join with Mortimer, right?

WORCESTER

Yes, they will.

HOTSPUR

I swear, it's extremely well thought out.

WORCESTER

And we've got good reasons to hurry and save ourselves by raising an army. No matter how hard we try to look like everything's fine, the King will always think he owes us for having helped him take the throne, and he'll worry that we don't feel we've been properly compensated. Until he finds a way to pay us for good—by killing us. You can see that he's already begun to distance himself from us.

HOTSPUR

He has, he has. We'll get revenge!

WORCESTER

Cousin, farewell. No further go in this
Than I by letters shall direct your course.
290 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
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
295 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

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**WORCESTER**

Nephew, farewell. Don't do any more than I tell you to do in the letters I'll write you. When the time comes, which will be soon, I'll sneak off to Glendower and Mortimer. I'll plan it so that you, Douglas and all our armies will arrive together. Then we can face our future with strength instead of the uncertainty we feel now.

NORTHUMBERLAND

So long, brother. I believe we'll prevail.

HOTSPUR

Good bye, uncle. Oh, I hope it won't be long until battlefields and collisions and groans are witnesses to our game of war!

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 1

FIRST CARRIER enters, holding a lantern.

FIRST CARRIER

I'll be damned if it isn't 4 A.M. already. The Big Dipper has already risen above the chimney, and our horses aren't ready yet. Hey, *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.

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 bots. This house is turned upside down since Robin ostler died.

FIRST CARRIER

10 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

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 allo w us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in your chimney, and your chamber-lye breeds fleas like a

(offstage) Just a second!

FIRST CARRIER

Hey, [Tom](#), give the saddle of my horse, Cut, a few whacks to soften it up, and stuff some wool under it—the old nag's got some bad bruises on her shoulders.

SECOND CARRIER enters.

SECOND CARRIER

The feed here's as damp as anything. That's a fast way for a horse to get parasites. This stable's upside down since Ostler Robin died.

FIRST CARRIER

Poor guy. Once the price of oats went up, he was never happy again. It killed him.

SECOND CARRIER

This stable's got worse fleas than any in London. I'm stung like a [tench](#).

FIRST CARRIER

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

SECOND CARRIER

They don't even give us a bathroom. So we pee in the fireplace, and you know that urine breeds fleas like nobody's

loach.

FIRST CARRIER

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

SECOND CARRIER

I have a gammon of bacon and two races 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

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

business.

FIRST CARRIER

Hey, ostler! Come on already, damn you!

SECOND CARRIER

I've got to deliver a ham and some ginger root all the way to Charing Cross.

FIRST CARRIER

God almighty! The turkeys I'm carrying are starving! Hey, Stable-boy! Curse you! Can't you see? Can't you hear? If it isn't a good idea to knock you on the head, I'm a fool. Come on, damn you! Can't we trust you to do your job?

GADSHILL enters.

GADSHILL

Morning, deliverymen. What time is it?

FIRST CARRIER

I think it's two o'clock.

GADSHILL

Let me borrow your lantern so I can check on my horse in the stable.

FIRST CARRIER

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

GADSHILL

30 (*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.

GADSHILL

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

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

No way, by God; just hold on a minute. I know a few tricks like that myself, I swear.

GADSHILL

(*to SECOND CARRIER*) Please, let me borrow yours.

SECOND CARRIER

Sure, whenever. Whatever you say. "Let me borrow your lantern," he says? Yeah, right. I'll see you dead first.

GADSHILL

[Sirrah](#), what time do you plan to be in London?

SECOND CARRIER

At a reasonable enough time. (*to FIRST CARRIER*) Come on, Mugs, old friend. Let's wake up the gentlemen. They want to travel in a group because they're carrying a lot of valuables.

Both CARRIERS exit.

GADSHILL

Hey, [chamberlain](#)!

CHAMBERLAIN

(*offstage*) "[I'm there for you](#)," as the pickpockets say!

GADSHILL

That's as good as saying, "'I'm there for you,' said the chamberlain." You're only as different from a pickpocket as a

direction doth from laboring: thou layest the plot how.

Enter CHAMBERLAIN

CHAMBERLAIN

Good morrow, Master Gadshill. 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 worshippest 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 dream'st not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace, that would, if

supervisor is from a worker; you're the one who sets the plans.

The CHAMBERLAIN enters.

CHAMBERLAIN

Morning, Mr. Gadshill. What I told you last night is still true. There's a rich landowner all the way from Kent staying here, and he's got three hundred gold coins with him. I heard him say so to a man at supper last night. That man's some kind of tax collector, and he has plenty of money with him, too. They just woke up and they've ordered breakfast; they'll be leaving soon.

GADSHILL

Sirrah, if they don't run into some highway robbers today, you can have my neck.

CHAMBERLAIN

I don't want it; keep it for the hangman. I know you worship the patron saint of highway robbery, as much as a godless man like you worships anything.

GADSHILL

Why are you taking to me about the hangman? If I hang, I'll make half of a fat pair on the gallows, because if I hang, old Sir John will be hanging right with me—and he's not exactly thin. Please! Our gang has some members you could never guess, and for their own amusement, they're happy to lend the

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?

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.

profession of thievery some respect. If we were ever investigated, they would smooth everything over. I've got no wandering highwaymen, no thieves with homemade weapons, no red-faced drunks with crazy mustaches. Only men of calm and noble demeanor for me: magistrates and court officials. Men who can keep a secret; who'd rather smack you than speak, rather speak than drink, and rather drink than pray.—No! That's a lie! They pray all the time to England, their patron saint. Or rather, they don't pray to her; they prey on her. They ride her up and down and then make her their [boots](#).

CHAMBERLAIN

Make her their boots? Why, will she keep their feet dry from muddy water?

GADSHILL

She can, she can. She's been greased with so many bribes that she's waterproof. We thieve in complete safety; we've got a potion that makes us invisible.

CHAMBERLAIN

Oh, I don't think so. It's the dark of night that makes you hard to see, not a secret potion.

GADSHILL

Let's shake hands. You'll get a share of our spoils; I swear on my honor as 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

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**CHAMBERLAIN**

I'd rather have you swear by your reputation as a dishonest thief.

GADSHILL

Whatever. I'm a true man, even if I'm a dishonest thief. Tell the stable-boy to get my horse. Farewell, you fool.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 2

PRINCE HENRY, POINS, PETO, and BARDOLPH enter.

POINS

Come on, hide, hide! I stole Falstaff's horse, and he's rubbed the wrong way; he's fraying like cheap velvet.

PRINCE HENRY

Stay hidden.

POINS, PETO and BARDOLPH exit.

FALSTAFF enters.

FALSTAFF

Poins! Poins, damn you! Poins!

PRINCE HENRY

5 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

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

Quiet, you fat-bellied jerk! What a racket you're making!

FALSTAFF

Where's Poins, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

He walked up the hill. I'll go find him.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

I got a raw deal, to be out robbing with him. He stole my horse and tied him up someplace. If I have to walk even four feet more, I'll be totally out of breath. Still, I bet I'll die a natural death—if I don't get hanged for killing that jerk, that is. Every hour for the past twenty-two years, I've sworn I'd never talk to him again, but I love his company. He must have slipped me a love potion that makes me adore him. Damn, that must be it: I have drunk love potions. Poins! Hal! Drop dead, the both of you! Bardolph! Peto! I'll die if I have to walk another foot. If turning honest and abandoning these jerks weren't the best things I could possibly do for myself, then I'm the worst scoundrel that ever lived. Eight yards of rough road is like seventy miles to me, and these hard-hearted crooks know it. It stinks when there's no honor among thieves.

stony-hearted villains know it well enough. A plague upon it
when thieves cannot be true one to another!

They whistle.

25 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

30 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

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

They whistle from offstage.

Whew!

PRINCE HENRY, **POINS**, **PETO**, and **BARDOLPH** enter.

The hell with you all! Give me my horse, you deadbeats. Give
me my horse and the hell with you!

PRINCE HENRY

Shut up, fatso! Lie down, put your ear to the ground, and listen
for the footsteps of travelers.

FALSTAFF

Do you have a crane to lift me up again once I'm down? Damn,
I wouldn't walk my fat self this far again for all the money in
your father's treasury. What are you doing horsing around with
me like this?

PRINCE HENRY

You're lying. We can't horse around, because you don't have a
horse.

FALSTAFF

Please, my good Hal, help me find my horse, you 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?

GADSHILL

45 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**PRINCE HENRY**

Later with that! You want me to be your stable boy?

FALSTAFF

Go drop dead in your own heir-apparent pants. If I'm arrested, I'll rat you out, too. If I don't get them singing dirty songs in the street about you all, let me be poisoned to death with booze. I hate it when a practical joke gets so out of hand—and with me out of a horse, too!

GADSHILL enters.

GADSHILL

Freeze!

FALSTAFF

I am, and I don't like it.

POINS

Oh, that's the man who planned the whole thing; I recognize his voice, Bardolph.— What's going on?

GADSHILL

Cover your faces, cover your faces. Get your masks on. There's tax money coming down the hill, on its way to the King's treasury.

FALSTAFF

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

GADSHILL

There's enough to make us all.

FALSTAFF

50 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

How many be there of them?

GADSHILL

55 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.

That's a lie, you clown. It's on its way to the king's bank.

GADSHILL

There's enough to make us all rich.

FALSTAFF

Or to get us all hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

Listen, you four confront them in the narrow lane. Ned Poins and I will wait further down. If they get away from you, they'll run right into us.

PETO

How many of them are there?

GADSHILL

About eight or ten.

FALSTAFF

Damn! Won't they rob us?

PRINCE HENRY

What, are you a coward, Sir John Fatstuff?

FALSTAFF

Well, I'm certainly not John of [Gaunt](#), your grandfather, but I'm no coward, Hal.

PRINCE HENRY

60 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

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

PRINCE HENRY

65 (*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

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

PRINCE HENRY

Well, we'll see about that.

POINS

Jack, sirrah, your horse is there behind the hedge. When you need him, that's where you'll find him. So long, and be brave.

FALSTAFF

I can't hit him. I'd be hanged.

PRINCE HENRY

(*to POINS, so others cannot hear*) Ned, where are our disguises?

POINS

(*to PRINCE HENRY*) They're here, close by. Now hide.

PRINCE HENRY and POINS exit.

FALSTAFF

Now, men, here's to happy endings. Every man to his station.

The TRAVELERS enter.

FIRST TRAVELER

Come on, friend. The boy will lead our horses down the hill while we walk a bit and stretch our legs.

THIEVES

Stand!

TRAVELERS

Jesus bless us!

FALSTAFF

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.

THIEVES

Freeze!

TRAVELERS

Jesus bless us!

FALSTAFF

Hit them! Down with them! Cut their throats! Yahhhh! No-good bloodsuckers! Overfed morons! They hate young people like us. Down with them! Rob them blind!

TRAVELERS

Oh! We're done for!

FALSTAFF

Damn it, you potbellied morons, are you finished? No, you fat misers. I wish everything you owned were here. Come on, pigs, come on! What, you idiots! Young men have to survive. You're **Grand Jurors**, aren't you? Well here's some justice for you!

The thieves rob the travelers and tie them up. They all exit.

PRINCE HENRY and **POINS** enter.

PRINCE HENRY

The thieves have tied up the honest men. If you and I can now rob the robbers and run laughing to London, we would talk about it for a week, laugh about it for a month, and it would be a hilarious story forever.

POINS

85 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 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

90 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.

The thieves are all scattered, and possessed with fear
So strongly that they dare not meet each other.

95 Each takes his fellow for an officer.

POINS

Get down. I hear them coming.

PRINCE HENRY and **POINS** hide. The **THIEVES** return.

FALSTAFF

Come on, boys, let's divide up the spoils and then ride off before dawn. If the Prince and Poins aren't cowards, there's no justice in the universe. Poins is about as brave as a duck.

As the thieves split the money, PRINCE HENRY and POINS attack them.

PRINCE HENRY

(in disguise) Give us your money!

POINS

(in disguise) Crooks!

The thieves all run away. FALSTAFF fights for a moment, then runs away as well, leaving all of the money behind.

PRINCE HENRY

Too easy. Now we ride off happily. The thieves have scattered, and they're so terrified that they don't even want to run into each other—they'll each think that the other guy is an officer! Let's go, Ned. Falstaff is sweating so hard that he's watering the

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

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

ground as he walks along. If I weren't laughing so hard, I'd actually feel sorry for him.

POINS

How loud that fat rogue screamed!

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 3

HOTSPUR enters alone, reading a letter.

HOTSPUR

"As for me, sir, I would be happy to be there because of the love I bear for your family." He would be happy to be here. Well, why isn't he, then? He says he loves my family, but he clearly loves his barn more than our house. I'll read on. "Your plan is dangerous." That's true, and it's also dangerous to catch a cold, to sleep, to drink. But I tell you, my lord fool, we shall pluck a flower of safety from this thorn of danger. "Your plan is dangerous; your allies untrustworthy; your timing poor; and your whole project too weak to counter so powerful an opponent." Is that so? Is that so? I'll say it once again: you are a stupid, cowardly dog, and a liar. What an idiot this is! By God, our plan is as good a plan as ever hatched, our allies loyal and firm. A good plan, good allies, and very promising; it's an excellent plan, very good allies. What a yellowbellied fool this

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?
35 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

is! Why, the Archbishop of York approves of the plan, and how it's progressing. Damn! If I were with this imbecile right now, I'd break his head open with his wife's fan. Don't we have my father? And my uncle, and me? Edmund Mortimer, York, and Owen Glendower? And besides, don't we have Douglas? Haven't they all sent me letters, promising to meet me with their armies by the ninth of next month? And aren't some of them on their way already? What an unbelievable ass this is! Faithless! Ha! Just watch; he'll run to the King in cold fear and spill our secrets. Oh, I could split myself in two and knock my own self senseless for unfolding this important plan to such a coward. To hell with him! Let him tell the King; we're ready. I'll set off tonight.

His wife, LADY PERCY, enters.

What is it, Kate? I must leave you in a few hours.

LADY PERCY

Oh, my good lord, why are you alone like this? What have I done to make my Harry banish me from his bed these past two weeks? Tell me, sweet husband, what has stolen your appetite, your desire, and your sleep? Why do you stare at the ground and jump in your skin when you are sitting alone? Where is the color in your cheeks? Why have you taken all your attention,

And start so often when thou sit'st alone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks
40 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,
45 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,
50 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,
55 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?
Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

HOTSPUR

60 What, ho!

Enter SERVANT

which should be mine, and given it to this dark mood and terrible sadness? While you sleep so lightly, I've watched you and heard you mumble stories of war. I've heard you give commands to your horse. I've heard you yell, "Courage! To the field!" And you have talked of charges and retreats; of trenches, tents; of fences, ramparts, and walls; of all types of cannon; of prisoners' ransoms and of dead soldiers, and of all the movements of a violent battle. Your soul has also been at war and has disturbed you in your sleep. Beads of sweat have broken out on your forehead, like bubbles in a churning stream. And on your face I've seen strange expressions, like a man who's gulping his breath at an awful, sudden command. Oh, what does all this mean? My lord is contemplating some serious matters, and if he doesn't tell me about them, he surely doesn't love me.

HOTSPUR

You there!

A SERVANT enters.

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

65 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

What say'st thou, my lady?

Has Gilliams left with my letters?

SERVANT

He has, my lord, an hour ago.

HOTSPUR

Did Butler bring those horses from the sheriff?

SERVANT

He brought one of them just now.

HOTSPUR

Which one? A brown one, right? With its ears clipped?

SERVANT

Yes, my lord.

HOTSPUR

That brown horse will be my throne. I'll mount him in a second.

Oh, "Hope is my Comfort!" Tell Butler to walk him out in the

fields.

The SERVANT exits.

LADY PERCY

Listen, my lord.

HOTSPUR

What is it, my lady?

LADY PERCY

What is it carries you away?

HOTSPUR

Why, my horse,
70 My love, my horse.

LADY PERCY

Out, you mad-headed ape!
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
75 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 paraquito, answer me
Directly unto this question that I ask.
80 In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

HOTSPUR

Away!
Away, you trifler. Love, I love thee not.

LADY PERCY

What is it that's got you so carried away?

HOTSPUR

My horse, my love. My horse.

LADY PERCY

Enough, you crazy fool! Not even a weasel is as hotheaded as you are. I swear, I'll find out what you're up to, Harry, I will. I fear that my brother, Mortimer, is making some kind of move over his claim to the throne, and has asked you to help. But if you go—

HOTSPUR

—such a long way on foot, I'll be tired.

LADY PERCY

Stop it, you little parrot. Answer me straight. I swear, Harry, I'll break your little finger if you don't tell me everything, and the truth, too.

HOTSPUR

Get away from me, you nag! Love? I don't love you. I don't even care about you, Kate. This is no time for playing with dolls and

I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world
85 To play with mammets and to tilt with lips.
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 me?

LADY PERCY

Do you not love me? Do you not indeed?
90 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
95 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.
100 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,
105 And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

jousting with kisses; we'll have bloody noses and broken
heads, and spread them around, too. For God's sake, my horse!
What, Kate? What do you want from me?

LADY PERCY

You don't love me? Really, you don't? Well, fine then; don't love
me. And since you don't love me, I won't love myself. You don't
love me? Seriously, tell me if you're joking or if you mean it.

HOTSPUR

Will you see me off? Once I'm on my horse, I'll swear I love you
till the end of time. But listen here, Kate. From now on, I won't
have you asking me where I'm going, nor guessing why I'm
doing what I'm doing. I must go where I must go. This is final:
tonight I must leave you, sweet Kate. I know you are wise, but
your wisdom doesn't go further than your role as my wife. You
may be able to keep a secret, but you're still a woman; and yet
no woman can keep secrets like you, because you cannot
reveal what you don't actually know. And that is as far as I will
trust you, sweet 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.

110 Will this content you, Kate?

LADY PERCY

It must, of force.

Exeunt

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 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.

LADY PERCY

Oh really? That far?

HOTSPUR

Not an inch further. But listen here, Kate. Wherever I go, you
will go too. I leave today, and tomorrow, you. Will this make
you content, Kate?

LADY PERCY

It must.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 4

PRINCE HENRY and **POINS** enter.

PRINCE HENRY

Ned, come out of that airless room and help me laugh a bit.

POINS

Where've you been, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

With three or four knuckleheads and a few dozen kegs of
liquor. I've been with the lowest of the low. Sirrah, I've made
great friends with these three bartenders, and I'm on a first-
name basis with them: Tom, Dick, and Francis. They swear on

They take it already upon their salvation that though I be but Prince of Wales, 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!” 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 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 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

30 (*within*) Francis!

their souls that, even though I’m only the Prince of Wales, I’m the king of niceness. They say I’m no pompous fool, like Falstaff, but a good sport, a spirited man, a good boy. When I’m King of England, all the good men of Eastcheap will follow me gladly. When you drink deeply, they joke that you have been dyed red; and if you stop for a breath when you’re drinking, they yell “Cough!” and they command you to keep going. In fifteen minutes, I got so good at being a drinking companion, I could be at ease with any man over a drink, in any setting. Ned, you didn’t do yourself any favors by missing this. But, sweet Ned, I’ll sweeten the name Ned with this bit of sugar, given to me by an apprentice **drawer** who never spoke any English his whole life, except, “That’ll be eight shillings and sixpence,” and “You’re welcome,” and also, “Just a second, just a second! Bring a pint of **bastard** to the **Half-Moon room!**” But Ned, let’s pass the time until Falstaff gets here. Hide in a side room while I ask that little apprentice drawer why he gave me the sugar. Keep calling out his name, Francis, and don’t stop, so that all he’s able to say is, “Just a second!” Step aside, and I’ll give you a taste.

POINS exits.

POINS

(*offstage*) Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Thou art perfect.

POINS

(*within*) Francis!

Enter FRANCIS, a drawer

FRANCIS

Anon, anon, sir.—Look down into the Pomgarnet, Ralph.

PRINCE HENRY

Come hither, Francis.

FRANCIS

35 My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

FRANCIS

Forsooth, five years, and as much as to—

POINS

(*within*) Francis!

FRANCIS**PRINCE HENRY**

Perfect.

POINS

(*offstage*) Francis!

FRANCIS, a drawer, enters.

FRANCIS

Just a second, sir.—Ralph, make sure everything's okay in the Pomegranate Room!

PRINCE HENRY

Come here, Francis.

FRANCIS

Sir?

PRINCE HENRY

How many more years of your apprenticeship do you have, Francis?

FRANCIS

Truly, five years, which is as long —

POINS

(*offstage*) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, anon, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

40 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

How old art thou, Francis?

FRANCIS

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

POINS

50 (within) Francis!

FRANCIS

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

Just a second, sir!

PRINCE HENRY

Five years! Wow, that's a long time to be clinking beer mugs.
But Francis, are you brave enough to play the coward with your
contract? To flash it your heels, as you run away?

FRANCIS

Oh Lord, sir. I'd swear on a stack of Bibles that I'd love to be
able to—

POINS

(offstage) Francis!

FRANCIS

Just a second, sir!

PRINCE HENRY

How old are you, Francis?

FRANCIS

Let's see—at the end of next September, I'll be—

POINS

(offstage) Francis!

FRANCIS

PRINCE HENRY

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

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

POINS

(within) Francis!

FRANCIS

Anon, anon.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FRANCIS

My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

Just a second, sir! (*to PRINCE HENRY*) Wait here a moment, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FRANCIS

Oh lord, I wish I could have given you two pennies' worth!

PRINCE HENRY

I'll give you a thousand pounds for it. Ask for it whenever you want it, and it's yours.

POINS

(offstage) Francis!

FRANCIS

Just a second!

PRINCE HENRY

You want it in a second, Francis? No, Francis. Maybe tomorrow, Francis, or Thursday, Francis, whenever you want it. But, Francis.

FRANCIS

Sir?

PRINCE HENRY

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

FRANCIS

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

70 What, sir?

POINS

(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.*

Enter VINTNER

Are you ready to rob **this man**? This man, with his leather jacket, fashionable crystal buttons, short hair, agate signet ring, dark stockings, ribboned garters, oily speech, Spanish leather pouch—

FRANCIS

Oh Lord, sir, who are you talking about?

PRINCE HENRY

Well then, it looks like **brown bastard** will continue to be your only drink. Because listen, Francis, your white canvas shirt will get stained out there. Even in North Africa, sir, you won't get so much.

FRANCIS

Excuse me, sir?

POINS

(offstage) Francis!

PRINCE HENRY

Get going, you good-for-nothing. Can't you hear people calling you?

POINS and **PRINCE HENRY** both begin to shout "Francis!"

FRANCIS stands there bewildered, not knowing what to do.

The VINTNER enters.

VINTNER

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

Exit FRANCIS

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

PRINCE HENRY

Let them alone awhile, and then open the door.

Exit VINTNER

Poins!

Reenter POINS

POINS

Anon, anon, sir.

PRINCE HENRY

80 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 drawer. Come, what's the issue?

VINTNER

Why are you standing there when people are calling you? Take care of the customers inside!

FRANCIS exits.

My lord, old Sir John and a half-dozen others are at the door.
Should I let them in?

PRINCE HENRY

Leave them out there for a while, and then open the door.

VINTNER exits.

Poins!

POINS enters.

POINS

Just a second, sir!

PRINCE HENRY

Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are here. Are we ready for a laugh?

POINS

We'll be happy as crickets, my lad. But listen, what's with this gag you played on the waiter? What's the point?

PRINCE HENRY

85 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

What's o'clock, Francis?

FRANCIS

Anon, anon, sir.

Exit FRANCIS

PRINCE HENRY

90 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 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.

PRINCE HENRY

I'm up for anything. Right now, I'm feeling all the moods that anyone has ever felt, from the old days of Adam to this young age, right now, at twelve o'clock midnight.

FRANCIS enters.

What time is it, Francis?

FRANCIS

Just a second, sir.

FRANCIS exits.

PRINCE HENRY

This boy has fewer words than a parrot, but he's actually a person! All he does is run up and down stairs, and the only things he can say are the names of the items on your bill. I'm not yet like Percy, the Hotspur of the North. He kills six or seven dozen Scotsmen before breakfast, washes his hands, and then says to his wife, "To hell with this boring life! I need something to do!" "Oh, my sweet Harry," she says, "How many have you killed today?" "Give my brown horse a dose of medicine," he says. And then about an hour later, he answers her: "About fourteen." Then he says, "That's nothing, nothing." Listen, bring in Falstaff. I'll play Percy, and that damned fat slob will play his wife, Dame Mortimer. "Bottom's up!" as the drunk says. Bring in the meat, bring in blubber.

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

POINS

Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou 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*)

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.

FALSTAFF

110 (*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 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 unhanged 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

FALSTAFF, **GADSHILL**, **BARDOLPH**, and **PETO** enter. **FRANCIS** follows with wine.

POINS

Welcome, Jack. Where've you been?

FALSTAFF

A curse on all cowards, I say, and revenge on them, too! Amen to that! Give me some wine, boy. I'm not going to keep up this way of life much longer. I'll knit socks, mend them, and fix their feet. A curse on all cowards! Give me a cup of wine, you lowlife! Isn't there any honesty left in this world? (*he drinks*)

PRINCE HENRY

Did you ever see the sun kiss a dish of **butter**? The tender-hearted sun, melting the butter with its sweet words! If you have, then take a look at Falstaff.

FALSTAFF

(*to FRANCIS*) You bastard! Somebody put **lime** in my wine! All men are cheaters and schemers, but a coward is worse than a glass of wine with lime in it. A miserable coward! Go on, old Jack, die already. If there's even one real man left on this earth besides me, then I'm as skinny as a herring. In all of England there are only three good men that haven't been put to death, and one of them is fat and growing old. God help us all! It's a

weaver. I could sing psalms, or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

PRINCE HENRY

120 How now, woolsack, what mutter you?

FALSTAFF

A King's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom 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!

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

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

POINS

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

FALSTAFF

I call thee coward? I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward, but I would give a thousand pound I could 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

bad world, I say. I wish I were a weaver; I could sing psalms while I was sewing. I'll say it again: a curse on all cowards.

PRINCE HENRY

What's the matter, you sack of wool? What are you muttering about?

FALSTAFF

A King's son! If I don't drive you out of the kingdom with a [wooden dagger](#), and send your subjects running before you like a flock of geese, then I'll never grow a beard again. You, Prince of Wales? What a joke!

PRINCE HENRY

You fat son of a whore, what's the matter?

FALSTAFF

Aren't you a coward? Tell me that. And Poins there?

POINS

Dammit, you fat belly. If you call me a coward, I swear, I'll stab you.

FALSTAFF

I call you coward? I'd sooner see you damned than call you a coward, but I tell you; I'd give a thousand pounds to be able to run as fast as you can. You've got good-enough-looking shoulders; you don't care who sees your back! Is that what you

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.

PRINCE HENRY

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

140 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

145 What, a hundred, man?

call backing up your friends? Damn anyone who backs up like that! I'd rather have a man who faces me. Give me some wine! I'll be damned if I've had anything to drink today.

PRINCE HENRY

Liar! You've barely had time to wipe your lips since your last drink.

FALSTAFF

Whatever. (*he drinks*) A curse on all cowards, I still say.

PRINCE HENRY

What's the matter?

FALSTAFF

What's the matter? There are four of us here who stole a thousand pounds this very morning.

PRINCE HENRY

Where is it, Jack? Where is it?

FALSTAFF

Where is it? It was stolen from us. A hundred men against only four of us.

PRINCE HENRY

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

155 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

160 You rogue, they were bound, every man of them, or I am a

FALSTAFF

I'll be damned if I didn't fight with a dozen of them for two straight hours. It's a miracle I managed to get away. They stabbed through my shirt eight times. Four through my pants. My shield's got holes through and through. My sword's as cut up as a hacksaw. Behold the evidence! It was the best fighting I've ever done, but even my all wasn't enough. A curse on all cowards! (*points to GADSHILL, PETO and BARDOLPH*) Ask these men. If they don't tell you the whole truth, they're liars and devils.

PRINCE HENRY

Tell us, men. What happened?

GADSHILL

The four of us jumped about a dozen—

FALSTAFF

Sixteen at least, my lord.

GADSHILL

And tied them up.

PETO

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

FALSTAFF

Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

GADSHILL

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

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

165 What, fought you with them all?

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.

PRINCE HENRY

170 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.

You jerk, we did tie them up, every single one of them, or I'm a Jew, a true Hebrew Jew.

GADSHILL

Then, when we were dividing the money, about six or seven other men jumped us—

FALSTAFF

And untied the rest, and then all the others showed up.

PRINCE HENRY

What, you fought with all of them?

FALSTAFF

All? I don't know what you mean by "all." But if I didn't fight with fifty of them, I'm a bunch of radishes. If fifty-two or fifty-three of them didn't attack me, then I'm no man.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

Too late for praying now. I made things hot for two of them; two I'm sure I got, two thugs wearing clothes made of buckram cloth. I'll tell you what, Hal: if I'm lying to you, spit in my face and call me a horse. You know my old fighting stance. Here's

PRINCE HENRY

What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.

FALSTAFF

Four, Hal, I told thee four.

POINS

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

In buckram?

POINS

Ay, four in buckram suits.

FALSTAFF

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

how I stood, and here's how I handled my sword. Four thugs in buckram came right at me—

PRINCE HENRY

What? Four? You said two a second ago.

FALSTAFF

Four, Hal. I said four.

POINS

That's right. He said four.

FALSTAFF

These four threw everything they had right at me. I made no big fuss of it; I just put up my shield and all seven of their swords hit it.

PRINCE HENRY

Seven? But just now there were only four.

FALSTAFF

Wearing buckram?

POINS

Yes. Four in clothes made of buckram.

FALSTAFF

Seven, I swear on my sword. If not, I'm a liar.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

Dost thou hear me, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

FALSTAFF

190 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

Their points being broken—

POINS

Down fell their hose.

FALSTAFF

195 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

O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two!

PRINCE HENRY

(to POINS , so no one else can hear) Leave him alone. There'll be more in a minute.

FALSTAFF

Are you listening to me, Hal?

PRINCE HENRY

I'm listening, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Good, because it's worth paying attention to. Anyway, these nine guys in buckram that I told you about—

PRINCE HENRY

So, two more already.

FALSTAFF

Since their points were broken—

POINS

Their *stockings* fell down.

FALSTAFF

They started to run away, but I followed them closely. And as quick as a thought, I finished off seven of the eleven.

PRINCE HENRY

Unbelievable! Eleven buckram men have 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

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

205 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

210 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.

FALSTAFF

But as the devil would have it, three wretched bastards wearing green came from behind and ran right at me. It was so dark, Hal, that you couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

PRINCE HENRY

These lies are like the man who tells them: huge as a mountain, obvious, and plain as day. You clay-brained fatso, you knuckleheaded fool, you son of a whore, you obscene tub of lard—

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

Well, how could you know that these men were wearing green when it was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face? Go ahead, tell us. What do you have to say to that?

POINS

Come on, tell us, Jack, go on.

FALSTAFF

What, just because you command me? Dammit, if I were being tortured on all the contraptions in the world, I wouldn't speak just because you commanded. Speak just because you command! If my reasons were as cheap as blackberries, I

PRINCE HENRY

215 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

Mark, Jack.

PRINCE HENRY

225 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

wouldn't give away my reasons just because I was commanded. Not I.

PRINCE HENRY

I'm not going to put up with this any longer. This red-faced coward, this flattener of mattresses, this breaker of horses' backs, this huge hill of flesh—

FALSTAFF

Dammit! You scarecrow, you skin of an elf, you dried-out ox's tongue, you bull's penis, you salted cod! Oh, I wish I had enough breath to tell you all the things you are! You yardstick, you empty sheath, you case for a violinist's bow, you disgusting erect sword—

PRINCE HENRY

Catch your breath for a moment, then start again. And when you've tired yourself with these awful comparisons, listen to me say just one thing.

POINS

Listen closely, Jack.

PRINCE HENRY

The two of us saw you four jump four men, tie them up and take their money. Now listen to how the simple truth will shame you. Then the two of us jumped the four of you. And with just a word, we stole your prize from you. Now we have it,

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 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. 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 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 be merry? hall we have a play extempore?

PRINCE HENRY

and we can show it to you right here in the bar. And Falstaff, you ran away as quickly and as lightfootedly, as a cow from the slaughter, screaming for mercy, as you ran and screamed. What a lowlife you are, to hack up your sword and say it happened in a fight! What outrageous story, what trick, what hiding place can you possibly find to hide you from your open and obvious shame?

POINS

Come on, let's hear it, Jack. What trick have you got now?

FALSTAFF

By God, I knew it was you the whole time, like I was your own father! Listen to me, men: would it be right for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I have attacked the true Prince? Look, you know I'm as brave as [Hercules](#), but you must listen to your instinct. It's like that old superstition, about how a lion will never attack a true Prince. Instinct is a powerful thing; I was only a coward by instinct. From now on, I'll have to think of myself as a brave lion, and you as a true Prince. But good God, men, I'm glad you have the money. Hostess! Lock the doors; we'll celebrate tonight and pray tomorrow. Gentlemen, lads, boys, hearts of gold—I'll call you every good name I can think of, all at once! Hey! Shall we have some fun? Shall we stage a little play?

PRINCE HENRY

Content, and the argument shall be thy running away.

FALSTAFF

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

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

O Jesu, my lord the Prince!

PRINCE HENRY

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

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

FALSTAFF

What manner of man is he?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

An old man.

Of course, and the play will be about you running away.

FALSTAFF

Oh, let it go, Hal, if you love me.

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh, Jesus—Your Majesty!

PRINCE HENRY

Hello there, my lady the hostess! Do you have something to
say to me?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Indeed, my lord. There's a nobleman from the royal court at the
door, and he wants to speak with you. He says your father sent
him.

PRINCE HENRY

Give him some coins and send him right back to my mother.

FALSTAFF

What kind 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

Prithee do, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Faith, and I'll send him packing.

Exit FALSTAFF

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!

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 it was done in fight, and persuaded us to do the like.

FALSTAFF

What is an old man doing out of bed at midnight? Do you want me to talk to him?

PRINCE HENRY

Please do, Jack.

FALSTAFF

Truly, I'll send him on his way.

FALSTAFF exits.

PRINCE HENRY

Now, men: by God, you fought well. So did you, Peto, and you, Bardolph. You must be lions, too, since your instinct told you to run away. You wouldn't touch the true Prince; no, indeed!

BARDOLPH

Honestly, I ran when I saw the others run.

PRINCE HENRY

Okay, now tell me the truth. How did Falstaff's sword get broken like that?

PETO

He hacked away at it with his dagger. He said he would swear up and down to make you believe that it happened in a fight, and he made us do the same.

BARDOLPH

Yea, and to tickle our noses with speargrass to make them bleed, and then to beslubber our garments with it, and swear it was the blood of true men. I did that I did 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

280 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

285 Choler, my lord, if rightly taken.

BARDOLPH

Yes, and he made us rub our noses with rough weeds until they started to bleed, then smear our clothes with the blood and swear that it was from the men we fought. When he told me the crazy things he wanted us to do, I did something I haven't done in seven years: I blushed.

PRINCE HENRY

Liar! You stole a cup of wine eighteen years ago, got caught in the act, and you've been blushing ever since. You had your fiery-red face and your weapons going for you, but still you ran away. What instinct made you do that?

BARDOLPH

Sir, do you see these red welts on my face? Do you see these swellings?

PRINCE HENRY

I do.

BARDOLPH

What do you think they mean?

PRINCE HENRY

That your temper is hot and your wallet is empty.

BARDOLPH

It means anger, sir, you interpret it correctly.

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?

FALSTAFF

290 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

300 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

It means you'll be hanged if the authorities catch you.

FALSTAFF enters.

Here comes skinny Jack; here comes the bag of bones. What's going on, now, my sweet windbag? How long has it been, Jack, since you saw your own knees?

FALSTAFF

My own knees? When I was your age, Hal, my waist was as skinny as an eagle's talon; I could have crawled through a councilman's thumb ring. But damn all that sighing and sadness! It blows a man up like a balloon. There's bad news out there. That was Sir John Bracy, sent by your father. You have to go to court in the morning. Percy, that mad man from up north, and that Welshman who gave [Amamon](#) a beating, and stole Lucifer's wife, and made a pact to be the devil's master—what's his name again?

POINS

Oh, Glendower.

FALSTAFF

Owen, Owen, that's the one. And his son-in-law Mortimer, and old Northumberland, and Douglas, that lively Scot of Scots, who can ride a horse straight up a wall—

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

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

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

The man who can ride at high speeds, then kill a flying sparrow with his pistol.

FALSTAFF

You've hit it; that's him exactly.

PRINCE HENRY

I may have hit it, but Owen never hit the sparrow.

FALSTAFF

Well, that rascal has bravery in him; he won't run away.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, you rascal! You just praised him for running!

FALSTAFF

He'll run on his horse, you cuckoo. But when fighting on foot, he'll never budge.

PRINCE HENRY

Yes he will, Jack. By instinct.

FALSTAFF

You're right, by instinct. Well, he's there, and a man named Mordake, and a thousand Scottish soldiers besides. Worcester snuck out of London tonight, and your father's hair turned white when he heard. The price of land has dropped as low as a bucket of stinking fish.

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

By the Mass, thou sayest true. It is like we shall have good trading that way. But tell me, Hal, art not thou horrible afeard? 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?

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.

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

If that's the case, then when the weather gets hot and the [civil war](#) has really broken out, we can buy women's virtues the way other people buy nails: by the hundreds.

FALSTAFF

By God, lad, you tell the truth. We'll probably have good luck in that area. But Hal, aren't you scared? You're the heir apparent. Can you imagine three worse enemies than that demon Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil Glendower? Aren't you horribly scared? Isn't your blood running cold at the thought?

PRINCE HENRY

Not in the least, truly: I don't have your instinct.

FALSTAFF

Well, you'll be rebuked horribly when you see your father tomorrow. If you love me, practice a response.

PRINCE HENRY

You pretend to be my father; ask me about the details of my life.

FALSTAFF

Really? Excellent! This chair will be my throne, this dagger my scepter, and this cushion will be my crown.

PRINCE HENRY

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 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

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

FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

345 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.

PRINCE HENRY

Your throne is a wooden stool, your gold scepter is a dagger of lead, and your precious, expensive crown is a lousy bald head.

FALSTAFF

If you still have a shred of divine grace in you, you'll be moved by this. Give me some wine to make my eyes bloodshot, so that it looks like I've been crying. I must speak with passion, and I'll do it like [King Cambyses](#).

PRINCE HENRY

Well then, I'll bow to you.

FALSTAFF

And I'll speak to you. Step aside, gentlemen.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh, Jesus! This is an excellent game, truly!

FALSTAFF

Don't cry, sweet queen; your trickling tears do no good.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Oh Lord, look how well he's keeping it up!

FALSTAFF

For God's sake, gentlemen; take my queen away from here.
The floodgates of her eyes are being overwhelmed by her

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

FALSTAFF

350 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, 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.

tears.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My God! He's just as good as those silly old professional actors!

FALSTAFF

Quiet, little ale pot. Quiet, little booze-brain. (*to PRINCE HENRY*) Harry, I am not only amazed at where you are spending your time, but whom you're spending it with. They say that stepping on a chamomile plant will make it grow faster. But when it comes to youth, the more it is wasted, the faster it wears away. I know you are my son. Your mother says so, I believe so, and the wicked glint in your eye and foolish expression on your face prove it. If it's true that you are my son, then here is my point: why, since you are my son, do so many people point at you? Should the blessed sun in heaven waste its time eating blackberries? That is not a question worth asking. Should the son of the king of England become a thief and steal wallets? That is worth asking. Harry, you've heard of a substance known as pitch. [Pitch](#), as the wise men tell us, makes one filthy, and so does the company you keep. Harry, I speak to you not drunk but weeping, not in happiness but in anger, not just in words but also in sadness. And yet, there is a very good and pious man whom I've often seen you with, but I do not know his name.

PRINCE HENRY

370 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 poulters hare.

PRINCE HENRY

Well, here I am set.

FALSTAFF**PRINCE HENRY**

What kind of man, your highness?

FALSTAFF

A stout man, truly; and overweight. He has a cheerful expression, a handsome look, and a noble bearing. I think he is about fifty years old, or perhaps closer to sixty. Now I remember! His name is Falstaff. If that man has a bad character, then I have been fooled. Harry, I see goodness in him. If one can tell a tree by its fruit, and a fruit by its tree, then let me come right out and say this: there is goodness in that Falstaff. Stay with him, but get rid of everyone else. Now tell me, you naughty boy, tell me; where have you been for the past month?

PRINCE HENRY

You think you sound like a king? You play me, and I'll play my father.

FALSTAFF

You're overthrowing me? If you play him even half as well as I did, half as majestically, then hang me up like a rabbit for sale in a butcher shop.

PRINCE HENRY

I'm all 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

390 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 dropsies, 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

As am I. (*to the others*) Judge us, everyone.

PRINCE HENRY

Now, Harry, where are you coming from?

FALSTAFF

From Eastcheap, my noble lord.

PRINCE HENRY

The complaints I have heard about you are very serious.

FALSTAFF

For God's sake, my lord, they are lies. (*to the others*) I'll make you laugh by playing a young prince, I truly will.

PRINCE HENRY

Are you swearing, you ungracious boy? From now on, do not even look at me. You have been violently turned away from goodness; there is a devil that haunts you, in the shape of an old, fat man. A ton of man is your companion. Why do you associate with that trunk of bodily fluids, that sifting bin of beastliness, that swollen sack of disease, that huge jug of wine, that stuffed suitcase of guts, that roasted ox crammed with pudding, that ancient *Vice*, that gray-haired immorality, that father criminal, that aged vanity? What is he good for, besides tasting wine and drinking it? What does he do skillfully, besides carving chickens and eating them? What's he smart about besides schemes? What does he scheme about

in villany? Wherin villainous but in all things? Wherin worthy but in nothing?

FALSTAFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

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

FALSTAFF

410 My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE HENRY

I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF

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. 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

besides crime? What is he criminal about besides everything? What is he good for besides nothing?

FALSTAFF

I wish your highness would help me follow your meaning. Who do you mean, your grace?

PRINCE HENRY

That criminal, loathsome corrupter of youth: Falstaff, that old, white-bearded devil.

FALSTAFF

My lord, I know the man.

PRINCE HENRY

I know you do.

FALSTAFF

But to make me claim that he's any more harmful than I am—well, I can't claim that. Yes he's old, and it's a shame: his white hair proves it. But that he's a—forgive me—pimp? That I absolutely deny. If drinking wine and sugar is a fault, then God forgive us all. If being old and merry is a sin, then I know a lot of old men who are going to hell. If being fat means you should be hated, than we should all love [Pharaoh's lean cows](#). No, your highness. Get rid of Peto, get rid of Bardolph, get rid of Poins. But as for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, honest Jack Falstaff, brave Jack Falstaff, and therefore even more

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.

PRINCE HENRY

425 I do, I will.

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

BARDOLPH

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

430 O Jesu, my lord, my lord—

PRINCE HENRY

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

brave, given that he is old Jack Falstaff—do not get rid of him. Do not get rid of him. If you get rid of him, you'll be getting rid of the whole world.

PRINCE HENRY

I do. I will.

There are knocks from offstage. MISTRESS QUICKLY, FRANCIS, and BARDOLPH exit. BARDOLPH comes back, running.

BARDOLPH

Oh sir, sir! The Sheriff and a frightening group of officers are at the door.

FALSTAFF

Wait, you ass! We'll finish the play: I have much to say on behalf of that Falstaff.

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Jesus! Sir, sir!

PRINCE HENRY

Well, look here! All this mess over nothing! 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

435 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 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

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.

The Sheriff and the officers are at the door. They've come to search the place. Should I let them in?

FALSTAFF

Do you hear that, [Hal?](#) Be careful about calling a piece of real gold a counterfeit; you are genuine, even though it may not seem so.

PRINCE HENRY

And you are a genuine coward, with no instinct.

FALSTAFF

I deny that. And if you'll deny the Sheriff, then please do; otherwise, let him in. If I don't look as good on the [hangman's cart](#) as any other man, then a curse on my upbringing. I'm as willing to be hanged as any man.

PRINCE HENRY

Go, hide behind the arras. The rest of you, go upstairs. Now, my men. Here's wishing for an honest face and a clear conscience.

FALSTAFF

I've had both of those, but their shelf-life has expired. I'd better hide. (*he hides behind the arras*)

Everyone except for PRINCE HENRY and PETO exits.

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
Hath followed certain men unto this house.

PRINCE HENRY

450 What men?

SHERIFF

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

CARRIER

As fat as butter.

PRINCE HENRY

The man, I do assure you is not here,
455 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
For any thing he shall be charged withal.
460 And so let me entreat you leave the house.

SHERIFF

The SHERIFF and a CARRIER enter.

Now, Sheriff, what is it you want from me?

SHERIFF

First, please forgive me, my lord. A group of citizens followed
some criminals into this bar.

PRINCE HENRY

What men?

SHERIFF

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

CARRIER

As fat as butter.

PRINCE HENRY

I promise you, that man isn't here, since he's currently running
an errand for me. Sheriff, I give you my word that by lunchtime
tomorrow I'll send him to you, or anyone else you need to see.
He'll answer to anything he may be accused of. So please, I'd
like you to leave this tavern.

SHERIFF

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

PRINCE HENRY

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

SHERIFF

465 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

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 snorting like a horse.

PRINCE HENRY

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

I will, my lord. There are also two gentlemen who, in this
robbery, lost three hundred [marks](#).

PRINCE HENRY

It's possible. If he did it, he'll answer for it. And with that,
farewell.

SHERIFF

Good night, my noble lord.

PRINCE HENRY

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

SHERIFF

Yes, sir. I think it's two o'clock.

The SHERIFF and CARRIER exit.

PRINCE HENRY

This oily rascal is as famous as St. Paul's Cathedral. Go, call him
out here.

PETO

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

PRINCE HENRY

Listen, how heavily he breathes! Look in his pockets.

PETO searcheth his pockets, and findeth certain papers

What hast thou found?

PETO

Nothing but papers, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Let's see what they be. Read them.

PETO

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

Item, sauce, ... 4d.

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

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

Item, bread, ob.

PRINCE HENRY

480 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.

PETO searches **FALSTAFF**'s pockets and finds some papers.

What did you find?

PETO

Nothing but some papers, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Let's see what they are. Read them.

PETO

(*reads*) First, a chicken — two shillings and two pence. Second, sauce — four pence. Third, wine, two gallons — five shillings and eight pence. Fourth, anchovies and dessert wine — two shillings and six pence. Fifth, bread — a halfpenny.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh horrible! A halfpenny's worth of bread against this enormous amount of wine? Hang onto everything else you found; we'll read it when we have time. Let him sleep there till tomorrow. I'll go to court in the morning. We're all off to the wars, and you will have honorable positions. I'll put this fat rogue in charge of an infantry company, and a quarter mile's march will be the end of him. The money we stole will be repaid with interest. Meet me early in the morning; and with that, good morning, Peto.

PETO

Good morrow, good my lord.

Exeunt

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.

PETO

Good morning, my good lord.

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 1

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

MORTIMER

These commitments are reliable, our allies are solid, and the beginning of our project bodes well.

HOTSPUR

Lord Mortimer, and kinsman Glendower, won't you please sit?
And Uncle Worcester—Dammit! I forgot the map!

GLENDOWER

Here it is. Sit, kinsman Percy. Sit, good cousin Hotspur. For that is the name King Henry calls you, and whenever he says it, he grows pale, and with a sigh he wishes you were in heaven.

HOTSPUR

And you in hell, whenever he hears someone say "Owen Glendower."

GLENDOWER

I cannot blame him. At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets, and at my birth
15 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

20 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.
25 Diseas—d nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinched and vexed

GLENDOWER

I don't blame him. The sky was full of fiery meteors and comets when I was conceived, and when I was born, the entire earth shook like a coward.

HOTSPUR

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

GLENDOWER

I say there was an earthquake when I was born.

HOTSPUR

And I say that if you think the earth shook because it was afraid of you, then the earth and I do not agree.

GLENDOWER

The heavens were all on fire, and the earth trembled.

HOTSPUR

Oh! Then the earth trembled when it saw the heavens on fire, and not in fear of your birth. When nature is diseased, strange eruptions can break forth. Often, the earth is pinched with a kind of colic, and troubled by gas in her belly. When that gas struggles to be released, it shakes old Mother Earth, bringing

By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb, which, for enlargement striving,
30 Shakes the old beldam earth and topples down
Steeple 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
35 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,
40 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?
45 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.

down steeples and moss-covered towers. When you were born, our Mother Earth was ill and shook with pain.

GLENDOWER

Kinsman, I don't take this kind of contrary behavior from many people. With your permission, I'll say one more time that when I was born, the heavens were full of shooting stars. The goats ran down from the mountains, and herds of animals stampeded strangely through the fields. These signs marked me as an extraordinary person. All the events of my life prove that I should not be counted with ordinary men. Is there a man who lives anywhere within England, Scotland, or Wales who can say I learned from him, or that he taught me? And bring forward one human who can follow me in the complicated ways of magic, or keep up with me in my obscure experiments.

HOTSPUR

Well, nobody speaks better Welsh. I'm going to lunch.

MORTIMER

50 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.

HOTSPUR

55 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

60 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

MORTIMER

Stop now, kinsman Percy. You will upset him.

GLENDOWER

I can summon spirits from the deep ocean.

HOTSPUR

Why, so can I, and so can any other man! But will they come
when you summon them?

GLENDOWER

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

HOTSPUR

And I can teach you, kinsman, how to shame the devil—by
telling the truth! "Tell the truth and shame the devil," as the old
saying goes. If you do have the power to call him up, then
bring him here. And I'll swear I have the power to shame him
into leaving. Oh, for goodness sake, tell the truth and shame
the devil!

MORTIMER

Enough already; stop this useless talking.

GLENDOWER

Three times now, Henry Bolingbroke has raised an army
against mine. And three times, I turned him back from the

Bootless home and weather-beaten back.

HOTSPUR

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

GLENDOWER

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

MORTIMER

The Archdeacon hath divided it
70 Into three limits very equally:
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
By south and east is to my part assigned;

All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound
75 To Owen Glendower; and, dear coz, to you
The remnant northward, lying off from Trent.
And our indentures tripartite are drawn,
Which being sealèd interchangeably—
A business that this night may execute—
80 Tomorrow, cousin Percy, you and I
And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth
To meet your father and the Scottish power,

banks of the River Wye, and the sandy-bottomed River Severn.
I sent him home, [bootless](#) and beaten by foul weather.

HOTSPUR

You sent him home without his boots, and in foul weather?
How in the devil's name did he avoid catching fevers?

GLENDOWER

All right, here's the map. Shall we divide up our territories
according to our three-way agreement?

MORTIMER

The [Archdeacon](#) has divided the land into three very equal
parts. All of England southeast of the Trent and Severn rivers
goes to me.

All of Wales, and everything west of the Severn—including all
the fertile land within those boundaries—goes to Owen
Glendower. And, my dear kinsman, you get everything that
remains to the north, coming up from the Trent. Our agreement
is drawn up in triplicate. We can all sign it tonight, and then,
kinsman Percy, tomorrow you, me, and Worcester will set off to
meet your father and the Scottish army at Shrewsbury, as
planned. My father-in-law Glendower isn't ready yet, but we
won't need his army for another two weeks. (*to GLENDOWER*)

As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.
My father Glendower is not ready yet,
85 Not shall we need his help these fourteen days.

(to GLENDOWER) Within that space you may have drawn
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,
90 From whom you now must steal and take no leave,
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.
95 See how this river comes me cranking in
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
100 In a new channel, fair and evenly.
It shall not wind with such a deep indent,
To rob me of so rich a bottom here.

GLENDOWER

By that time, you will have raised an army of the farmers on
your land, your allies, and your neighbors.

GLENDOWER

I'll be ready sooner than that, my lords; and I'll bring your wives
along with me. You should sneak away from them now, and
leave without saying goodbye. Otherwise, they'll cry an ocean
of tears when you leave them.

HOTSPUR

I think my share, north of Burton here, isn't as big as any of
yours. Look how this river swoops in. It cuts out a huge chunk
of my best land, in the shape of a half-moon. I'll have a dam
built. I'll re-route the Trent River so it won't go winding so far
into my land and rob me of a fertile valley.

GLENDOWER

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

MORTIMER

Yea, but Mark how he bears his course, and runs me up
105 With like advantage on the other side,
Gelding the opposèd continent as much
As on the other side it takes from you.

WORCESTER

Yea, but a little charge will trench him here
And on this north side win this cape of land,
110 And then he runs straight and even.

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

It won't go winding? It will. It must. You see that it does.

MORTIMER

Yes, but look how the Trent runs its course and winds a similar distance into my share. It cuts out the same amount of land from my side as it does from yours.

WORCESTER

Yes, but a small sum of money will pay to dig a trench, which will reclaim this bit of land on the north side. Then it will run straight along.

HOTSPUR

I'll do that. It will only take a little money.

GLENDOWER

I won't have it changed.

HOTSPUR

You won't?

GLENDOWER

No, and neither will you.

HOTSPUR

Who's going to stop me?

GLENDOWER

Why, that will I.

HOTSPUR

115 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

120 And gave the tongue a helpful ornament—
A virtue that was never seen in you.

HOTSPUR

Marry,
And I am glad of it with all my heart:
I had rather be a kitten and cry "mew"
125 Than one of these same meter balladmongers.

I had rather hear a brazen can'stick turned,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree,
And that would set my teeth nothing an edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry.

130 'Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag.

GLENDOWER

Come, you shall have Trent turned.

Why, I will.

HOTSPUR

Well, say it in Welsh then, so I can't understand you.

GLENDOWER

My lord, I can speak English just as well as you. I was brought up in the English court. There, in my youth, I composed many English songs for the harp, lending the language lovely ornaments of music. That is an accomplishment you have never achieved.

HOTSPUR

Indeed, and my whole heart is glad for that. I'd rather be a kitten and say "meow" than be a courtly balladeer.

I'd rather hear a piece of brass turned on a lathe, or a ungreased wheel grind on its axle. Nothing sets my teeth on edge so as much as finicky poetry; it's like the lurching steps of a lame horse.

GLENDOWER

Fine. Change the Trent's course.

HOTSPUR

I do not care. I'll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend;
But in the way of bargain, mark you me,
135 I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.
Are the indentures drawn? Shall we be gone?

GLENDOWER

The moon shines fair. You may away by night.
I'll haste the writer, and withal
Break with your wives of your departure hence.
140 I am afraid my daughter will run mad,
So much she doteth on her Mortimer.

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,
145 Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-winged griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
150 As puts me from my faith. I tell you what—

HOTSPUR

I don't care. I'd gladly give away three times as much land to
any friend who deserved it. But when it comes to negotiating a
deal, mark my words: I'll haggle over the smallest fraction of a
hair. Are the agreements drawn up? Are we ready to leave?

GLENDOWER

The moon is bright; you can leave during the night. I'll tell the
man writing up our documents to hurry, and I'll tell your wives
you're leaving. I'm afraid my daughter will go mad because she
loves Mortimer so much.

GLENDOWER exits.

MORTIMER

Damn, kinsman Percy! How angry you make my father-in-law!

HOTSPUR

I can't help it. He makes me angry with all his talk. Moles and
ants, Merlin and his prophecies, dragons, a fish with no fins, a
griffin without wings, a raven without feathers, a crouching lion
and a cat rearing up to pounce. He talks so much mumbo-
jumbo that I don't know what to believe anymore. I'll tell you
this: he kept me awake last night for at least nine hours, listing
the names of all the devils that serve him. I said, "Hmm," and,
"How interesting," but he didn't hear a word. Oh, he's as tedious

He held me last night at least nine hours
In reckoning up the several devils' names
That were his lackeys. I cried "Hum," and "Well, go to,"
But marked him not a word. O, he is as tedious

155 As a tired horse, a railing wife,
Worse than a smoky house: I had rather live
With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far,
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me
In any summerhouse in Christendom.

MORTIMER

160 In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read and profited
In strange concealments, valiant as a lion,
And as wondrous affable, and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?
165 He holds your temper in a high respect
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
170 Without the taste of danger and reproof.
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

WORCESTER

(to HOTSPUR) In faith, my lord, you are too willful-blame,

as a tired horse or a nagging wife; he's worse than a smoke-filled house.

I'd rather live in a windmill and eat nothing but cheese and garlic than in a luxurious home eating delicacies, if it meant I had to listen to him talk.

MORTIMER

Truly, he's a worthy man. He's exceedingly well-read, and proficient in the occult; he's as brave as a lion, incredibly charming, and as generous as the jewel mines of India. And do you know what, cousin? He holds you in great respect. He restrains his temper when you do something to put him in a bad mood. I promise you, there isn't a man alive who could have challenged him as you have, and gotten away without being hurt or punished. But don't try it too often, I beg you.

WORCESTER

And, since your coming hither, have done enough
To put him quite beside his patience.

175 You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault.

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,
180 Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain,
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

185 Well, I am schooled. Good manners be your speed!
Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

Enter GLENDOWER with the LADIES PERCY AND MORTIMER

MORTIMER

This is the deadly spite that angers me:
My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

GLENDOWER

My daughter weeps; she'll not part with you.
190 She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

MORTIMER

(to HOTSPUR) Truly, my lord, you are to blame in your stubbornness. Since you arrived, you have done enough to test his patience. You must learn, sir, to correct this fault. Sometimes it demonstrates greatness, courage, strength—and that honors you. But often it reveals fury, bad manners, lack of self-control, pride, arrogance, conceitedness, and contempt. In a gentlemen, the least of these qualities will make you lose people's affections. It stains your beautiful qualities, making it impossible for them to be noticed.

HOTSPUR

Well, I have had my lesson. May good manners bring you success! Here come our wives; let's say our goodbyes.

GLENDOWER enters with the LADIES PERCY AND MORTIMER

MORTIMER

This is the bad luck that angers me: my wife speaks no English, and I speak no Welsh.

GLENDOWER

My daughter is weeping: she doesn't want to be parted from you. She wants to be a soldier and join you in the war.

MORTIMER

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

195 I understand thy looks. That pretty Welsh
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,
200 And that's a feeling disputation;
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,
205 With ravishing division, to her lute.

Father-in-law, tell her that she and Lady Percy will come with you after us.

GLENDOWER and **THE LADY** speak in Welsh.

GLENDOWER

She's desperate now; a cranky, selfish hussy. Nobody can change her mind.

THE LADY speaks more Welsh.

MORTIMER

I understand you by the look on your face. Those pretty Welsh tears streaming from your heavenly eyes I understand perfectly; I'd answer in the same language, if it weren't shameful for a man to cry.

THE LADY speaks more Welsh.

I understand your kisses and you mine; that's a conversation of emotion. I'll study continuously, my love, until I learn your language. Your voice makes Welsh sound as sweet as the most eloquently written songs, sung by a fair queen in a garden of summer flowers, with a gorgeous accompaniment on her a lute.

GLENDOWER

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,

210 And she will sing the song that pleaseth you
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

215 The hour before the heavenly harnessed team
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
220 Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,
And straight they shall be here. Sit, and attend.

GLENDOWER

No, if you start to cry, you'll drive her mad.

THE LADY speaks more Welsh.

MORTIMER

Oh, I have no idea what she's saying!

GLENDOWER

She wants you to lie down on the rush-covered floor and rest
your head in her lap. She'll sing whatever song you like, and
she'll lull you to sleep. She'll bewitch you into a pleasant
heaviness, halfway between waking and sleeping; like the hour
just before the sun begins its golden rise in the east.

MORTIMER

I'll gladly sit and hear her sing. By the time she's done, I think
our documents will be prepared.

GLENDOWER

Do so. The musicians who are going to play are now floating in
the air a thousand leagues from here. They'll be here shortly;
so sit, and listen.

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.

The music plays

HOTSPUR

225 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 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**HOTSPUR**

Kate! You're good at lying down. Come quickly, so that I can
put my [head in your lap](#).

LADY PERCY

Stop it, you silly goose.

Music plays.

HOTSPUR

Now I see that the devil understands Welsh; it's no surprise
he's so moody. By God, he's a good musician.

LADY PERCY

Then you should be incredibly musical, for you're the moodiest
man alive. Lie still, you thief. Listen to the lady sing in Welsh.

HOTSPUR

I'd rather hear Lady, my dog, howl in Irish.

LADY PERCY

Do you want your head broken in?

HOTSPUR

No.

LADY PERCY

Then be still.

HOTSPUR

235 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

240 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"—

Then be still.

HOTSPUR

Never; that's a womanly trait.

LADY PERCY

Now God help you—

HOTSPUR

Into the Welsh lady's bed!

LADY PERCY

What did you say?

HOTSPUR

Quiet! She's singing.

THE LADY sings a Welsh song.

HOTSPUR

Come on, Kate. I want to hear your song, too.

LADY PERCY

Not mine, darn it.

HOTSPUR

Not yours? Darn it? Honestly! You swear like a candymaker's wife. "Not you, darn it." And "I swear on my life," and "God forgive me," and "as plain as day." Your curse words are smooth

245 And givest such sarcenet surety 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,"
And such protest of pepper-gingerbread,
250 To velvet-guards and Sunday citizens.
Come, sing.

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.

Exit HOTSPUR

GLENDOWER

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,
And then to horse immediately.

MORTIMER

With all my heart.

as silk. You'd think you'd never gone further than Finsbury in your life. Swear like the real lady you are, Kate. Let loose a good mouthful of curses; leave "darn" and such watered-down cursewords to those citizens, trimmed in velvet and wearing their Sunday best. Come on, sing.

LADY PERCY

I will not sing.

HOTSPUR

It's the quickest way to become a tailor; tailors love to sing. Or you could teach songs to birds. If our agreements are drawn up, I'll be gone within two hours; come find me whenever you want.

HOTSPUR exits.

GLENDOWER

Come now, Mortimer. You're as reluctant to leave as Percy is on fire to go. Our agreements are drawn up by now. We'll sign and then go straight to our horses.

MORTIMER

I go with all my heart.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 2

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

The KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, and others enter.

KING

Gentlemen, please leave; the Prince of Wales and I must speak
in private. But stay close by, for I'll need you in a moment.

The lords exit.

I don't know whether God decided, because of some
displeasing crime I have committed, to turn my own flesh and
blood into a punisher and a plague upon me. The course of
your life has me convinced that you are only meant for one
purpose in this world: to be God's vengeance against me for all
my misdeeds. Why else would such disorderly and low
desires, such poor, such wretched, such lewd, such despicable
actions, such wasteful pleasures, and such vulgar company
become associated with your high-born self, and call
themselves equals with a Prince like you?

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
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,

Your majesty, I wish I could be proven innocent of all those accusations, for I can certainly clear myself of many of them. But let me beg one favor of you: if I can demonstrate that I'm not guilty of the false charges of these smiling flatterers and wretched gossips (the kinds of stories that are always told about great men), then you will forgive me when I confess to the youthful indiscretions I actually did commit.

KING

Let God forgive you! But I'm amazed, Harry, at your inclinations, which run completely contrary to those of your ancestors. Your vulgar behavior has cost you your place on my council, a position now held by your younger brother. You have almost completely alienated yourself from the good graces of the courtiers and the other members of the royal family. The hopes of your youth are now ruined; every man, in his heart, thinks he can see your downfall. If I had been so publicly visible, so overly familiar to people, so freely accessible, so cheap and available to the common hordes, then public opinion (which helped me get the crown) would have stayed loyal to King Richard. I would have stayed a banished man, with no reputation and no promise of success. But because I was so

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 crownèd 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

rarely seen in public, people were amazed by me when I did appear; they acted as if I were a comet. Men would tell their children, "That's him!" Others would ask, "Where? Which one's Bolingbroke?" I was more gracious than heaven; I acted so modestly that I won the allegiance of their hearts, and the shouts and salutes of their mouths. They even did so when the King himself was present.

This is how I kept myself fresh and new. I was like a priest's ceremonial vestments: rarely seen, but admired. I appeared seldomly, but marvelously, like a feast made all the more impressive by its rarity. Now, ridiculous King Richard pranced about with vapid clowns and superficial wits, quickly lit and just as quickly burnt out. He degraded himself, mingling his royal self with those skipping fools.

His reputation was ruined by their scornful attitudes. He lost face by laughing with those joking boys, and tolerating the rudeness of every smooth-faced, disdainful prankster. He

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 glutted, 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 aweary 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.

spent his time in common, public places, surrendering himself to the pursuit of popularity. Soon, they saw him every day and it was like overdosing on honey; they began to hate the taste of that sweetness. A little too much is as bad as far too much. Seeing him became as common a sight as a cuckoo in June—heard but not paid attention to; seen, but by eyes so used to seeing that they took it for granted. They didn't look with a special gaze, as they do at the sun when it shines only rarely. Instead, they grew bored, they looked away.

They slept in front of him and watched him dully, the way a sullen man looks at his enemy. They were stuffed, gorged, and full with his presence. And that is just where you stand, Harry. You have lost your princely status by associating with vile criminals: there's not an eye in the kingdom that isn't weary of looking at you. No eyes except mine, that is, which had wished to see more of you; and now they're acting against me, blinding themselves with foolish tears.

PRINCE HENRY

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself.

KING

For all the world
As thou art to this hour was Richard then
95 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
Than thou, the shadow of succession.
100 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,
Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
105 To bloody battles and to bruising arms.
What never-dying honor hath he got
Against renownèd Douglas, whose high deeds,
Whose hot incursions and great name in arms,
Holds from all soldiers chief majority
110 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

PRINCE HENRY

From now on, my very gracious father, I will behave more like myself.

KING

At this moment, you seem just like Richard did when I returned from France to lead the revolt. And just as I was then, Percy seems now.

I swear on my scepter and my soul, he has more of a right to the throne than you, you shadowy copy of a king. For without a right to the throne—nor anything even resembling a right—he has filled the kingdom's battlefields with armies. He seeks to lead an army against the King, into the jaws of the lion. And even though he is no older than you are, he leads old statesmen and venerable bishops into bloody battles and violent wars. What lasting honor he won, by beating the renowned Douglas! That man's great exploits, violent invasions, and glorious military reputation had won him praise throughout the Christian world as the most outstanding soldier. And yet Hotspur, this [Mars](#) in baby clothes, this infant warrior, has defeated Douglas three times, captured him once, then freed him and made him his ally. Now they have become a huge threat to my throne. And what do you have to say about this? Percy, Northumberland, the Archbishop of York, Douglas,

Discomfited great Douglas, ta'en him once,
115 Enlargèd 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,
The Archbishop's Grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,
120 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?
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
125 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

Do not think so. You shall not find it so.
130 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,
And, in the closing of some glorious day,
Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
135 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.

and Mortimer have banded together, and now they are after me. But why am I telling you this?
Why should I tell you about my foes, Harry, when you are my most beloved and most dangerous enemy? With your sycophantic fear, your vulgar inclinations, and your short temper, I wouldn't be surprised if you left me to fight under Percy, following his heels like a dog and bowing to him when he frowns. Just to prove what a degenerate you are.

PRINCE HENRY

Don't think that; that will not happen. God forgive whoever turned you against me like this! I'll redeem myself by beating Percy. And at the end of some

glorious victory, I'll come to you and proudly say that I am your son. I will wear a garment made of blood, and my face will be stained by a bloody mask which, when washed away, will clean me of my shame. This will be the day, whenever it happens, that this famous and honored child—this brave

And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
That this same child of honor and renown,
140 This gallant Hotspur, this all-praisèd knight,
And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
For every honor sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my head
My shames redoubled! For the time will come
145 That I shall make this northern youth exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf.
And I will call him to so strict account
150 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,
The which if He be pleased I shall perform,
155 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
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

KING

160 A hundred thousand rebels die in this.
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.

Hotspur, this highly praised knight—will meet your disregarded Harry in battle.

I wish that every honor he's earned were multiplied, and that every one of my shames were doubled. For the time will come when I'll make this youth from the north exchange his glorious deeds for my embarrassments. Percy is working for me, my lord. He's collecting glories on my behalf, and I'm going to hold him strictly accountable for them. He'll either have to surrender every last one of those glories to me, no matter how small, or I'll tear them right out of his heart.

This I promise you, in the name of God. And if God allows me to do these things, then I beg you to heal the wound caused by my long years of bad behavior. If not, then my death will cancel all my debts. I would rather die a hundred-thousand deaths than break even the smallest part of this promise.

KING

Through this vow, a hundred-thousand rebels are killed. You will be given a position of command, and absolute trust in this

Enter BLUNT

How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of speed.

BLUNT

So hath the business that I come to speak of.
Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
165 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,
As ever offered foul play in the state.

KING

170 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.
On Thursday we ourselves will march. Our meeting
175 Is Bridgenorth. And, Harry, you shall march
Through Gloucestershire; by which account,
Our business valuèd, some twelve days hence
Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.
Our hands are full of business. Let's away.
180 Advantage feeds him fat while men delay.

undertaking.

BLUNT enters.

What's wrong, Blunt? You look like there's an emergency.

BLUNT

There is, which is what I've come to tell you. Lord Mortimer of Scotland sent word that Douglas and the English rebels met at Shrewsbury, on the eleventh of this month. If everyone involved keeps their word, they will have an army as enormous and terrifying as any that ever caused trouble in this kingdom.

KING

We heard this news five days ago. The Earl of Westmoreland left today, along with my son Lord John of Lancaster. Harry, you'll go next Wednesday. On Thursday, I will go myself. We'll meet at Bridgenorth. Harry, you will march through Gloucestershire. Given the amount of time we'll all need, we should come together with our full forces at Bridgenorth twelve days from now. There's a lot to do, so let's go. Our enemies will take advantage if we're slow.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 3

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, 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

10 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—of an hour; paid money that I borrowed, three or four times; lived well

FALSTAFF and **BARDOLPH** enter.

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, haven't I shrivelled since our last robbery? Haven't I gotten thin? Aren't I shrinking? My skin is hanging off me like a loose gown on an old lady; I'm puckered like a rotten apple. I'd better repent my sins, and fast, while there's still something left of me. I'll be in bad shape soon, and then I won't have the strength to repent. If I haven't forgotten what the inside of a church looks like, I'm a withered berry, a lame old nag. The inside of a church! The wrong crowd, the wrong crowd has ruined me.

BARDOLPH

Sir John, you complain so much, you're sure not to live much longer.

FALSTAFF

You're absolutely right. Come on then, sing me a dirty song. Make me laugh. I lived my life as properly as a gentleman should. Well, properly enough, anyway. I didn't swear much. I didn't gamble—more than seven days a week. I went to a whorehouse no more than once—every fifteen minutes. I paid my debts—three or four times. I lived well and within

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

20 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 lived in purple, for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would 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

reasonable boundaries. And now, I live poorly and out of moderation.

BARDOLPH

You're so fat, Sir John, that you have no choice but to live out of moderation: moderation could not fit you.

FALSTAFF

You fix your face and I'll fix my life. You're like the flagship of our fleet, with a light on its bow—except that your light is in your nose.

BARDOLPH

Why, Sir John, my face isn't hurting you.

FALSTAFF

No, you're right. I actually get some good from your face: it's like a skull, or a death token. I can't look at your face without thinking of the flames of hell, and Dives from the Bible, who burned eternally. If there were anything pious about you, I could swear oaths on your face. I could say, "Now, by this *fire*, which is God's angel ..." But you're a complete sinner, and if it weren't for the light in your face, you'd be the son of darkness. When you ran up Gadshill at night to find my horse, I could have sworn you were a will-o-the-wisp or a fireball. You're an endless torchlight parade, a permanent bonfire. Walking with you from tavern to tavern at night has saved me a thousand *marks* in candles and flashlights. But the money I've spent on

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 thirty 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

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

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.

wine for you would have been enough to buy the most expensive candles in Europe. I've kept that nose of yours burning for thirty-two years, God bless me.

BARDOLPH

Dammit! I wish my face were in your *belly*.

FALSTAFF

God have mercy! Then I'd surely have heartburn.

MISTRESS QUICKLY enters.

Hello there, Madame Clucking Chicken! Have you figured out yet who picked my pocket?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do you think I have thieves in my establishment? I've searched, I've asked questions; so has my husband. We've asked every man, boy and servant here. No one's ever lost so much as a fraction of a hair in this tavern before.

FALSTAFF

You lie! Bardolph got a shave here, and he lost a lot of hair. And I swear my pocket was picked. To hell with you, you're a woman. To hell with you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Who, I? No; I defy thee! God's light, I was never called so in mine own house before.

FALSTAFF

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

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

He? Alas, he is poor. He hath nothing.

FALSTAFF**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Who, me? No, I say. By God, I've never been called such a thing in my own tavern before.

FALSTAFF

Oh come on, I know all about you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

No, Sir John; you don't know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you're making a fuss so that you can cheat me out of it. I have bought you a dozen shirts to wear.

FALSTAFF

Junk, cheap junk. I gave them away to bakers' wives, to sift flour with.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I swear, as an honest woman, that they were made of expensive fabric, eight shillings an *ell*. Besides, you owe me money for food and drink, plus twenty-four pounds I lent you.

FALSTAFF

(*points at BARDOLPH*) He had some of it. Let him pay.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Him? He's poor, he has 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

80 Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My lord, I pray you, hear me.

PRINCE HENRY

What? Poor? Look at his face. What do you call rich? They could make coins from his nose, mint his cheeks. I won't pay a **denier**. You think I'm a rube? What, I can't relax at a tavern without getting my pocket picked? I lost my grandfather's sealing ring, worth forty marks.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Jesus! I've heard the Prince tell him countless times that ring was only made out of copper.

FALSTAFF

What? The Prince is a bastard, a sneak. Dammit, if he were here and said something like that, I'd beat him like a dog.

PRINCE HENRY and PETO enter, marching like soldiers.

FALSTAFF joins them, pretending that his cudgel is a fife, or military flute.

Hey there, lad! Is that what's happening? Are we all going to march?

BARDOLPH

Yes, side by side, like prisoners to the gallows.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My lord, please, listen to 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

85 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

90 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

What is it, Mistress Quickly? How's your husband? I think highly of him; he's an honest man.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

My lord, please listen to me.

FALSTAFF

Forget about her, and listen to me.

PRINCE HENRY

What is it, Jack?

FALSTAFF

The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras and I had my pocket picked. This bar's like a whorehouse: they pick your pockets.

PRINCE HENRY

What did you lose, Jack?

FALSTAFF

Would you believe it, Hal? Three or four I.O.U.'s worth forty pounds each, and my grandfather's sealing ring.

PRINCE HENRY

Junk, not worth more than eight pennies.

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.

PRINCE HENRY

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Say, what thing, what thing?

FALSTAFF

What thing! Why, a thing to thank God on.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

105 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.

FALSTAFF

That's what I said, my lord. And I said I'd heard you say so, and then he said awful things about you, like the foul-mouthed man that he is. He said he'd beat you.

PRINCE HENRY

What? He did?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

If he didn't, I'm not faithful, trustworthy or womanly.

FALSTAFF

You're about as faithful as a whore, as trustworthy as a fox on the run, and—as for womanhood—a man in a dress is the minister's wife compared to you. Get out of here, you thing, get out.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Thing? What thing?

FALSTAFF

What thing? A thing to say "thank God" for.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I am not a thing to say "thank God" for, I want you to know; I am an honest man's wife. And ignoring the fact that you are a knight, you are a brute for calling me that.

FALSTAFF

Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say otherwise.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

110 Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

FALSTAFF

What beast? Why, an otter.

PRINCE HENRY

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

115 Thou art an unjust man in saying so. Thou or any man knows where to have me, thou knave, thou.

PRINCE HENRY

Thou sayest true, hostess, and he slanders thee most grossly.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

So he doth you, my lord, and said this other day you owed him a thousand pound.

PRINCE HENRY

120 Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

Well, if you ignore the fact that you're a woman, then I suppose that would make you an animal.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What animal, you brute?

FALSTAFF

What animal? Why, an otter.

PRINCE HENRY

An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?

FALSTAFF

Because she's not quite a fish and not quite a mammal. A man wouldn't know where to put her.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

You're awful for saying so: you or any man would know where to put me, you brute, you!

PRINCE HENRY

You're right, hostess, and he has really insulted you.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

He insulted you, too, my lord. Just the other day, he said you owed him a thousand pounds.

PRINCE HENRY

Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pounds?

FALSTAFF

A thousand pound, Hal? A million. Thy love is worth a million; thou owe me thy love.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Nay, my lord, he called you "jack," and said he would cudgel you.

FALSTAFF

¹²⁵ Did I, Bardolph?

BARDOLPH

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

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

A thousand pounds, Hal? A million. Your love is worth a million, and you owe me your love.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

No, sir. He called you a bastard and said he'd beat you.

FALSTAFF

Did I, Bardolph?

BARDOLPH

Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

FALSTAFF

That's right, if he said my ring was junk and made of copper.

PRINCE HENRY

And I do say that it's made of copper. So will you dare keep your word and beat me?

FALSTAFF

Hal, know this: if you were only a man, I would dare. But since you're also a Prince, I'm scared of you, as much as I'm scared by the roar of a lion's cub.

PRINCE HENRY

Why the cub and not 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

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

Dost thou hear, Hal? Thou knowest in the state of innocence Adam fell, and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? 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

Only the King is as frightening as the lion. You think I'm as scared of you as I am of your father? If I am, I pray to God for my [belt](#) to break.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, but if it did, your guts would fall down to your knees! Sirrah, there's no room in your chest for trustworthiness, truthfulness, or honesty. It's all filled up with guts and stomach. Accuse an honest woman of picking your pocket? You son of a whore; you rude, bloated cheat. I'll be damned if there was anything in your pocket besides tavern bills, notes about whorehouses, and a penny's worth of candy for energy. If you had anything else in your pockets, then I'm a liar; yet you stand by your lies. You won't even try to hide how bad you are. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

FALSTAFF

Don't you know, Hal? Adam fell from grace when the world was innocent. What should poor Jack Falstaff do, now that the world is wicked? You see I have more flesh than other men. It follows that I'm more fallible than other men.—So you're confessing to picking my pocket?

PRINCE HENRY

It looks that way.

FALSTAFF

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 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

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

165 Do, my lord.

PRINCE HENRY**FALSTAFF**

Hostess, I forgive you. Go get breakfast ready; love your husband; tend to your servants; cherish your guests. You'll find me a perfectly reasonable man. See? I'm calm, as always. Now please, get going!

MISTRESS QUICKLY exits.

Now Hal, what's the news at court? What ever happened about our robbery?

PRINCE HENRY

I'm your guardian angel again, you fresh piece of meat. The money's been paid back.

FALSTAFF

I don't like that "paying back." It means twice the work!

PRINCE HENRY

My father and I are friends again, and I can do whatever I want.

FALSTAFF

Then rob the treasury right away, and don't even delay long enough to wash your hands.

BARDOLPH

Do it, 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 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

My lord.

PRINCE HENRY

Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster,
175 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

Jack, meet me tomorrow in the Temple hall
At two o'clock in the afternoon;
180 There shalt thou know thy charge, and there receive

I have gotten you an infantry company to command, Jack.

FALSTAFF

I wish it were the horse brigade. Where can I recruit a talented crook? Oh, if I only had a gifted thief, about twenty-two years old! I'm terribly lacking in help. Well, thank God for these rebels. The only people they bother are the good people. I like that. I honor and salute them.

PRINCE HENRY

Bardolph!

BARDOLPH

My lord?

PRINCE HENRY

Deliver this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, my brother. Give this one to Westmoreland.

BARDOLPH exits.

Peto, get to your horse, get to your horse! You and I have to be thirty miles from here by lunchtime.

PETO exits.

Jack, meet me at [Temple Hall](#) at two o'clock tomorrow. You'll get the list of your troops there, plus some money and an

Money and order for their furniture.

The land is burning. Percy stands on high,
And either we or they must lower lie.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF

Rare words, brave world!—Hostess, my breakfast, come.—

185 O, I could wish this tavern were my drum.

Exit

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
5 Should go so general current through the world.
By God, I cannot flatter. I do defy
The tongues of soothsers. But a braver place
In my heart's love hath no man than yourself.
Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.

DOUGLAS

10 Thou art the king of honor.

order for their equipment. The country is on fire, and Percy's riding high. Either they or we must die.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

Well spoken! What a splendid world! Bring my breakfast, hostess! I wish that I could lead my troops from here!

He exits.

Act 4 Scene 1

HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, and DOUGLAS enter.

HOTSPUR

Well said, you excellent Scotsman. If people these days didn't confuse the truth with flattery, I would praise you highly. No other soldier so newly tested in battle would have gained such a widespread reputation. God knows, I don't flatter: I hate people who give out praise too easily. But you have a place in my heart that no other man has. Make me prove it; try me.

DOUGLAS

No man so potent breathes upon the ground
But I will beard him.

HOTSPUR

Do so, and 'tis well.

Enter a MESSENGER with letters

What letters hast thou there? (to DOUGLAS) I can but thank you.

MESSENGER

These letters come from your father.

HOTSPUR

15 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 justling time? Who leads his power?
Under whose government come they along?

MESSENGER

20 His letters bear his mind, not I, my lord.

WORCESTER

You are the most honorable man alive, and if any man challenges that—no matter how powerful—I'll defy him.

HOTSPUR

You do that. Well done.

A MESSENGER enters with letters.

What letters have you got there? (to DOUGLAS) All I can do is thank you.

MESSENGER

These letters come from your father.

HOTSPUR

Letters from him? Why isn't he here in person?

MESSENGER

He can't come, my lord; he's terribly sick.

HOTSPUR

Damn! How can he take the leisure of being sick at such a frantic time? Who's in charge of his army? Who's leading them here?

MESSENGER

His letters will tell you his plans, my lord, not I.

WORCESTER

I prithee, tell me, doth he keep his bed?

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

25 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.

HOTSPUR

Sick now? Droop now? This sickness doth infect
The very lifeblood of our enterprise.
30 '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
35 On any soul removed but on his own;
Yet doth he give us bold advertisement
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,
40 Because the King is certainly possessed
Of all our purposes. What say you to it?

Pardon me, but is he bedridden?

MESSENGER

He had been, sir, for four days before I left. And on the day I left, his doctors were extremely concerned.

WORCESTER

I wish he'd waited till things were settled before he went and got sick. We've never needed him more than now.

HOTSPUR

Sick now? Faint now? His disease is infecting our entire project. It's spread all the way to here, right to our camp. He writes that some internal illness—and that his allies couldn't be gathered so quickly by one of his deputies. Besides, he didn't think it was appropriate to delegate such a dangerous and important task to someone other than himself. But he also says that we should be bold and press on with our small contingent. For, as he writes, there's no turning back now, since the King surely knows our plans. What do you think?

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
45 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
50 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
55 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

60 But yet I would your father had been here.

WORCESTER

Your father's sickness is a serious injury to us.

HOTSPUR

It's a perilous wound, like losing a limb. And yet, truly, it's not that bad; the loss of my father seems worse than it is. After all, is it a good idea to bet all our resources on one throw of the dice? Or to gamble such a rich stake on a single hazardous event? No, because that would mean we had reached the end of our hope, and the very limit of our luck.

DOUGLAS

That's right. We have a chance at a rich inheritance; we can take a risk now, based on the promise of success to come. That gives us comfort, something to fall back on.

HOTSPUR

It gives us a refuge, a home we can always run to, in case the devil or misfortune ruins these early plans.

WORCESTER

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
65 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'ring side
70 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
75 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
80 If we without his help can make a head
To push against a kingdom, with his help
We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down.
Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are whole.

I still wish your father were here. Our endeavor here won't withstand any division. People who don't realize your father is sick will assume that he knows some kind of secret, or that he is loyal to the King, or that he doesn't approve of how we're handling things. And just imagine how that kind of mistrust could frighten our more timid supporters, and lead them to doubt us. You know very well that the challenger must always avoid careful examination. We must seal every crack, every loophole, which skeptics might look through to see weaknesses. Your father's absence draws the curtains back and reveals frightful things to ignorant people, who had never had a reason to fear before.

HOTSPUR

You're taking this too far. I'd rather think about his absence this way: it makes us look even better. It makes our great undertaking seem even more daring than it would if Northumberland were here. People will think that if we can raise an army against the King without my father, that once he joins we'll turn the whole kingdom upside down. Everything is fine, we're all in one piece.

DOUGLAS

As heart can think. There is not such a word
85 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.

HOTSPUR

90 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,
95 The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales,
And his comrades, that daffed the world aside
And bid it pass?

DOUGLAS

We're as well off as we could have hoped. In Scotland, we
don't even know the meaning of the word fear.

Sir Richard VERNON enters

HOTSPUR

Welcome, kinsman Vernon, from the bottom of my heart.

VERNON

I pray to God that what I have to say is worth welcoming, my
lord. The Earl of Westmoreland, with seven thousand men, is
marching this way. Prince John is with him.

HOTSPUR

Nothing to be worried about. What else?

VERNON

I've also learned that the King himself is coming this way, or at
least plans to very soon, with a huge and powerful force.

HOTSPUR

We'll welcome him too. Where's his son, that sporting,
foolhardy Prince of Wales, and his comrades, who don't care
about anything?

VERNON

All furnished, all in arms,
All plumed like estridges that with the wind
Baited like eagles having lately bathed,
100 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,
105 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
110 And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

VERNON

They're all in uniform, all armed. They look like feathered ostriches; like eagles beating their wings after a bath; like statues painted gold. They're as lively as the springtime; as gorgeous as the midsummer sun; as giddy as young goats; as wild as young bulls. I saw young Harry with his helmet on, and armor on his thighs. Armed with powerful weapons, he rose off the ground like the winged god Mercury, and leaped so effortlessly into his saddle, it was as if an angel had dropped out of the sky to ride a fiery [Pegasus](#), and bewitch the world with his incredible 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
115 All hot and bleeding will we offer them.
The mailed 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,

HOTSPUR

Stop, stop! This praise of him makes me sicker than the sun on an early spring day. Let them come, like sacrifices in all their finery; we'll offer them, hot and bleeding, to the fire-eyed goddess of smoky war. The war-god Mars will sit on his altar, up to his ears in blood. I am on fire, knowing that this rich prize is so near, and yet still not ours. Come, bring me my horse, who will carry me like a lightning bolt to face the Prince of Wales. Then this Harry will meet that Harry, my horse against his

120 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 corse.
O, that Glendower were come!

VERNON

There is more news.
125 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

130 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.

horse; we'll meet and never separate, till one of us falls down as a corpse. Oh, I wish that Glendower were here!

VERNON

I have more news: as I passed through the town of Worcester, I heard that Glendower won't be able to collect his army for two more weeks.

DOUGLAS

That's the worst news I've heard so far.

WORCESTER

Yes, truly, that news makes me cold.

HOTSPUR

How many men in the King's army?

VERNON

Thirty thousand.

HOTSPUR

Let it be forty. Even with both my father and Glendower absent, our armies may still be enough to win. Come on, let's gather our troops right now. It's almost doomsday; if we die, we die cheerfully.

Doomsday is near. Die all, die merrily.

DOUGLAS

135 Talk not of dying. I am out of fear
Of death or death's hand for this one half year.

Exeunt

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.

DOUGLAS

Don't talk about dying. I won't even worry about dying for the next six months.

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 2

FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH enter.

FALSTAFF

Bardolph, go ahead of us to Coventry, and fill me a bottle of wine. Our army will keep marching, and we'll make it to Sutton Coldfield tonight.

BARDOLPH

Will you give me some money, captain?

FALSTAFF

Spend your own.

BARDOLPH

If I buy you this bottle, that makes me [an angel](#).

FALSTAFF

Well, if this bottle earns you an angel, then keep it for your troubles. If you earn twenty angels, then keep them all; I'm good for it. Tell my lieutenant Peto to meet me at the city limit.

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 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, revolted tapsters, and ostlers tradefallen, the cankers of a calm world and a long peace, ten times more 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

BARDOLPH

I will, captain. Farewell.

BARDOLPH exits.

FALSTAFF

If I'm not ashamed of my soldiers, then I'm a pickled fish. I've taken terrible advantage of my position. I've pressed a hundred and fifty soldiers into service, and for that, the treasury has paid me over three hundred pounds. I recruited only well-to-do property owners and rich farmer's sons. I looked for men who were engaged to be married, who were already halfway through their preparations. I found a whole supply of pampered cowards who would rather listen to the devil than a military march; who feared the sound of gunfire

more than a wounded bird or a maimed duck might. I recruited only the soft-hearted, who each had as much courage as could fit on a pin head and bribed me to avoid fighting. So now, my battalion is made up of flag bearers, corporals, lieutenants, and crooks as ragged as *Lazarus* in those paintings where the dogs are licking the sores on his body. I have men who've never been soldiers: servants dismissed for their dishonesty; youngest sons with no hope of an inheritance; runaway apprentice bartenders; unemployed stable boys. When the world is calm and peaceful, these men are blisters on society.

think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draf^f 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.

They're ten times more ragged than an old, tattered flag, and they're the kind of men I have to replace the ones who bribed me. You'd think I had a hundred and fifty men who'd just come from pig farming, who eat scraps and garbage. One madman saw us on the march and told me that it looked as if I'd unloaded all the gallows and drafted all the dead bodies. No one's ever seen such a group of scarecrows. I'm not going to march through Coventry with them tonight, that's for sure. They march with their legs wide apart, as though they had chains on their ankles. Which makes sense, since I drafted most of them out of jails. There's only a shirt and a half in the whole group, and the half-shirt is really just two napkins sewn together and thrown over the shoulders like a cape. And the whole shirt, to tell the truth, was stolen from a tavern owner in St. Alban's, or maybe that drunken innkeeper in Daventry. But that doesn't matter. They'll be able to steal plenty of clothing from the hedges, where the washers hang the laundry out to dry.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and Lord WESTMORELAND

PRINCE HENRY

How now, blown Jack? How now, quilt?

FALSTAFF

45 What, Hal, how now, mad wag? What a devil dost thou in Warwickshire?—My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you

PRINCE HENRY and Lord WESTMORELAND enter.

PRINCE HENRY

What's up, swollen **Jack!** What's up, quilt?

FALSTAFF

Hello there, Hal, you crazy boy! What in the devil's name are you doing in Warwickshire? And Lord Westmoreland, I beg

mercy: I thought your Honor had already been at 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.

FALSTAFF

Tut, never fear me. I am as vigilant as a cat 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?

FALSTAFF

Mine, Hal, mine.

PRINCE HENRY

I did never see such pitiful rascals.

FALSTAFF

Tut, tut, good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder. They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

WESTMORELAND

your pardon. I thought you were already at Shrewsbury.

WESTMORELAND

You're right, Sir John; it's about time I got there, and you, too. But my army's already there. The King is waiting for us, so we must march all night.

FALSTAFF

Don't worry about me. I'm as focused as a cat looking for cream to steal.

PRINCE HENRY

Steal cream is right—you've stolen so much that it's turned you into butter. But tell me, Jack, whose soldiers are those?

FALSTAFF

Mine, Hal, mine.

PRINCE HENRY

I never saw such pitiful-looking losers.

FALSTAFF

Now, now: they're good enough to die. Cannon fodder, cannon fodder—they'll fill a mass grave as well as better men would. They're just men, just men.

WESTMORELAND

Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare,
too beggarly.

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

65 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

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
70 Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest.

Exeunt

Maybe so, Sir John, but I think they look terribly poor and bare;
they look like beggars.

FALSTAFF

Well, I don't know where they got their poverty, but their
bareness—or their bare-bonedness—well, they didn't get that
from me.

PRINCE HENRY

That's for sure. Unless you think several inches of fat over your
ribs makes you "bare-boned." But hurry up, sirrah: Percy is
already at the battlefield.

PERCY exits.

FALSTAFF

What, has the King already made camp?

WESTMORELAND

He has, Sir John: I'm afraid we may be too late.

FALSTAFF

Well, a hungry guest arrives early for a feast, but a poor soldier
arrives late to a battle.

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 3

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

Why say you so? Looks he not for supply?

VERNON

So do we.

HOTSPUR

5 His is certain; ours is doubtful.

WORCESTER

Good cousin, be advised. Stir not tonight.

VERNON

(to HOTSPUR) Do not, my lord.

DOUGLAS

HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, DOUGLAS, and VERNON enter.

HOTSPUR

We'll fight him tonight.

WORCESTER

We can't do that.

DOUGLAS

Then you're giving him the advantage.

VERNON

Not in the least.

HOTSPUR

Why do you say that? Doesn't he have backup coming?

VERNON

So do we.

HOTSPUR

His is guaranteed. Ours isn't.

WORCESTER

Nephew, I'm telling you. Don't start the fighting tonight.

VERNON

(to HOTSPUR) Don't, my lord.

DOUGLAS

You do not counsel well.
You speak it out of fear and cold heart.

VERNON

Do me no slander, Douglas. By my life
10 (And I dare well maintain it with my life),
If well-respected honor bid me on,
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
15 Which of us fears.

DOUGLAS

Yea, or tonight.

VERNON

Content.

HOTSPUR

Tonight, say I.

VERNON

Come, come it nay not be. I wonder much,
Being men of such great leading as you are,
20 That you foresee not what impediments
Drag back our expedition. Certain horse
Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up.
Your Uncle Worcester's horse came but today,

You're giving poor advice, based on fear and cowardice.

VERNON

Don't slander me, Douglas. I swear on my life—and I'll prove it with my life—that if I'm roused to fight through thoughtful, careful consideration, I'm just as unafraid as you, my lord, or any Scotsman alive. In tomorrow's battle, we'll see which one of us is afraid.

DOUGLAS

Fine. Or tonight.

VERNON

That's enough.

HOTSPUR

Tonight, I say.

VERNON

Come on, we can't do that. I wonder how—being the great leaders you are—you cannot see the problems we're facing. My cousin has yet to arrive with his horses, and your Uncle Worcester's troops only arrived today. Their spirit and their bravery is asleep; their courage is dulled and tamed by the

And now their pride and mettle is asleep,
25 Their courage with hard labor tame and dull,
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

30 The number of the King exceedeth ours.
For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in.

The trumpet sounds a parley

Enter BLUNT

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
35 You were of our determination.
Some of us love you well, and even those some
Envy your great deservings and good name
Because you are not of our quality
But stand against us like an enemy.

hard journey. They don't have even a quarter of their usual strength.

HOTSPUR

The enemy's horses are tired from the journey as well. The majority of ours are well-rested.

WORCESTER

But the King has more men than we do. For God's sake, nephew, wait until everyone arrives.

A trumpet announces the approach of an envoy.

BLUNT enters.

BLUNT

I'm here with a generous offer from the King, if you'll listen to me and treat me with respect.

HOTSPUR

Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt. I wish to God you were on our side. Many of us think very highly of you, though we begrudge you your honor and reputation, since you fight on the enemy's side.

BLUNT

40 And God defend but still I should stand so,
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
45 You conjure from the breast of civil peace
Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land
Audacious cruelty. If that the king
Have any way your good deserts forgot,
Which he confesseth to be manifold.
50 He bids you name your griefs, and with all speed
You shall have your desires with interest
And pardon absolute for yourself and these
Herein misled by your suggestion.

BLUNT

And I hope to God I always will, so long as you overstep the bounds of allegiance and duty by standing against the anointed King. But let me get to the point. The King sent me to learn your complaints, and to find out why you are stirring up warfare in a time of peace, and spreading violent dissent throughout his loyal country. If the King has somehow overlooked one of your deserving acts—which, he admits, there are many—he asks you to name your complaints. He'll meet your demands, with interest, as quickly as possible, and grant an absolute pardon to you and everyone who has followed your mistaken lead.

HOTSPUR

The king is kind, and well we know the king
55 Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.
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,
60 A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,
My father gave him welcome to the shore;
And when he heard him swear and vow to God

HOTSPUR

That's kind of the King. We know all too well about the promises the King makes, and the ways he keeps his word. My father, my uncle, and I put that crown on his head. And when he had barely twenty-six men supporting him, when no one cared about him, when he was wretched and low, a poor, forsaken criminal trying to sneak home, my father welcomed him. When he swore an oath to God, weeping and speaking passionately, that he had come back to England only to

He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,
To sue his livery, and beg his peace,
65 With tears of innocence and terms of zeal,
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,
70 The more and less came in with cap and knee,
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
75 Even at the heels in golden multitudes.
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,
80 And now forsooth takes on him to reform
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,
85 This seeming brow of justice, did he win
The hearts of all that he did angle for,
Proceeded further—cut me off the heads
Of all the favourites that the absent King

reclaim his father's title and make peace with King Richard, my father took pity on him, swore to help him and did so. When the country's most important men saw that Northumberland was on his side, they came to see Henry, and bowed down to him. They met him in towns, cities, villages; they waited for him on bridges, stood in the streets, lay gifts before him, swore their loyalty, pledged the support of their sons, followed him like servants. Soon enough, he began to understand his power. He overstepped the promise he'd made to my father at Ravensburgh, when his blood was still humble. And then, suddenly, he took it upon himself to reform certain laws and strict decrees that weighed too heavily on the kingdom. He made angry speeches about the abuses we were suffering, and seemed to weep over the country's problems. And with this face, this mask of righteousness, he won everyone's hearts. Then he went even further, and cut off the heads of all of Richard's deputies, who stayed behind to run the country while Richard was waging war in Ireland.

In deputation left behind him here
90 When he was personal in the Irish war.

BLUNT

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.

95 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,

100 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

105 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?

BLUNT

I didn't come here to listen to this.

HOTSPUR

Then I'll get to the point. A little while later, he overthrew King Richard. Soon after that, he killed him. And right after that, he raised taxes on everyone. To make matters worse, he allowed his kinsman Mortimer—who by rights ought to be the king—to be imprisoned in Wales, and remain there without ransom. He tried to use my victories to disgrace me, and tried to trap me with spies. He dismissed my uncle from his royal Council, threw my father out of the royal court, broke promise after promise, and committed crime after crime. In conclusion, he forced us to raise this army for our own safety, and to question his claim on the crown, which we believe is too flimsy to stand.

BLUNT

Should I bring this answer to the King?

HOTSPUR

Not so, Sir Walter. We'll withdraw awhile.
110 Go to the King, and let there be impawned
Some surety for a safe return again,
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

115 And maybe so we shall.

BLUNT

Pray God you do.

Exeunt

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 Scroop, and all the rest
To whom they are directed. If you knew
5 How much they do import, you would make haste.

HOTSPUR

No, Sir Walter. We'll stand down for a while. Go to the King. My uncle will bring him our demands early in the morning, provided that you arrange for a guarantee that he'll be allowed to return safely. And so, farewell.

BLUNT

I wish you would accept the King's offer of kindness and love.

HOTSPUR

Perhaps we will.

BLUNT

I pray to God you do.

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 4

The ARCHBISHOP of York and SIR MICHAEL enter.

ARCHBISHOP

Hurry, Sir Michael, bring this sealed letter as fast as you can to the Lord Marshal. Bring this one to Scroop, and all the rest to whom they are addressed. If you knew how important they were, you would hurry.

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,

SIR MICHAEL

My good lord, I can guess what they say.

ARCHBISHOP

I'm sure you can. Tomorrow, Sir Michael, ten thousand men will try their luck. I'm told that at Shrewsbury, the King—with a huge and quickly assembled army—will fight Harry Percy. I'm afraid, Michael, that without Northumberland, whose army was the largest of all, and without Owen Glendower, who was also being counted on but is absent because his horoscope told him to stay away, I'm afraid that Percy's army will be too weak to fight the King right now.

SIR MICHAEL

Don't worry, sir. Douglas and Mortimer are there.

ARCHBISHOP

No, Mortimer isn't there.

SIR MICHAEL

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.

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

Enter the KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, Lord John of

But Mordake is there, and Vernon, and Harry Percy, and
Worcester and a slew of brave warriors and excellent men.

ARCHBISHOP

That's correct. But the King has pulled together the best men
in the country: the Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, the
noble Westmoreland, warlike Blunt, and many other
acquaintances and valuable men of good reputation, with
great skill in battle.

SIR MICHAEL

No doubt they will face great opposition.

ARCHBISHOP

I hope so, but still I'm afraid. Now hurry, Sir Michael, to prevent
an absolute disaster. For if Percy doesn't prevail, the King will
come after us before he disbands his army. He's heard that
we're part of the rebellion, so we'd be wise to prepare against
him. Now hurry. I have to go write to more friends. Farewell, Sir
Michael.

They exit.

Act 5 Scene 1

The KING, PRINCE HENRY of Wales, Lord John of LANCASTER,

LANCASTER, Earl of WESTMORELAND, BLUNT, and FALSTAFF

KING

How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky hill. The day looks pale
At his distemp'rature.

PRINCE HENRY

The southern wind
Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,
5 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

How now, my Lord of Worcester? 'Tis not well
10 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.
This is not well, my lord; this is not well.
15 What say you to it? Will you again unknit
This curlish knot of all-abhorred war

Earl of WESTMORELAND, Sir Walter BLUNT, and FALSTAFF enter.

KING

How bloody the sun looks as it peers over that massive hill.
The day looks pale—it must be sick to see the sun in such a mood.

PRINCE HENRY

The southern wind is playing its trumpet, to announce to the world what the sun means. And judging by the whistling leaves, it's going to be a stormy, windy day.

KING

Then let it take the losers' side. To winners, nothing seems unpleasant.

A trumpet sounds. WORCESTER and VERNON enter.

Hello there, my lord of Worcester! It isn't right that you and I are meeting under these circumstances. You have betrayed my trust. You forced me to put aside my comfortable peacetime clothing and instead have made me crush my old body into hard, military armor. That isn't right, sir, that isn't right. What do you have to say about it? Will you untie this ill-tempered knot of hateful war? Will you return to my loyalty? When you circled me, your King, in your obedient orbit, you

And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhaled meteor,
20 A prodigy of fear and a portent
Of broachèd mischief to the unborn times?

WORCESTER

Hear me, my liege:
For mine own part I could be well content
To entertain the lag end of my life
25 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.

PRINCE HENRY

Peace, chewet, peace.

WORCESTER

30 (*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

shone beautifully and naturally. Now you blaze like a comet: a fearful omen, and a signal that evil will be released into the future.

WORCESTER

Listen, my lord. For me, I would love nothing more than to spend my old age in peace and quiet. I protest: I did not seek out this day of aggression.

KING

You did not seek it? Then how did it come here?

FALSTAFF

Rebellion was standing in front of him, and he bumped into it.

PRINCE HENRY

Quiet, you chatterer, quiet!

WORCESTER

(*to the KING*) Your Highness chose to turn your back on me and my family. I must remind you, sir, that we were your first and dearest friends. For you, I quit my position under Richard, and ran day and night to meet you on the road and kiss your hand. At that time, you were far less powerful than I was. But my

35 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
40 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,
45 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,
50 What with the injuries of a wanton time,
The seeming sufferances that you had borne,

And the contrarious winds that held the King
So long in his unlucky Irish wars
That all in England did repute him dead—
55 And from this swarm of fair advantages
You took occasion to be quickly wooed
To gripe the general sway into your hand,
Forget your oath to us at Doncaster;
And being fed by us, you used us so

brother, his son, and I brought you home and ignored the danger. At Doncaster you swore an oath to us that you were not going to challenge the King; all you wanted was your late father's estate, the dukedom of Lancaster, and in this we promised to help you.

But soon, good luck began to pour on you like rain, and a flood of greatness fell upon you. You had a swarm of advantages: you had our assistance; and the King had been away so long; and the country was suffering under violence; and you seemed to have been so grievously wronged; and difficult winds were keeping

Richard so long in those unlucky Irish wars, people thought he was dead. You seized the opportunity, and used the general feeling to your advantage. You forgot the oath you swore to us at Doncaster.

We nourished you, but you used us, like the cuckoo bird uses the sparrow: you settled in our nest, ate our food, and as you grew, you crowded us out. We loved you, but we couldn't even come near you, for fear that you'd swallow us up. For our own

60 As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow—did oppress our nest,
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
That even our love durst not come near your sight
For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
65 We were enforced for safety sake to fly
Out of sight and raise this present head,
Whereby we stand opposèd by such means
As you yourself have forged against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
70 And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

KING

These things indeed you have articulate,
Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches,
To face the garment of rebellion
75 With some fine color that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurlyburly innovation.
And never yet did insurrection want
80 Such water colors to impaint his cause,
Nor moody beggars starving for a time
Of pellmell havoc and confusion.

PRINCE HENRY

safety, we were forced to run away and secretly raise this army.
And now we stand with it, armed with powers that you yourself
have caused to stand against you. You treated us poorly, you
looked at us with anger, and you broke the faith and trust you
swore to us when you were younger.

KING

You've said all this already. You've announced it in
marketplaces, given sermons on it in churches. You've tried to
make rebellion look pleasant in the eyes of all the fickle
turncoats and poor malcontents, who laugh and clap eagerly
at the news that a revolution is coming. But rebellion always
trades in these kinds of thin excuses, and never lacks angry
beggars, desperate for mayhem and chaos.

PRINCE HENRY

In both your armies there is many a soul
Shall pay full dearly for this encounter
85 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,
This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
90 More active-valiant, or more valiant-young.
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.
For my part, I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry.
95 And so I hear he doth account me too.
Yet this before my father's majesty:
I am content that he shall take the odds
Of his great name and estimation,
And will, to save the blood on either side,
100 Try fortune with him in a single fight.

KING

And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,
Albeit considerations infinite
Do make against it.—No, good Worcester, no.
We love our people well, even those we love
105 That are misled upon your cousin's part.
And, will they take the offer of our grace,

Both our armies are full of men who will make the ultimate sacrifice in this battle, once it starts. Tell your nephew that the Prince of Wales joins the whole world

in praising Henry Percy. Except for his current endeavor, I don't think there's a man alive who is braver, more heroic, more daring, or more bold.
As for me, I'm ashamed to admit that I've shirked my responsibilities. I hear that he agrees with me on that point. And yet—and I say this in front of my father—in order to avoid casualties on both sides, I want to challenge him in hand-to-hand combat. And I'm content to admit that, based on his good name and reputation, he's the favorite to win.

KING

Prince of Wales, I'd support that idea, except that there are countless reasons why I shouldn't. No, Worcester, no. I love my subjects, even those who have mistakenly followed your nephew's lead. If they accept our pardon, then he, you, and they will all be my friends again, and I'll be theirs. Tell your nephew this, and bring back his answer.

Both he and they and you, yea, every man
Shall be my friend again, and I'll be his.
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
110 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.
We will not now be troubled with reply.
We offer fair. Take it advisedly.

Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON

PRINCE HENRY

115 It will not be accepted, on my life.
The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

KING

Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge,
For on their answer will we set on them,
120 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;
'tis a point of friendship.

PRINCE HENRY

But if he doesn't surrender, he will be rebuked and harshly punished. So, be gone. I don't want to hear anymore from you now. I offer a fair deal; I advise you to accept it.

WORCESTER and VERNON exit.

PRINCE HENRY

He won't accept. I'll bet my life on it. Douglas and Hotspur are convinced that they could take on the whole world together.

KING

Then everyone get to their battalions. As soon as they respond, we'll attack. May God be with us. Our cause is just!

Everyone exits except PRINCE HENRY and FALSTAFF.

FALSTAFF

Hal, if you see me fall in battle, stand over me, like this. It would be an act of friendship.

PRINCE HENRY

Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship.
Say thy prayers, and farewell.

FALSTAFF

125 I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and all well.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, thou owest God a death.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF

'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 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

Only a giant could do you that friendship. Say your prayers,
and farewell.

FALSTAFF

I wish it were bedtime, Hal, and everything were okay.

PRINCE HENRY

But you owe God a death.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF

It's not due yet. I'd hate to pay him before the due date. Why
should I be so eager to pay him before he even asks for it?
Well, it doesn't matter: honor spurs me on. Yeah, but what if
honor spurs me off once I'm on, and picks me out to die? What
happens then? Can honor set a broken leg? No. Or an arm? No.
Can it make a wound stop hurting? No. Honor can't perform
surgery, then? No. What is honor? A word. What is in that word,
"honor?" What is that "honor?" Air. Quite a bargain! Who has it?
A guy who died last Wednesday. Does he feel it? No. Does he
hear it? No. It can't be detected, then? Right—not by the dead,
anyway. But won't it live with the living? No. Why? Slander
won't allow it. That's why I don't want any part of it. Honor is
nothing more than a gravestone, and that concludes my
[catechism](#).

He exits.

Act 5 Scene 2

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.
It is not possible, it cannot be
5 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,
For treason is but trusted like the fox,
10 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,
And we shall feed like oxen at a stall,
15 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—

WORCESTER and Sir Richard **VERNON** enter.

WORCESTER

Oh no, Sir Richard, my nephew cannot be told about the generous and kind offer the King made.

VERNON

But he should be told.

WORCESTER

It will be the end of all of us! There is absolutely no way that the King will keep his word and trust us again. He will always be wary of us. He'll find other reasons to punish us for this rebellion. For the rest of our lives he and his loyalists will look on us with suspicion. Treason is like a fox: you can tame it, care for it, and put it in a cage, but it will always have the wild instincts it inherited from its ancestors. No matter how we look—sad or happy—people will interpret our looks in the worst possible light. We'll be like oxen in a stall: the better they're fed, the closer they are to being slaughtered.
My nephew's disloyalty might be forgiven: his young age and hot temper will excuse it. Plus, his nickname gives him permission: Hotspur the Harebrain, always flaring up. All his offenses will be blamed on me and his father. After all, we encouraged him, and since we taught him to be angry at the

A hairbrained Hotspur governed by a spleen:
20 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.
Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry know
25 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.
Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.—
Uncle, what news?

WORCESTER

30 The King will bid you battle presently.

DOUGLAS

Defy him by the Lord of Westmoreland.

HOTSPUR

Lord Douglas, go you and tell him so.

King, we'll pay for it. So cousin, don't by any means let Harry know what the King offered.

VERNON

Tell him what you want, and I'll back you up.

HOTSPUR and DOUGLAS enter.

Here comes your nephew.

HOTSPUR

My uncle's back. Free Westmoreland, his hostage. Uncle, what's happening?

WORCESTER

The King will beckon you to battle shortly.

DOUGLAS

Have Westmoreland deliver your message of defiance.

HOTSPUR

Douglas, go tell him to do that.

DOUGLAS

Marry, and shall, and very willingly.

Exit DOUGLAS

WORCESTER

There is no seeming mercy in the King.

HOTSPUR

35 Did you beg any? God forbid!

WORCESTER

I told him gently of our grievances,
Of his oath-breaking, which he mended thus
By now forswearing that he is forsworn.
He calls us "rebels," "traitors," and will scourge
40 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,
And Westmoreland, that was engaged, did bear it,
Which cannot choose but bring him quickly on.

WORCESTER

45 The Prince of Wales stepped forth before the King,
And, nephew, challenged you to single fight.

DOUGLAS

Indeed, I will, and gladly.

DOUGLAS exits.

WORCESTER

The King doesn't appear willing to forgive us.

HOTSPUR

Did you ask him to? God forbid!

WORCESTER

I politely told him what our issues were. I accused him of breaking his promise to us, and here's how he answered: he lied about the fact that he lied. He called us rebels, traitors, and said he'd punish us with his mighty army.

DOUGLAS enters.

DOUGLAS

Get your weapons, gentlemen, get your weapons! I sent King Henry a brave and defiant message, and Westmoreland, who was our hostage, will deliver it. This will surely bring the battle on immediately.

WORCESTER

The Prince of Wales stepped forward, nephew, and challenged you to a one-on-one fight.

HOTSPUR

O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,
And that no man might draw short breath today
But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,
50 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,
Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms.
55 He gave you all the duties of a man,
Trimmed up your praises with a princely tongue,
Spoke your deservings like a chronicle,
Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valued in you,
60 And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
As if he mastered there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
65 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,
So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

HOTSPUR

Oh, I wish the whole battle were between us, and that the only people who would lose their breath today would be me and Harry [Monmouth!](#) Tell me, tell me, what was the tone of his challenge? Did he show contempt for me?

VERNON

No, I swear; I never heard a challenge issued more gracefully. It was like a brother asking a brother to a little friendly competition. He paid you all due respect, and he summed up your good qualities in the most princely language. He spoke of how deserving you are, as though he were your biographer. He claimed you were even above praise, for simple praise could never measure up to your true merits. And he gave a modest account of himself, as well, which made him seem like a true prince indeed. He berated himself for having behaved wildly, but he said this so gracefully that he sounded like a teacher giving a lesson and a student learning one at the same time. There he stopped, but let me say this: if he survives this battle, then England never had a sweeter hope, nor one so misunderstood in his recklessness.

HOTSPUR

Cousin, I think thou art enamored
70 On his follies. Never did I hear
Of any Prince so wild a liberty.
But be he as he will, yet once ere night
I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,
That he shall shrink under my courtesy.—
75 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
Can lift your blood up with persuasion.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

My lord, here are letters for you.

HOTSPUR

80 I cannot read them now.—
O gentlemen, the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely were too long
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
85 An if we live, we live to tread on kings;
If die, brave death, when princes die with us.
Now, for our consciences, the arms are fair
When the intent of bearing them is just.

HOTSPUR

I think you've been charmed by his foolishness. I've never heard of a Prince who was so wild and loose. But however he wants to seem, before night falls I will embrace him with these soldier's arms, and he will tremble at my affection.
Get ready, get ready quickly! And friends, partners, soldiers, take a moment to think for yourselves about what you have to do. I'm not a good enough speaker to motivate you.

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

My lord, I have some letters for you.

HOTSPUR

I can't read them now. Oh, gentlemen, life is short. But if you spend that brief time shamefully, you are wasting your time: even if life lasted only an hour, it would still be too long. If we live, it will be in triumph over kings. If we die, it will be a glorious death, since princes will die with us. As for our consciences, our battle is fair: it's right to bear arms when the cause is just.

Enter another **MESSENGER**

SECOND MESSENGER

My lord, prepare. The King comes on apace.

HOTSPUR

90 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,
Whose temper I intend to stain
With the best blood that I can meet withal
95 In the adventure of this perilous day.

Now, Esperance! Percy! And set on.
Sound all the lofty instruments of war,
And by that music let us all embrace,
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall
100 A second time do such a courtesy.

Here they embrace. The trumpets sound.

Exeunt

*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

Another **MESSENGER** enters.

SECOND MESSENGER

My lord, get ready. The King has launched his attack.

HOTSPUR

I thank him for cutting off my speech, since I have no talent for speaking. Only one more thing: each man should do his best, and with that I will draw my sword. On this dangerous day, I intend to stain it with the best blood I can find. "Hope is my comfort!" Percy! Let's go! Sound all the imposing instruments of battle, and let's embrace one another to the tune of that music. For, by heaven, some of us will never be able to do that again.

They embrace. The trumpets sound.

They exit.

Act 5 Scene 3

The KING crosses the stage with his army. The trumpets sound the call to battle.

DOUGLAS and Sir Walter BLUNT enter. BLUNT is 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 yelder, 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,

BLUNT

What is your name—you, who are attacking me like this? What honor do you think you'll get by fighting me?

DOUGLAS

My name is Douglas, and I'm haunting you in this battle because they tell me you are a king.

BLUNT

They tell you the truth.

DOUGLAS

Today, Lord Stafford paid for resembling you so well, for instead of you, King Harry, my sword killed him. Now it will kill you, unless you surrender as my prisoner.

BLUNT

I was not born to surrender, you arrogant Scotsman. You're about to see a king take revenge for Stafford's death.

They fight. DOUGLAS kills BLUNT. HOTSPUR enters.

HOTSPUR

I never had triumphed upon a Scot.

DOUGLAS

All's done, all's won; here breathless lies the 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,

Oh, Douglas! If you'd fought like this at Holmedon, I would never have been able to beat you.

DOUGLAS

It's over, we've won: here's the King, dead.

HOTSPUR

Where?

DOUGLAS

Here.

HOTSPUR

This, Douglas? No. I know this man: he was a brave knight, by the name of Blunt; he is disguised as the King.

DOUGLAS

(to BLUNT) Wherever your soul is off to now, let it carry the name of fool! You paid too much for that borrowed title. Why did you tell me you were a king?

HOTSPUR

The King has many men on the battlefield disguised in his uniform.

DOUGLAS

Now, I swear on my sword, I'll kill all his uniforms! I'll murder every item of his clothing, one piece at a time, until I find the

Until I meet the King.

HOTSPUR

Up and away!

30 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. 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, to beg during life. But who comes here?

Enter PRINCE HENRY

PRINCE HENRY

40 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,

King himself.

HOTSPUR

Get going! Our side looks like it will win today.

They exit.

The trumpets play a call to arms. FALSTAFF enters, alone.

FALSTAFF

I could always *escape shot-free* in London, but I'm scared of getting shot out here. Here, you take it on the head. Wait a minute—who's this? Sir Walter Blunt! There's honor for you, but no vanity! I'm as hot as molten lead, and as heavy, too; so God keep the lead out of me. I don't need any lead bullets in my belly—my own guts are heavy enough. My army of ragged bums has been massacred. Not even three of my hundred-fifty troops are still alive, and the ones who are have run away, to panhandle in the streets. Who's coming?

PRINCE HENRY enters.

PRINCE HENRY

What, are you standing here doing nothing? Give me your sword. Many good men are lying cold and dead on the ground, with the enemy's horses galloping over them. Their deaths have not been revenged. Come, give me your sword.

Lend me thy sword.

FALSTAFF

45 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.
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?

FALSTAFF

50 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

Oh, Hal, please, give me a moment to catch my breath. No one has ever fought as heroically as I did today. I've killed Percy, I've made him safe.

PRINCE HENRY

You're right; he's safe, and now he's coming to kill you. Now please, give me your sword.

FALSTAFF

No, Hal, I swear to God! If Percy's alive, you're not taking my sword. But you can have my gun, if you want.

PRINCE HENRY

Give it to me. Is it in its holster?

FALSTAFF

Yup. It's hot, hot; it could *sack* a city. (PRINCE HENRY *opens the holster and finds a bottle of white wine*)

PRINCE HENRY

Is this a time to joke and fool around?

He throws the bottle at FALSTAFF.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

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

If Percy's alive, I'll pierce him. If he runs into me, fine. If he doesn't run into me, but I run into him, let him slice me like a butcher. I don't want the kind of honor Sir Walter has: give me life. If I manage to save my life, fine. If not, I'll have honor that I never looked for, and that'll be that.

He exits.

Act 5 Scene 4

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

I beseech your Majesty, make up,
5 Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.

KING

I will do so.—My Lord of Westmoreland,
Lead him to his tent.

Trumpets sound battle calls. Soldiers skirmish. The KING, PRINCE HENRY, injured and bleeding, Lord John of LANCASTER, and WESTMORELAND enter.

KING

Please, Harry, get out of here: you're bleeding too heavily. John of Lancaster, go with him.

LANCASTER

I won't leave, my lord, unless I am bleeding too.

PRINCE HENRY

I beg your highness, advance. Your army will lose heart if it sees you falling back.

KING

I will. My Lord of Westmoreland, take him to his tent.

WESTMORELAND

Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.

PRINCE HENRY

Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help,
10 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

We breathe too long. Come, cousin Westmoreland,
15 Our duty this way lies. For God's sake, come.

Exeunt Lord John of LANCASTER and WESTMORELAND

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.

KING

20 I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point
With lustier maintenance than I did look for
Of such an ungrown warrior.

PRINCE HENRY

WESTMORELAND

(to PRINCE HENRY) Come, my lord. I'll lead you to your tent.

PRINCE HENRY

Lead me, my lord? I don't need your help. God forbid that a shallow scratch could make the Prince of Wales retreat from a battlefield like this one, where great men are falling and being trampled upon, and rebels are triumphing in their massacres!

LANCASTER

We've stopped for too long. Come, Westmoreland. We have work to do. For God's sake, come on!

LANCASTER and WESTMORELAND exit.

PRINCE HENRY

By God, you have deceived me, Lancaster. I didn't think you were that brave. Before, I loved you as a brother; now, I respect you as my soulmate.

KING

He had Percy cornered, and he carried himself more bravely than I would have expected of such a young warrior.

PRINCE HENRY

O, this boy lends mettle to us all.

Exit

Enter DOUGLAS

DOUGLAS

Another king! they grow like Hydra's heads.—
25 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,
So many of his shadows thou hast met
30 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

I fear thou art another counterfeit,
35 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

Oh, this boy lends us all courage!

PRINCE HENRY exits.

DOUGLAS enters.

DOUGLAS

Another king! The more of them we kill, the more of them
spring up. I am Douglas, and I bring death to everyone wearing
that uniform. Who are you, disguised as a king?

KING

The King himself. And it pains me, Douglas, that you ran into so
many of my shadows, and not me. I have two sons on the field,
looking for Percy and for you. But, since you were lucky
enough to come upon me, I'll fight you myself. Defend
yourself.

DOUGLAS

I fear that you're another fake; and yet, you bear yourself like a
king. Whoever you are, you're mine, and I'll defeat you.

They fight. The KING begins to lose. PRINCE HENRY of Wales enters.

PRINCE HENRY

Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like
Never to hold it up again. The spirits
40 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?
Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succor sent,
45 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
In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.

PRINCE HENRY

50 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,
Which would have been as speedy in your end
55 As all the poisonous potions in the world,
And saved the treacherous labor of your son.

PRINCE HENRY

Look at me, you nasty Scotsman, or you'll never look at anything again. I have the spirits of brave Shirley, Stafford, and Blunt in me. It is the Prince of Wales who threatens you, and I never make promises I cannot keep.

They fight. DOUGLAS runs away.

Cheer up, father. How are you? Sir Nicholas Gawsey called for reinforcements, and so has Clifton. I'm going to Clifton right now.

KING

Wait, and breathe for a moment. You have redeemed your bad reputation, and show that you care something for me, by rescuing me like this.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh God! Anyone who ever said I wished for you to die did me a terrible wrong. If I wanted that, I would have let Douglas continue his attack. That would have killed you faster than any dose of poison, and it would have saved me the trouble of treachery.

KING

Make up to Clifton. I'll to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

Exit the KING

Enter HOTSPUR

HOTSPUR

If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

PRINCE HENRY

Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.

HOTSPUR

60 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.
Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere,
65 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
To end the one of us, and would to God
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine.

KING

Go to Clifton; I'll go to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

The KING exits.

HOTSPUR enters.

HOTSPUR

If I'm not mistaken, you're Harry Monmouth.

PRINCE HENRY

You make it sound as if I'd deny it.

HOTSPUR

My name is Harry Percy.

PRINCE HENRY

Why then, I'm looking at a very brave rebel by that name. I am the Prince of Wales, and don't think, Percy, that you can share in my glory any longer. There isn't enough room for two stars in the same orbit; England cannot handle a double reign, Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales ruling at once.

HOTSPUR

It won't have to, Harry, for the time has come for one of us to die. I only wish that you had as great a reputation in warfare as I do.

PRINCE HENRY

70 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

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
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me.
They wound my thoughts worse than thy sword my flesh.

PRINCE HENRY

My reputation will be greater by the time we part. I'll take all the flowers of honor from your helmet, and turn them into a garland for myself.

HOTSPUR

I can't stand your arrogance any longer.

They fight.

FALSTAFF enters.

FALSTAFF

Well said, Hal! Go for it, Hal! This isn't child's play, I'll tell you that much!

DOUGLAS returns and fights with FALSTAFF, who falls down and plays dead.

DOUGLAS exits.

PRINCE HENRY kills HOTSPUR

HOTSPUR

Oh, Harry, you've [taken away](#) my youth. I can handle the loss of my fragile life, but not the loss of all the honors you have won from me: that loss wounds my thoughts more than your sword wounds my flesh. But thought depends on life, and life

80 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,
But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust,
85 And food for— (*he dies*)

PRINCE HENRY

For worms, brave Percy. Fare thee well, great heart.
Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk!
When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it was too small a bound,
90 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,
I should not make so dear a show of zeal.
95 But let my favors hide thy mangled face;
And even in thy behalf I'll thank myself
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.
Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven.
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
100 But not remembered in thy epitaph.

He spieth FALSTAFF on the ground

What, old acquaintance, could not all this flesh

depends on time, and time, which watches over the whole world, must stop eventually. Oh, I could make prophecies, but the cold hand of death is stopping my tongue. No, Percy. You are dust, and food for—(*he dies*)

PRINCE HENRY

For worms, brave Percy. Farewell, brave soul. Your ambition, aimed at evil, ends—look at how withered it has become. When this body contained a soul, an entire kingdom was too small to hold it. But now, two paces of wretched earth is plenty of room. The ground that you lie dead upon doesn't have a single living man upon it as brave as you. If you could hear me, I wouldn't praise you so lavishly. But let me cover your battered face with part of my uniform. I'll thank myself on your behalf for doing these rites of respect.
Adieu, and take my praise of you to heaven. Let your disgraces sleep with you in the grave, and let them be kept off your tombstone!

He sees FALSTAFF lying on the ground.

What? My old friend? Couldn't all this flesh hold onto a little

Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell.
I could have better spared a better man.
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee
105 If I were much in love with vanity.

Death hath not struck so fat a deer today,
Though many dearer in this bloody fray.
Emboweled will I see thee by and by;
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie.

Exit PRINCE HENRY

FALSTAFF riseth up

FALSTAFF

110 Emboweled? If thou bowel 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. Therefore I'll

life? Poor Jack, farewell. I would rather have lost a more valuable soldier. If I were in love with vanity, I'd really miss you. Death hasn't taken anyone as fat today, though it has taken many better men in this vicious battle. I'll have you bowelled soon; till then, lie here in blood, by the great Percy.

PRINCE HENRY exits.

FALSTAFF stands up.

FALSTAFF

Embowedled? If you cut me open today, I'll let you pickle me and eat me tomorrow. Damn! I had to fake being dead, or that raging rebel of a Scotsman would have ended me. Fake? No, I tell a lie: I'm not a faker. To die is to be a faker, because a dead body is an imitation of a living one. But to fake being dead, in order to stay alive, that's no kind of faking. That's the truest kind of living there is. Bravery is mostly about precaution; I'm careful, and it saved my life. Damn, I'm scared of this bombshell Percy, even though he's dead. What if he's faking, too, and he gets up? I swear, he'd be the better faker. Therefore, I'll make sure he's dead; in fact, I'll swear that I killed him. Why couldn't he just get up, like I did? Only a

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

130 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

135 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.

witness could stop me, and there are no witnesses here. Therefore, sirrah, (*stabs the body*) you're coming with me—complete with a new wound in your thigh. (*he throws HOTSPUR's body over his shoulder*)

PRINCE HENRY and **Lord John of LANCASTER** enter.

PRINCE HENRY

John, my brother, you've bravely proven yourself in this, your first battle.

LANCASTER

Wait! Who do we have here? Didn't you say this fat man was dead?

PRINCE HENRY

I did. I saw him dead on the ground, bleeding and not breathing. Are you alive? Or is this some kind of dream, playing with our sight? Talk to us. We won't trust our eyes without our ears. You aren't what you seem to be.

FALSTAFF

That's for sure. I'm not a double man. But if I'm not Jack Falstaff, then I'm a crook. Here's Percy. If the king will honor me for this, fine. If not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I expect to me made an earl or a Duke for this, I'll tell you that much.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, Percy I killed myself, and saw thee dead.

FALSTAFF

140 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

This is the strangest tale that ever I heard.

PRINCE HENRY

This is the strangest fellow, brother John.—

150 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

The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours.
Come, brother, let us to the highest of the field
155 To see what friends are living, who are dead.

PRINCE HENRY

Why, I killed Percy myself and I saw you dead.

FALSTAFF

You did? Lord, Lord, how people love to lie! I admit I had fallen and was out of breath, and so was he. But we both stood up at the same time and fought for a long hour. If I am to be believed, fine. If I'm not believed, then the guilt will lie with the people who are supposed to reward bravery. I swear on my life, I gave him this gash in the leg. Damn, if he were alive and said I didn't, I'd shove my sword down his throat.

LANCASTER

This is the strangest story I've ever heard.

PRINCE HENRY

This is the strangest man, John. All right then, display your prize on your back. As far as I'm concerned, if lying will help you out, I'll decorate your lie as prettily as I can.

A trumpet blows a call of retreat.

A trumpet is blowing retreat: we've won. Come on, brother. Let's get to high ground and see which of our friends are alive, and which 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

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

PRINCE HENRY and Lord John of LANCASTER exit.

FALSTAFF

I'll follow them and claim my reward. May God reward whoever rewards me. If I grow into a great man, I'll grow thinner: I'll go on a diet, quit drinking, and live properly, like a great man should.

He exits.

Act 5 Scene 5

Trumpets sound. The KING, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, and WESTMORELAND enter, with WORCESTER and VERNON as prisoners.

KING

This is how rebellions always end—defeated. Evil-spirited Worcester! Didn't I offer kindness, forgiveness and friendship to all of you? And you pretended that I did the opposite? Your relatives and friends trusted you, yet you lied to them? Three of our knights who were killed today, a noble earl, and many other men might have been alive right now if you had been a decent man and reported truthfully on the negotiations between our two armies.

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?

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

With all my heart.

PRINCE HENRY

25 Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you
This honorable bounty shall belong.

I did what I had to do for the sake of my own well-being. I accept my fate patiently, since there's no way I can avoid it.

KING

Put Worcester to death, and Vernon too: I'll wait a while before I decide what to do about the others.

WORCESTER and VERNON are escorted away by guards.

What's happening on the battlefield?

PRINCE HENRY

When that brave Scotsman, Lord Douglas, saw that things were turning against him, that Percy had been killed, and that his men were fleeing in terror, he ran away too. He fell down a hill and was so badly injured that our men were able to capture him. He's being held prisoner at my tent.
I ask your highness to let me decide what to do with him.

KING

With all my heart.

PRINCE HENRY

Brother, John of Lancaster, I'm going to give you the honor of this generous act. Go to Douglas and set him free, with no

Go to the Douglas, and deliver him
Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free.
His valor shown upon our crests today
30 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

Then this remains, that we divide our power.
35 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.
Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales
40 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,
Let us not leave till all our own be won.

Exeunt

ransom due. Let him do whatever he wants. His brave fighting against us today should be valued, even though he was our enemy.

LANCASTER

Thank you for giving me this honor. I'll take care of it immediately.

KING

All that's left is for us to split up our armies. You, my son John, and you, Westmoreland, head towards York as quickly as you can. Confront Northumberland and that churchman the Archbishop, who, I gather, are raising armies against us. You and I, Harry my son, will head for Wales to fight Glendower and Mortimer. The rebellion in this land will break apart once it meets battles like the one we fought today. And since we have accomplished our business so well, let's not quit until everything has been won.

They exit.