

## Act 1 Scene 1

*Enter LORD BARDOLPH*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Who keeps the gate here, ho?

*Enter the PORTER*

Where is the Earl?

**PORTER**

What shall I say you are?

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Tell thou the Earl

That the Lord Bardolph doth attend him here.

**PORTER**

His lordship is walked forth into the orchard.

5 Please it your Honor knock but at the gate

And he himself will answer.

**NORTHUMBERLAND** *Enter*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Here comes the Earl.

*Exit PORTER*

*LORD BARDOLPH enters.*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Hello? Who's the doorman around here?

*The PORTER opens the door.*

(to the PORTER) Where's the Earl?

**PORTER**

Who shall I say you are?

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Tell the Earl that the Lord Bardolph is here to see him.

**PORTER**

His lordship is out walking in the orchard. If you don't mind, knock at the orchard gate and he'll answer it himself.

**NORTHUMBERLAND** *enters from another side of the stage.*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Here comes the Earl.

*The PORTER exits.*

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

What news, Lord Bardolph? Every minute now  
Should be the father of some stratagem.  
The times are wild. Contention, like a horse  
10 Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose  
And bears down all before him.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

Noble Earl,  
I bring you certain news from Shrewsbury.

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Good, an God will!

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

As good as heart can wish.  
15 The King is almost wounded to the death,  
And, in the fortune of my lord your son,  
Prince Harry slain outright; and both the Blunts  
Killed by the hand of Douglas; young Prince John  
And Westmoreland and Stafford fled the field;  
20 And Harry Monmouth's brawn, the hulk Sir John,  
Is prisoner to your son. O, such a day,  
So fought, so followed, and so fairly won,  
Came not till now to dignify the times  
Since Caesar's fortunes.

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

What's the news, Lord Bardolph? Every minute, new violence erupts; it is a wild time. Conflict is like a horse, fed with too much rich food: it has broken out uncontrollably, and tramples everyone who stands before it.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

Noble Earl, I have reliable news from Shrewsbury.

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Good news, God willing.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

As good as one could wish for. The King has been wounded and is near death. And, thanks to your son's luck, Prince Harry has been killed. Douglas killed both Lords Blunt. Prince John of Lancaster, Westmoreland, and Stafford fled the battlefield. And your son captured that hulking Sir John Falstaff, Prince Harry's fattened pig. Oh, there hasn't been a battle so well fought or a victory so well won since the days of Julius Caesar! It brings honor to our times.

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

How is this derived?

25 Saw you the field? Came you from Shrewsbury?

### LORD BARDOLPH

I spake with one, my lord, that came from thence,  
A gentleman well bred and of good name,  
That freely rendered me these news for true.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Here comes my servant Travers, who I sent  
30 On Tuesday last to listen after news.

*Enter TRAVERS*

### LORD BARDOLPH

My lord, I overrode him on the way;  
And he is furnished with no certainties  
More than he haply may retail from me.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Now, Travers, what good tidings comes with you?

### TRAVERS

35 My lord, Sir John Umfreyle turned me back  
With joyful tidings and, being better horsed,  
Outrode me. After him came spurring hard  
A gentleman, almost forspent with speed,  
That stopp'd by me to breathe his bloodied horse.

How do you know all this? Did you see the battlefield? Did you come from Shrewsbury?

### LORD BARDOLPH

I talked with someone, my lord, who was coming from there.  
He was a gentleman, with good breeding and a good reputation. He swore that all this was the truth.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Here comes my servant, Travers. I sent him last Tuesday to find out what was happening.

*TRAVERS enters.*

### LORD BARDOLPH

Sir, I passed him on my way here. He doesn't know anything more than what I told him.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Now Travers, what good news do you have?

### TRAVERS

Sir, [Lord](#) Bardolph told me happy news and I turned around, to come back here. But he had a faster horse, so he passed me and got here first.  
Another man came after him, riding hard. He was nearly exhausted from going so fast, and he stopped to give his

40 He asked the way to Chester, and of him  
I did demand what news from Shrewsbury.  
He told me that rebellion had bad luck  
And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.  
With that he gave his able horse the head  
45 And, bending forward, struck his armèd heels  
Against the panting sides of his poor jade  
Up to the rowel-head, and starting so  
He seemed in running to devour the way,  
Staying no longer question.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Ha? Again:  
50 Said he young Harry Percy's spur was cold?  
Of Hotspur, Coldspur? That rebellion  
Had met ill luck?

### LORD BARDOLPH

My lord, I'll tell you what:  
If my young lord your son have not the day,  
Upon mine honor, for a silken point  
55 I'll give my barony. Never talk of it.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Why should that gentleman that rode by Travers  
Give then such instances of loss?

### LORD BARDOLPH

bleeding horse a break. He asked me for directions to Chester, and I demanded to hear news from Shrewsbury. He said that the rebels had been beaten, and that Harry Percy's spur was cold. Then he took off on his horse, leaned forward in his saddle, and jammed his heels into the animal's side so hard that they almost disappeared. He rode so fast he seemed to be devouring the highway. He didn't stay around to answer any of my questions.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

What? Say that again: he said that Harry Percy's spur was cold? Hotspur is now "Coldspur?" That the rebels had bad luck?

### LORD BARDOLPH

My lord, I'll tell you what—if your son hasn't won, on my honor, I'll exchange all my land for a lace to tie stockings with; don't even say such a thing.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

But why would that gentleman who rode past Travers describe such examples of loss?

### LORD BARDOLPH

Who, he?  
He was some hilding fellow that had stolen  
The horse he rode on and, upon my life,  
60 Spoke at a venture. Look, here comes more news.

*Enter MORTON*

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title leaf,  
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.  
So looks the strand whereon the imperious flood  
Hath left a witness'd usurpation.—

65 Say, Morton, didst thou come from Shrewsbury?

### MORTON

I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord,  
Where hateful death put on his ugliest mask  
To fright our party.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

How doth my son and brother?  
70 Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.  
Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,  
So dull, so dead in look, so woebegone,  
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,  
75 And would have told him half his Troy was burnt;

Who, him? He was some insignificant nobody who stole the horse he was riding and, I bet my life, was just talking nonsense. Look, here comes another messenger.

*MORTON enters.*

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Yes. And the look on his face is like the title page of a book: it hints at the tragic story within. His brow is lined with furrows, like a beach after a wild flood. Morton, did you come from Shrewsbury?

### MORTON

I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord. Death was there, frightening our side with his ugliest mask.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

How are my son and my brother? You're trembling, and the paleness of your face is more likely to convey your news than your tongue. This is like that old story about the burning of Troy. A man like you—faint, lifeless, dull, deadly-looking, sad—woke King Priam in the dead of night to tell him that half the city of Troy had been burned down. But Priam saw the fire before this man could speak, and I can see my Percy's death

But Priam found the fire ere he his tongue,  
And I my Percy's death ere thou report'st it.  
This thou wouldest say, "Your son did thus and thus;  
Your brother thus; so fought the noble Douglas"—  
80 Stopping my greedy ear with their bold deeds.  
But in the end, to stop my ear indeed,  
Thou hast a sigh to blow away this praise,  
Ending with "Brother, son, and all are dead."

### MORTON

Douglas is living, and your brother yet,  
85 But for my lord your son—

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Why, he is dead.  
See what a ready tongue suspicion hath!  
He that but fears the thing he would not know  
Hath, by instinct, knowledge from others' eyes  
That what he feared is chancèd. Yet speak, Morton.  
90 Tell thou an earl his divination lies,

And I will take it as a sweet disgrace  
And make thee rich for doing me such wrong.

### MORTON

You are too great to be by me gainsaid,  
Your spirit is too true, your fears too certain.

before you report it. You're going to tell me, "Your son did such-and-such; your brother did this; the noble Douglas fought like so." You'll stuff my greedy ears with stories of their bold deeds. But in the end, you'll stop my ears forever with a sigh that blows away all your words of praise. You will end your story by saying, "Your brother, your son, everyone-dead."

### MORTON

Douglas is alive, and so is your brother, for now. But as for your son, my lord—

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Why, he is dead. My suspicion is so quick to speak! When a man fears something, and doesn't want to know the truth, he can still tell when that thing has happened; by instinct, he can read it in another man's eyes. But speak, Morton. Tell me, who am an earl, that I have

no talent for prophecy. I'll take it as a pleasant insult, and I'll pay you richly for doing me that wrong.

### MORTON

You are too great a man to be slandered by me. Your instinct is correct; your fears are true.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

95 Yet, for all this, say not that Percy's dead.  
I see a strange confession in thine eye.  
Thou shak'st thy head and hold'st it fear or sin  
To speak a truth. If he be slain, say so.  
The tongue offends not that reports his death;  
100 And he doth sin that doth belie the dead,  
Not he which says the dead is not alive.  
Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news  
Hath but a losing office, and his tongue  
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell  
105 Remembered tolling a departing friend.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

I cannot think, my lord, your son is dead.

## **MORTON**

I am sorry I should force you to believe  
That which I would to God I had not seen,  
But these mine eyes saw him in bloody state,  
110 Rend'ring faint quittance, wearied and outbreathed,  
To Harry Monmouth; whose swift wrath beat down  
The never-daunted Percy to the earth,  
From whence with life he never more sprung up.  
In few, his death, whose spirit lent a fire  
115 Even to the dullest peasant in his camp,  
Being bruited once, took fire and heat away

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

But despite all this, don't say that Percy's dead. I can see a strange sort of confession in your eyes. You shake your head; you're afraid to tell the truth, or you think it would be sinful. If he's been killed, say so. The man who reports a death doesn't offend with that report. To lie about the dead is a sin, but it is no sin to say that a dead man is not alive. It's a losing situation, being the first man to bring unwelcome news. That man's voice sounds forever like a sad bell, and it will always be remembered for tolling the death of a friend.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

My lord, I cannot believe your son is dead.

## **MORTON**

I'm sorry that I must force you to believe this, when I wish to God that I hadn't seen it myself. But I saw him, in his bloody state, with my own eyes. He was barely able to fight back, exhausted and out of breath. Harry Monmouth's swift fury beat the unflinching Percy down to the ground, and once he was there, Percy never rose again. To be brief, Percy's spirit inspired the entire army, down to the dullest peasant. When the news got out that he had been killed, it took the fire and courage away from even the bravest soldiers. Percy's metal steeled the

From the best tempered courage in his troops;  
For from his metal was his party steeled,  
Which, once in him abated, all the rest  
120 Turned on themselves, like dull and heavy lead.  
And as the thing that's heavy in itself  
Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed.

So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,  
Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear  
125 That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim  
Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,  
Fly from the field. Then was the noble Worcester  
Too soon ta'en prisoner; and that furious Scot,  
The bloody Douglas, whose well-laboring sword  
130 Had three times slain th'appearance of the King,  
Gan vail his stomach and did grace the shame  
Of those that turned their backs and in his flight,  
Stumbling in fear, was took. The sum of all  
Is that the King hath won and hath sent out  
135 A speedy power to encounter you, my lord,  
Under the conduct of young Lancaster  
And Westmoreland. This is the news at full.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

For this I shall have time enough to mourn.  
In poison there is physic, and these news,  
140 Having been well, that would have made me sick,

whole army; when they learned that he had been blunted, they bent and warped like dull, heavy lead.  
And just as a heavy object gains momentum once it's pushed into motion, our army, made heavy by

Hotspur's death, suddenly started moving fast—faster than arrows flying toward a target—but they flew toward safety, not toward the battle. Soon, Worcester, that furious Scotsman, was captured. The warlike Douglas, who killed three enemies disguised as King Henry, began to lose courage: he ran away as well, lending his authority to the shameful retreat. But running in fear, he stumbled and was captured. The bottom line is that King Henry has won. He's sent a speedy force after you, sir, led by young John of Lancaster and Westmoreland. That is the whole story.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

There will be time to mourn for this. Sometimes poison can be a kind of medicine: this news, which would have made me sick had I been well, has, because I am sick, made me well. A dying

Being sick, have in some measure made me well.  
And as the wretch whose fever-weakened joints,  
Like strengthless hinges, buckle under life,  
Impatient of his fit, breaks like a fire

145 Out of his keeper's arms, even so my limbs,  
Weakened with grief, being now enraged with grief,  
Are thrice themselves. Hence therefore, thou nice crutch.  
A scaly gauntlet now with joints of steel  
Must glove this hand. And hence, thou sickly coif.

150 Thou art a guard too wanton for the head  
Which princes, fleshed with conquest, aim to hit.  
Now bind my brows with iron, and approach  
The ragged'st hour that time and spite dare bring  
To frown upon th'enraged Northumberland.

155 Let heaven kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand  
Keep the wild flood confined. Let order die,  
And let this world no longer be a stage

To feed contention in a lingering act;  
But let one spirit of the firstborn Cain  
160 Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set  
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,  
And darkness be the burier of the dead.

### LORD BARDOLPH

This strainèd passion doth you wrong, my lord.

man—his joints weakened by fever, dangling like useless hinges and crumpling under the man's own weight—will sometimes be stuck with a fit of impatience, causing him to burst out of his caretaker's arms. My limbs are like that now; once weakened by grief, they're now enraged by grief, and are three times as powerful as they were before. Away from me, you unmanly crutch! Chain mail armor will cover my hands now. Away from me, you invalid's cap! You are too fanciful a helmet for this head which is now the target of kings, grown arrogant with their victories. Wrap my head in iron, and then attack me with the roughest things that destiny and hatred will dare to bring upon me in my rage. Let the sky come crashing down! Let the ocean overflow the shores! Let law and order die! And let the world no longer be a stage for a long, drawn-out struggle: let the spirit of

Cain, who committed the first murder against his brother Abel, live in every heart. If every heart is a murderer's heart, this violent play will end, and darkness will shroud the corpses.

### LORD BARDOLPH

This extreme passion is bad for you, sir.

## MORTON

Sweet Earl, divorce not wisdom from your honor.  
165 The lives of all your loving complices  
Lean on your health, the which, if you give o'er  
To stormy passion, must perforce decay.  
You cast th' event of war, my noble lord,  
And summed the account of chance before you said  
170 "Let us make head." It was your presurmise  
That, in the dole of blows your son might drop.  
You knew he walked o'er perils on an edge,  
More likely to fall in than to get o'er.  
You were advised his flesh was capable  
175 Of wounds and scars, and that his forward spirit  
Would lift him where most trade of danger ranged.  
Yet did you say "Go forth," and none of this,  
Though strongly apprehended, could restrain  
The stiff-borne action. What hath then befall'n,  
180 Or what did this bold enterprise brought forth,  
More than that being which was like to be?

## LORD BARDOLPH

We all that are engagèd to this loss  
Knew that we ventured on such dangerous seas  
That if we wrought out life, 'twas ten to one;  
185 And yet we ventured, for the gain proposed  
Choked the respect of likely peril feared;

## MORTON

Gentle Earl, don't abandon your wisdom. All your allies are depending on you and your well-being. If you allow yourself to indulge in this kind of stormy emotion, your health will deteriorate even further. Before you said, "Let's raise an army," you calculated how the war might end, and you thought carefully about the likeliness of a victory. You knew from the beginning that, once the fighting started, your son might die. You knew that he was treading dangerously, as if on the edge of a precipice: you knew he was more likely to fall over than make it across. You were warned that your son was made of flesh and blood, and that it was possible he'd get hurt. You were warned that his temper and hot-headedness would push him into the most dangerous situations. But you still said, "Go forward." None of this consideration, even though it was clearly understood, could stop the stubborn course of events. So what happened here? What has been the result of this brave undertaking? Only this: precisely what was likely to happen in the first place.

## LORD BARDOLPH

We all knew that we were venturing into dangerous waters. We knew the odds were ten to one that we would come out alive, and yet we ventured forward anyway. The potential reward of winning outweighed the fear of our probable loss.

And since we are o'erset, venture again.  
Come, we will all put forth, body and goods.

### MORTON

'Tis more than time.—And, my most noble lord,  
190 I hear for certain, and do speak the truth:  
  
The gentle Archbishop of York is up  
With well-appointed powers. He is a man  
Who with a double surety binds his followers.  
  
My lord your son had only but the corpse,  
195 But shadows and the shows of men, to fight;  
  
For that same word "rebellion" did divide  
The action of their bodies from their souls,  
And they did fight with queasiness, constrained,  
  
As men drink potions, that their weapons only  
200 Seemed on our side. But, for their spirits and souls,  
  
This word "rebellion," it had froze them up  
As fish are in a pond. But now the Bishop  
Turns insurrection to religion.  
  
Supposed sincere and holy in his thoughts,  
205 He's followed both with body and with mind,  
  
And doth enlarge his rising with the blood  
Of fair King Richard, scraped from Pomfret stones;  
  
Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;  
Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,  
210 Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke;

We lost this time, but let's try again. Come, we'll all go for it,  
body and soul.

### MORTON

It is the appropriate time. Good sir, I hear for certain, and I tell  
you truthfully, that the Archbishop of York has raised a  
powerful army. He motivates his men with both his earthly and  
his spiritual powers. My lord, your son commanded only his  
soldiers' bodies. The word "rebellion" frightened them,  
separating their bodies from their hearts. It caused them to  
fight timidly, hesitantly, as though they were taking medicine:  
their weapons seemed to be on our side, but their spirits and  
souls were frozen, like fish in an icy pond. But now, the  
Archbishop turns our rebellion into a religious cause. Everyone  
believes he's a righteous and holy man, and they follow him  
not only in body but also in mind. He enhances his cause by  
preaching about the blood of good King Richard, which was  
spilled at Pomfret Castle. The Archbishop claims that he  
derives his authority from heaven; tells the men that the whole  
country is bleeding, gasping for life under the terrible  
leadership of Bolingbroke. And so men from every walk of life  
flock like sheep to follow him.

And more and less do flock to follow him.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

I knew of this before, but, to speak truth,  
This present grief had wiped it from my mind.  
Go in with me and counsel every man  
215 The aptest way for safety and revenge.  
Get posts and letters, and make friends with speed.  
Never so few, and never yet more need.

*Exeunt*

### NORTHUMBERLAND

I knew all this, but to tell you the truth, this terrible grief had pushed it out of my thoughts. Come inside; I want to hear everyone's ideas on the best way to defend ourselves and enact our revenge. Send out messengers and letters, and make new allies quickly. Our numbers have never been smaller, but there's never been more need for what we have to do.

*They exit.*

## Act 1 Scene 2

*Enter Sir John FALSTAFF, with his PAGE bearing his sword and buckler*

### FALSTAFF

Sirrah, you giant, what says the doctor to my water?

### PAGE

He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water, but, for the party that owed it, he might have more diseases than he knew for.

### FALSTAFF

5 Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent

*Sir John FALSTAFF enters with his PAGE, who carries a sword and shield.*

### FALSTAFF

Sirrah, you giant, what did the doctor say about my urine?

### PAGE

He said that the urine itself was good, healthy urine, but that the man who owned it probably had more diseases than he could tell.

### FALSTAFF

All kinds of people make it a matter of pride to heckle me. No man—that foolishly assembled lump of clay—could ever

anything that tends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath

10 overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the Prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment. Thou whoreson mandrake, thou art fitter to be worn in my cap than to wait at my heels. I was never manned with an agate till now, but I will inset 15 you neither in gold nor silver, but in vile apparel, and send you back again to your master for a jewel. The juvenal, the Prince your master, whose chin is not yet fledge—I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one off his cheek, and yet he will not stick to say 20 his face is a face royal. God may finish it when He will. 'Tis not a hair amiss yet. He may keep it still at a face royal, for a barber shall never earn sixpence out of it, and yet he'll be crowing as if he had writ man ever since his father was a bachelor. He may keep his own grace, but he's almost out of

25 mine, I can assure him. What said Master Dommelton about the satin for my short cloak and my slops?

invent something quite as funny as I seem to be to other people. I'm not only witty on my own, but I bring out wit in other people. Look at the two of us, walking here: I look like a sow that's smothered all of her baby pigs, except for you. If the Prince sent you to serve me for any other reason than to irritate me, I'm a fool. You weedy little son of a bitch: you're so tiny that you should be a decoration on my hat, not a servant at my feet. I've never had a servant before who was as tiny as a ring stone. But I won't set you in a gold or silver ring; I'll wrap you in rags and send you back to your master, to be used as a jewel—that youth, the Prince your master, whose chin is still lacking a beard. Why, I'll grow a beard in the palm of my hand before he'll have one that he can shave off his face. And yet, this doesn't stop him from claiming that he has a face for [royalty](#). Well, God will give him a beard whenever he chooses to—there's not a hair out of place yet. It's a good thing the Prince's face is a royal, because a barber will never earn a coin from shaving it. And still, the

Prince brags that he's been a full-grown man since before he was born. He can keep that title, for all I care; I have no affection for him now, I can assure him. What did Master Dommelton say about the satin for my cape and baggy trousers?

**PAGE**

He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance than Bardolph. He would not take his band and yours. He liked not the security.

**FALSTAFF**

30 Let him be damned like the glutton! Pray God his tongue be hotter! A whoreson Achitophel, a rascally yea-forsooth knave, to bear a gentleman in hand and then stand upon security! The whoreson smoothy-pates do now wear nothing but high shoes and bunches of keys at their girdles; 35 and if a man is through with them in honest taking up, then they must stand upon security. I had as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth as offer to stop it with "security." I looked he should have sent me two-and-twenty yards of satin, as I am a true knight, and he sends me "security." Well, 40 he may sleep in security, for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it, and yet cannot he see though he have his own lantern to light him.

Where's  
Bardolph?

**PAGE**

45 He's gone into Smithfield to buy your Worship a horse.

**PAGE**

He said that you have to give him a better guarantee of payment than just saying Bardolph was good for it. He wouldn't accept Bardolph's promise or yours; he felt that neither should be trusted.

**FALSTAFF**

Damn him to hell then, just like Dives in the Bible—the rich glutton who rejected the beggar Lazarus! And may Dommelton burn even hotter! He's a son-of-a-bitch traitor! A two-faced liar, who smiles and says "Yes sir, that'll be fine" to my face, and then demands a guarantee of payment! These bastard shopkeepers, with their fashionable short haircuts, and fancy shoes, and their fat key chains on their belts—you make an agreement to put something on credit, and then they throw a "guarantee of payment" at you. I would rather eat rat poison than guarantee my payment. I expected him to send me twenty-two yards of satin, and instead he sends me a "guarantee of payment." Well, let him guarantee himself a good night's sleep. After all, his wife's in somebody else's bed, so why not? She's practically shining a spotlight on her adultery, but he's so clueless he can't even tell. Where's Bardolph?

**PAGE**

He went to Smithfield to buy you a horse, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

I bought him in Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield. An I could get me but a wife in the stews, I were manned, horsed, and wived.

*Enter the Lord **CHIEF JUSTICE** and **SERVANT***

**PAGE**

Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the Prince for striking  
50 him about Bardolph.

**FALSTAFF**

Wait close. I will not see him.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What's he that goes there?

**SERVANT**

Falstaff, an 't please your Lordship.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

He that was in question for the robbery?

**SERVANT**

55 He, my lord; but he hath since done good service at Shrewsbury, and, as I hear, is now going with some charge to the Lord John of Lancaster.

**FALSTAFF**

I bought Bardolph at [St. Paul's Cathedral](#), and he's buying me a horse in Smithfield. Now if he could just find me a wife in a whorehouse, I'd be fully stocked with high-quality servants, horses, and wives.

*The Lord **CHIEF JUSTICE** and his **SERVANT** enter.*

**PAGE**

Sir, here comes the man who put the Prince in jail for hitting him during that argument about Bardolph.

**FALSTAFF**

Hide; I don't want to talk to him.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Who is that man?

**SERVANT**

Falstaff, if it please you, sir.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

The man who was a suspect in that robbery?

**SERVANT**

That's the one. But he did good work in the Battle of Shrewsbury, and I hear he's taking some soldiers to help Lord John of Lancaster.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What, to York? Call him back again.

**SERVANT**

Sir John Falstaff!

**FALSTAFF**

Boy, tell him I am deaf.

**PAGE**

60 You must speak louder. My master is deaf.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I am sure he is, to the hearing of any thing good.—Go pluck him by the elbow. I must speak with him.

**SERVANT**

Sir John!

**FALSTAFF**

What, a young knave and begging? Is there not wars? Is 65 there not employment? Doth not the King lack subjects? Do not the rebels need soldiers? Though it be a shame to be on any side but one, it is worse shame to beg than to be on the

worst side, were it worse than the name of rebellion can tell how to make it.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Where, to York? Tell him to come here.

**SERVANT**

Sir John Falstaff!

**FALSTAFF**

Boy, tell him I'm deaf.

**PAGE**

You have to speak up; my master is deaf.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I'm sure he is, when anything good's being said. Go, tap him on the shoulder. I must speak with him.

**SERVANT**

Sir John!

**FALSTAFF**

What? A young troublemaker? A beggar? Isn't there a war on? Isn't there work to do? Doesn't the King need subjects? Don't the rebels need soldiers? Though it's shameful to be on any side but the King's, it's even more shameful to be an idle beggar than a soldier on

wrong side—even if the rebellion were more despicable than the word "rebellion" already leads me to believe.

**SERVANT**

70 You mistake me, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Why sir, did I say you were an honest man? Setting my knighthood and my soldiership aside, I had lied in my throat if I had said so.

**SERVANT**

I pray you, sir, then set your knighthood and our soldiership  
75 aside, and give me leave to tell you, you lie in your throat if you say I am any other than an honest man.

**FALSTAFF**

I give thee leave to tell me so? I lay aside that which grows to me? If thou gett'st any leave of me, hang me; if thou tak'st leave, thou wert better be hanged. You hunt counter. Hence!  
80 Avaunt!

**SERVANT**

Sir, my lord would speak with you.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Sir John Falstaff, a word with you.

**FALSTAFF**

My good lord. God give your Lordship good time of the day. I am glad to see your Lordship abroad. I heard say your

**SERVANT**

You're mistaken, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Why is that? Did I say you were an honest man? Because, setting aside the fact that I'm knight and a soldier, I'd be nothing but a liar if I said that.

**SERVANT**

Then please, sir, set aside your knighthood and your soldiership and let me tell you that you're a deliberate liar, if you say I'm anything other than an honest man.

**FALSTAFF**

Should I allow you to say that? Should I set aside something that's mine by right? If I allow you anything, hang me. If you allow yourself, hang you. You're running in the wrong direction: get out of here! Go!

**SERVANT**

Sir, my master wants to speak with you.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Sir John Falstaff, I'd like a word with you.

**FALSTAFF**

My good sir! God grant you a good day! It's great to see you out and about: I'd heard you were sick. I hope your doctor

85 Lordship was sick: I hope your Lordship goes abroad by advice. Your Lordship, though not clean past your youth, have yet some smack of an ague in you, some relish of the saltness of time in you, and I most humbly beseech your Lordship to have a reverent care of your health.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

90 Sir John, I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury.

### **FALSTAFF**

An 't please your Lordship, I hear his Majesty is returned with some discomfort from Wales.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

I talk not of his Majesty. You would not come when I sent 95 for you.

### **FALSTAFF**

And I hear, moreover, his Highness is fallen into this same whoreson apoplexy.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Well, God mend him. I pray you let me speak with you.

### **FALSTAFF**

This apoplexy, as I take it, is a kind of lethargy, an 't please

knows you're out. Though you're not entirely past your youth, your lordship, you have a touch of age in you, a touch of the passage of time, and I must humbly urge you to take good care of your health.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Sir John, I sent for you to come see me before you left for Shrewsbury.

### **FALSTAFF**

If you don't mind my saying so, I hear the King is back from Wales and it didn't go so well.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

I'm not talking about the King. You didn't come when I sent for you.

### **FALSTAFF**

And I also hear that the King has fallen into a terrible paralysis.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Well, God give him a speedy recovery. Please, let me speak with you.

### **FALSTAFF**

100 your Lordship, a kind of sleeping in the blood, a whoreson tingling.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

What tell you me of it? Be it as it is.

### **FALSTAFF**

It hath its original from much grief, from study, and perturbation of the brain. I have read the cause of his effects  
105 in Galen. It is a kind of deafness.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

I think you are fallen into the disease, for you hear not what I say to you.

### **FALSTAFF**

Very well, my lord, very well. Rather, an 't please you, it is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that  
110 I am troubled withal.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

To punish you by the heels would amend the attention of your ears, and I care not if I do become your physician.

### **FALSTAFF**

I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient. Your Lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me in  
115 respect of poverty, but how should I be your patient to follow

His paralysis is, as I understand it, a kind of lethargy, if it please you. It's a sleepiness in the blood, a nasty tingling.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Why are you telling me this? Let it be.

### **FALSTAFF**

It comes from heavy sadness; from too much reading, and too much thinking. I read about it in the reference books: it's a kind of deafness.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

I think you must have that disease as well, because you're not hearing a word I'm saying.

### **FALSTAFF**

Very likely, my lord, very likely. But actually, sir, I have the not-listening disease; I have the not-paying-attention sickness.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

The cure for that illness would be to put you in shackles, and I wouldn't mind being your doctor.

### **FALSTAFF**

I may be as poor as [Job](#), but I'm not as patient. You may be able to throw me in jail because of my poverty, but some people might have slight reservations about that.

your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or indeed a scruple itself.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I sent for you, when there were matters against you for your life, to come speak with me.

**FALSTAFF**

120 As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the laws of this land-service, I did not come.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Well, the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

**FALSTAFF**

He that buckles him in my belt cannot live in less.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

**FALSTAFF**

125 I would it were otherwise. I would my means were greater and my waist slender.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

You have misled the youthful Prince.

**FALSTAFF****CHIEF JUSTICE**

I sent for you to come speak with me. There were charges against you that might have earned you the death penalty.

**FALSTAFF**

I was advised that, since I was working for the army at the time, I shouldn't go.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

The truth is, Sir John, that you are massively notorious.

**FALSTAFF**

Anybody who wears a belt this big couldn't be anything less than massive.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Your bank account is thin, and yet you put it to huge waste.

**FALSTAFF**

I wish it were the other way around: that my bank account were huge and my waist were thin.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

You've misled the young Prince.

**FALSTAFF**

The young Prince hath misled me. I am the fellow with the great belly, and he my dog.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

130 Well, I am loath to gall a new-healed wound. Your day's service at Shrewsbury hath a little gilded over your night's exploit on [Gad's Hill](#). You may thank th' unquiet time for your quiet o'erposting that action.

### **FALSTAFF**

My lord.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

135 But since all is well, keep it so. Wake not a sleeping wolf.

### **FALSTAFF**

To wake a wolf is as bad as to smell a fox.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

What, you are as a candle, the better part burnt out.

### **FALSTAFF**

A wassail candle, my lord, all tallow. If I did say of wax, my growth would approve the truth.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

140 There is not a white hair on your face but should have his

The young Prince has misled me. I'm the man with the big belly, and he's the dog who walks in front of me.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Well, I'd rather not open up a wound that's just healed. The good work you did at Shrewsbury has made up a little for the bad thing you did at Gad's Hill. You can thank the rebellion for helping you get away with that terrible deed.

### **FALSTAFF**

Really?

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

But since things are calm now, let's keep them that way. We won't wake a sleeping wolf.

### **FALSTAFF**

To wake a wolf is as bad as to [smell a fox](#).

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

What? You're like a candle, half burned out.

### **FALSTAFF**

Maybe, if I were a big, fat holiday candle made of animal fat. But you'd be better off saying that I'm a wax candle: I keep "waxing" larger and larger.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Your gray beard should be a sign that you're a man of gravity.

effect of gravity.

### FALSTAFF

His effect of gravy, gravy, gravy.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

You follow the young Prince up and down like his ill angel.

### FALSTAFF

Not so, my lord. Your ill angel is light, but I hope he that  
145 looks upon me will take me without weighing. And yet in  
some respects I grant I cannot go. I cannot tell. Virtue is of  
so little regard in these costermongers' times that true valor  
is turned bear-herd; pregnancy is made a tapster, and hath  
his

quick wit wasted in giving reckonings. All the other gifts  
150 appurtenant to man, as the malice of this age shapes them,  
are not worth a gooseberry. You that are old consider not the  
capacities of us that are young. You do measure the heat of  
our livers with the bitterness of your galls, and we that are in  
the vaward of our youth, I must confess, are wags too.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

155 Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth, that are  
written down old with all the characters of age? Have you  
not a moist eye, a dry hand, a yellow cheek, a white beard,

### FALSTAFF

I'm a man of gravy, gravy, gravy.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

You follow the young Prince everywhere, like a false angel on  
his shoulder.

### FALSTAFF

That's not so, my lord. False [angels](#) are light, and anyone can  
see without having to weigh me that I'm too heavy. But I don't  
know; in some ways, you're right. I'm not for these times. Virtue  
counts for so little in this commercial world of ours. True  
courage is worthless; it's only used by animal trainers in the  
bear-baiting rings. Intelligence is good for nobody but  
bartenders, who waste their wits totaling up tavern bills. In  
these mean-spirited days, man's best qualities aren't worth a  
thing. You older folks don't value us young people. You  
measure our fiery passion according to your melancholic  
bitterness. And I have to tell you, those of us who are highly  
advanced in our youth, we're spirited as well as young.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

You'd add your name to the list of the young? You, who have  
age written all over you? Don't you have mucus in your eyes?  
Dry skin? Jaundice? A white beard? An

a decreasing leg, an increasing belly? Is not your voice  
broken, your wind short, your chin double, your wit single,  
160 and every part about you blasted with antiquity? And will  
you yet call yourself young? Fie, fie, fie, Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

My lord, I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon,  
with a white head and something a round belly. For my  
voice, I have lost it with halloing and singing of anthems. To  
165 approve my youth further, I will not. The truth is, I am only  
old in judgment and understanding. And he that will caper  
with me for a thousand marks, let him lend me the money,  
and have at him! For the box of the ear that the Prince gave  
you, he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a  
170 sensible lord. I have checked him for it, and the young lion  
repents. Marry, not in ashes and sackcloth, but in new silk and  
old sack.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Well, God send the Prince a better companion.

### FALSTAFF

God send the companion a better prince. I cannot rid my  
hands of him.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

175 Well, the King hath severed you and Prince Harry. I hear you  
are going with Lord John of Lancaster against the

arthritic leg? A growing belly? Isn't your voice scratchy? Your  
breath short? Your chin doubled? Your last wit abandoned?  
Isn't every part of you devastated by age? And still you call  
yourself young? Shame on you, Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

Sir, I was born around three o'clock in the afternoon, with a  
white head and a bit of a round belly. As for my scratchy voice,  
I lost it through shouting and singing loud songs. But I won't try  
to prove how young I am any longer. I have only one trait of old  
age, and that is wisdom. If somebody wants to challenge me  
to a dance contest for a thousand- [mark](#) wager, let him hand  
me the money and off we go. Now, as for the fact that the  
Prince hit you on the head, he did it like a rude prince and you  
took it like a sensible gentleman. I reprimanded him for it, and  
he repents. He's not wearing the traditional sackcloth and  
ashes, for sure, but he's repenting in silk cloth and wine.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

May God send the Prince a better friend!

### FALSTAFF

May God send the friend a better prince! I can't get him off my  
hands!

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Well, the King has separated you and Prince Harry. I hear  
you're going with John of Lancaster to go fight

Archbishop and the Earl of Northumberland.

### FALSTAFF

Yea, I thank your pretty sweet wit for it. But look you pray,  
all you that kiss my Lady Peace at home, that our armies join  
180 not in a hot day, for, by the Lord, I take but two shirts out with  
me, and I mean not to sweat extraordinarily. If it be a hot day  
and I brandish anything but a bottle, I would I might never  
spit white again. There is not a dangerous action can peep  
out his head but I am thrust upon it. Well, I cannot last ever.

185 But it was always yet the trick of our English nation, if they  
have a good thing, to make it too common. If ye will needs  
say I am an old man, you should give me rest. I would to God  
my name were not so terrible to the enemy as it is. I were  
better to be eaten to death with a rust than to be scoured to  
190 nothing with perpetual motion.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Well, be honest, be honest; and God bless your expedition!

### FALSTAFF

Will your Lordship lend me a thousand pound to furnish me  
forth?

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Not a penny, not a penny. You are too impatient to bear  
195 crosses. Fare you well. Command me to my cousin

Northumberland and the Archbishop.

### FALSTAFF

Yes, and thanks for reminding me. I hope that all of you who  
stay home, safe and sound, will say a prayer that we soldiers  
don't end up in some hot battle. For, by the Lord, I've only  
packed two shirts, and I don't want to sweat too much. If things  
get hot and I pull out any other weapon besides a bottle, I'll  
never drink wine again. I get sent out on every dangerous  
assignment

that comes up. Well, I can't live forever. That's the thing about  
the English: when they have something good, they use it  
continually. If you're going to insist that I'm an old man, then let  
me rest. I wish to God the enemy weren't as scared of me as  
they are: I'd rather sit and rust than be worn out by all this work.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Well, stay honest, stay honest. God bless your undertaking.

### FALSTAFF

Could your lordship lend me a thousand pounds for some  
equipment I need?

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Not a penny, not a penny: you're too impatient to endure  
adversity. Farewell; give my regards to my kinsman

Westmoreland.

*Exeunt CHIEF JUSTICE and SERVANT*

**FALSTAFF**

If I do, fillip me with a three-man beetle. A man can no more separate age and covetousness than he can part young limbs and lechery; but the gout galls the one, and the pox pinches  
200 the other, and so both the degrees prevent my curses.—Boy!

**PAGE**

Sir.

**FALSTAFF**

What money is in my purse?

**PAGE**

Seven groats and two pence.

**FALSTAFF**

I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse.  
205 Borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable. Go bear this letter to my Lord of Lancaster, this to the Prince, this to the Earl of Westmoreland; and this to old Mistress Ursula, whom I have weekly sworn to marry since I perceived the first white hair on my chin. About it.  
210 You know where to find me.

Westmoreland.

*The CHIEF JUSTICE and his SERVANT exit.*

**FALSTAFF**

If I do, hit me with a sledgehammer. Old age and greed go together like youth and lust. Gout afflicts one and syphilis plagues the other, so there's no point in me cursing either the old or the young: they're both cursed already. Boy!

**PAGE**

Sir?

**FALSTAFF**

How much money's in my wallet?

**PAGE**

About seven *groats* and two pence.

**FALSTAFF**

There no way to cure the illness that's making my wallet waste away; borrowing makes it live a little longer, but the disease is incurable. Bring this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, this one to the Prince, this one to Westmoreland, and this one to Madame Ursula. I've promised to marry her every single week since I got my first gray hair. Get going: you know where I'll be.

*Exit PAGE*

A pox of this gout! Or, a gout of this pox, for the one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe. 'Tis no matter if I do halt. I have the wars for my color, and my pension shall seem the more reasonable. A good wit will make use of  
215 anything. I will turn diseases to commodity.

*Exit*

*The PAGE exits.*

Damn this gout! Or damn this syphilis! One of them is really messing up my big toe. Oh well, it doesn't matter if I limp. I can blame it on the war, and that will help justify my disability payments. A sharp brain can turn any problem to its advantage. I'll turn my diseases into cash.

*He exits.*

## Act 1 Scene 3

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP of York, Thomas MOWBRAY the Earl Marshal, Lord HASTINGS, and LORD BARDOLPH*

### ARCHBISHOP

Thus have you heard our cause and known our means,  
And, my most noble friends, I pray you all  
Speak plainly your opinions of our hopes.  
And first, Lord Marshal, what say you to it?

### MOWBRAY

I well allow the occasion of our arms,  
But gladly would be better satisfied  
How in our means we should advance ourselves  
To look with forehead bold and big enough  
Upon the power and puissance of the King.

### HASTINGS

### ARCHBISHOP

So that's what we're fighting for, and that's the kind of support we have. Now please, my noble friends, tell me frankly if you think we have a chance. First you, Marshal Mowbray. What do you say?

### MOWBRAY

I absolutely agree with our reasons for fighting. But given our resources, I'd feel better if I knew how we're going to grow bold and strong enough to defeat this mighty and powerful King.

### HASTINGS

10 Our present musters grow upon the file  
To five-and-twenty thousand men of choice,  
And our supplies live largely in the hope  
Of great Northumberland, whose bosom burns  
With an incensed fire of injuries.

### LORD BARDOLPH

15 The question then, Lord Hastings, standeth thus:  
Whether our present five-and-twenty thousand  
May hold up head without Northumberland.

### HASTINGS

With him we may.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Yea, marry, there's the point.  
But if without him we be thought too feeble,  
20 My judgment is we should not step too far  
Till we had his assistance by the hand.  
For in a theme so bloody-faced as this,  
Conjecture, expectation, and surmise  
Of aids incertain should not be admitted.

### ARCBISHOP

25 'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph; for indeed  
It was young Hotspur's cause at Shrewsbury.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Our army has grown to twenty-five thousand good men. Our reinforcements are coming with Northumberland, and his heart burns with anger over all he's lost.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Then, Lord Hastings, this is the question: can our twenty-five thousand get the job done without Northumberland?

### HASTINGS

With him, we can.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Yes, exactly, and that's the point. If we're too weak without him, then I don't think we should advance until we know that his help is guaranteed. In a fight as bloody as this one, we need to be certain about the status of our supporters: we can't rely on conjecture, hope, and guesswork when aid isn't guaranteed.

### ARCBISHOP

That's right, Lord Bardolph. That's what happened to young Hotspur at Shrewsbury.

### LORD BARDOLPH

It was, my lord; who lined himself with hope,  
Eating the air on promise of supply,  
Flatt'ring himself in project of a power  
30 Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts,  
And so, with great imagination  
Proper to madmen, led his powers to death  
And, winking, leapt into destruction.

### HASTINGS

But, by your leave, it never yet did hurt  
35 To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Yes, if this present quality of war—  
Indeed the instant action, a cause on foot—  
Lives so in hope, as in an early spring  
We see the appearing buds, which to prove fruit  
40 Hope gives not so much warrant as despair  
That frosts will bite them. When we mean to build,  
We first survey the plot, then draw the model,  
And when we see the figure of the house,  
Then must we rate the cost of the erection,  
45 Which if we find outweighs ability,  
What do we then but draw anew the model  
In fewer offices, or at last desist  
To build at all? Much more in this great work,  
Which is almost to pluck a kingdom down

That's true, my lord. Hotspur fortified himself with nothing but hope, and mistook empty words as a true promise of reinforcements. He imagined that a huge army was coming to his aid, but what actually arrived turned out to be even smaller than the smallest of his fantasies. And so, with daydreams that could only belong to a madman, he closed his eyes and leaped into destruction.

### HASTINGS

But, begging your pardon, there's no harm in making guesses and hopeful strategies.

### LORD BARDOLPH

Yes, there is. Presently, our armies are already in motion, but putting our hope in them is as ridiculous as expecting that early spring buds will produce fruit: at that time of year, buds are more likely to be killed by frost than to bloom. When we want to put up a building, first we survey the land, and then we draw up a set of plans. Then we calculate the cost, and if we can't afford it, we revise the plans with fewer rooms, or we decide not to build at all. In the great task we're attempting—the taking down of one kingdom, and the building of another—we have even more reason to evaluate the land and the plans. We must be certain that the foundation is sound, that the engineer is skilled. We must know precisely what we can afford, how ready and able we are, and we must consider the opposing arguments.

50 And set another up, should we survey  
The plot of situation and the model,  
Consent upon a sure foundation,  
Question surveyors, know our own estate,  
How able such a work to undergo,  
55 To weigh against his opposite. Or else

We fortify in paper and in figures,  
Using the names of men instead of men,  
Like one that draws the model of a house  
Beyond his power to build it, who, half through,  
60 Gives o'er and leaves his part-created cost  
A naked subject to the weeping clouds  
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.

### **HASTINGS**

Grant that our hopes, yet likely of fair birth,  
Should be stillborn and that we now possessed  
65 The utmost man of expectation,  
I think we are a body strong enough,  
Even as we are, to equal with the King.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

What, is the King but five-and twenty-thousand?

### **HASTINGS**

To us no more, nay, not so much, Lord Bardolph,

Otherwise, it becomes a meaningless exercise: papers and numbers, and names of men rather than real, live men. That's like drawing up plans for a house you can't possibly afford, building half of it, and then abandoning the partly-built structure to be ruined by the elements.

### **HASTINGS**

Let's suppose that everything we're hoping for fails to materialize, and the army we have now is as big as it's going to get. I still think that, even in this condition, we're a match for the King.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

Why? Does the King only have twenty-five thousand men?

### **HASTINGS**

70 For his divisions, as the times do brawl,  
Are in three heads: one power against the French,  
And one against Glendower; perforce a third  
Must take up us. So is the unfirm King  
In three divided, and his coffers sound  
75 With hollow poverty and emptiness.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

That he should draw his several strengths together  
And come against us in full puissance  
Need not be dreaded.

### **HASTINGS**

If he should do so,  
He leaves his back unarmed, the French and Welsh  
80 Baying him at the heels. Never fear that.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

Who is it like should lead his forces hither?

### **HASTINGS**

The Duke of Lancaster and Westmoreland;  
Against the Welsh, himself and Harry Monmouth;  
But who is substituted against the French  
85 I have no certain notice.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

The King isn't facing us with any more than that—in fact, he doesn't even have that many, Lord Bardolph. This is a time of war, and the King's had to divide his army into three sections. One division is fighting the French; one's fighting Glendower. That leaves a third of his army to fight against us. The King is weak and divided into three, and the coffers of his treasury echo with the sounds of hollow poverty and emptiness.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

There's no reason to fear that he will pull all three divisions together and confront us with his full strength.

### **HASTINGS**

If he did that, he'd be vulnerable at the rear, and the French and the Welsh would be at his heels. He would never let that happen.

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

Who's going to lead his troops against us?

### **HASTINGS**

The Duke of Lancaster and Westmoreland. The King and Harry Monmouth will fight against the Welsh. I don't know for sure who is in charge of the fight against the French.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

Let us on,  
And publish the occasion of our arms.  
The commonwealth is sick of their own choice.  
Their over-greedy love hath surfeited.  
An habitation giddy and unsure  
90 Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.  
O thou fond many, with what loud applause  
Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke  
Before he was what thou wouldest have him be.  
And being now trimmed in thine own desires,  
95 Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him  
That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up.  
So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard,  
And now thou wouldest eat thy dead vomit up  
100 And howl'st to find it. What trust is in these times?  
They that, when Richard lived, would have him die  
Are now become enamored on his grave.  
Thou, that threw'st dust upon his goodly head  
When through proud London he came sighing on  
105 After th' admired heels of Bolingbroke,  
Criest now "O earth, yield us that King again,  
And take thou this!" O thoughts of men accursed!  
Past and to come seems best; things present, worst.

Let's continue. We'll publicly proclaim the reasons we're fighting. The people are sick of the leadership they themselves supported. They were greedy for it, but now they have overfed. When you build your foundation on the public's love, you build on shaky and unsure ground. Oh, you foolish masses! You shouted your love for Bolingbroke to the skies, before you knew what he'd turn into. Now that you're dressed in the things you desired, you monstrous devourer, you're so full of Bolingbroke that you're ready to vomit him up. This, you vulgar dog, is just how you emptied your gluttonous stomach of King Richard; and now you want to eat up your dead vomit, and you howl trying to find it. What can you count on in this world? The very people who wanted Richard dead when he was alive are now in love with his corpse. The very people who threw garbage on his noble head when he marched through London in shame behind the admired Bolingbroke are now saying, "Oh Earth, return that King, and take this one!" Curses on men's thoughts! Only the past and the future appeal to them; whatever they have right now they despise.

Shall we go draw our numbers and set on?

**HASTINGS**

110 We are time's subjects, and time bids begone.

*Exeunt*

Should we gather our troops and press forward?

**HASTINGS**

Time is our commander, and time proposes we be on our way.

*They exit.*

## Act 2 Scene 1

Enter **MISTRESS QUICKLY**, with two officers; **FANG** with her and **SNARE** following

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Master Fang, have you entered the action?

**FANG**

It is entered.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Where's your yeoman? Is 't a lusty yeoman? Will a' stand to 't?

**FANG**

5 Sirrah! Where's Snare?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O Lord, ay, good Master Snare.

**SNARE**

Here, here.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY** enters with Sheriff **FANG**. Deputy **SNARE** follows.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Master Fang, have you filed the lawsuit?

**FANG**

It's filed.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Where's your deputy? Is he a strong deputy? Will he rise to the occasion?

**FANG**

Sirrah, where's Snare?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh my goodness! Master Snare!

**SNARE**

Here, here.

**FANG**

Snare, we must arrest Sir John Falstaff.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Yea, good Master Snare, I have entered him and all.

**SNARE**

10 It may chance cost some of us our lives, for he will stab.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Alas the day, take heed of him. He stabbed me in mine own house, and that most beastly, in good faith. He cares not what mischief he does. If his weapon be out, he will foin like any devil. He will spare neither man, woman, nor child.

**FANG**

15 If I can close with him, I care not for his thrust.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, nor I neither. I'll be at your elbow.

**FANG**

An I but fist him once, an he come but within my view—

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I am undone by his going. I warrant you, he's an infinitive thing upon my score. Good Master Fang, hold him sure.

20 Good Master Snare, let him not 'scape. He comes

**FANG**

Snare, we've got to arrest Sir John Falstaff.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Yes, good Master Snare. I've filed the suit against him and everything.

**SNARE**

It could cost some of us our lives: he'll stab.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh my goodness! Watch out for him: he stabbed me in my own house, and it was nasty. I swear, he doesn't care what trouble he causes. Once he's got his weapon out, he'll thrust it like the devil. He won't spare man, woman, or child.

**FANG**

If I can get close to him, I won't worry about his thrusting.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Me neither. I'll be right next to you.

**FANG**

If I can grab him once, if he just comes within my grasp—

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I'm [bankrupt](#) from his never paying. He's run up an infinitive bill with me. Catch him, Master Fang! Don't let him get away, Master Snare! He's always going to [Pie Corner](#) —sorry to

continuantly to Pie Corner, saving your manhoods, to buy a saddle, and he is indited to dinner to the Lubber's Head in Lumbert Street, to Master Smooth's the silkman. I pray you, since my exion is entered, and my case so openly known to  
25 the world, let him be brought in to his answer. A hundred mark is a long one for a poor lone woman to bear, and I have borne, and borne, and borne, and have been fubbed off, and fubbed off, and fubbed off from this day to that day, that it is a shame to be thought on. There is no honesty in such  
30 dealing, unless a woman should be made an ass and a beast to bear every knave's wrong. Yonder he comes, and that errant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph, with him. Do your offices, do your offices, Master Fang and Master Snare, do me, do me, do me your offices.

Enter **FALSTAFF**, **BARDOLPH**, and **PAGE**

**FALSTAFF**

35 How now! Whose mare's dead? What's the matter?

**FANG**

Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Mistress Quickly.

**FALSTAFF**

Away, varlets!—Draw, Bardolph. Cut me off the villain's

mention it—to buy a saddle. And every day he gets **indited** to lunch with Master Smooth the silk seller, at the Leopard's Head on Lumbert Street. Please bring him to justice. I've been entered—I mean, my lawsuit's been entered at court, and the whole world knows how easy I am—I mean how easy it was for him to rip me off. A hundred **marks** is a lot for a poor, solitary woman to take. And I've taken it, and taken it, and taken it. And I've been fobbed off and fobbed off and fobbed off, day in and day out. It's horrible to even think about. That's a terrible way to treat people, unless you think that every woman should be made an ass and an animal, and that she should be opened to every jerk's molestation. Here he comes, with that notorious wine-faced crook, Bardolph. Do me a favor and do me your jobs, Master Fang and Master Snare. Do me! Do me! Do me a favor and do me your jobs!

**FALSTAFF**, his **PAGE**, and **BARDOLPH** enter.

**FALSTAFF**

What's going on? Whose horse died? What's the matter?

**FANG**

Sir John, you're under arrest for charges brought by Mistress Quickly.

**FALSTAFF**

head. Throw the quean in the channel.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Throw me in the channel? I'll throw thee in the channel. Wilt  
40 thou, wilt thou, thou bastardly rogue?—Murder, murder!—

Ah, thou honeysuckle villain, wilt thou kill God's officers  
and the King's? Ah, thou honeyseed rogue, thou art a  
honeyseed, a man-queller, and a woman-queller.

### FALSTAFF

Keep them off, Bardolph.

### FANG

45 A rescue, a rescue!

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Good people, bring a rescue or two.— (to FALSTAFF) Thou  
wot, wot thou? Thou wot, wot ta? Do, do, thou rogue. Do,  
thou hempseed.

### FALSTAFF

Away, you scullion, you rampallion, you fustilarian! I'll  
50 tickle your catastrophe.

*Enter the Lord CHIEF JUSTICE and his men*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

What is the matter? Keep the peace here, ho!

Get out of here, you crooks! Draw your sword, Bardolph. Cut off  
this rascal's head, and throw this whore in the gutter.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Throw me in the gutter? I'll throw you in the gutter. You will?  
You will? You bastardly cheat! Murder! Murder! Oh, you  
[honeysuckle](#) criminal! You're going to kill God's sheriffs, and  
the King's? Oh, you honey-seed creep! You're a honey-seed, a  
man-killer, and a woman-killer.

### FALSTAFF

Keep them off me, Bardolph.

### FANG

An escape! An escape!

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Somebody, bring an [escape](#) or two! (to FALSTAFF) You will, will  
you? You will, will you? Go ahead, go ahead, you scoundrel!  
You hemp-seed!

### FALSTAFF

Get off, you serving wench! You ruffian! You fat old hag! I'll beat  
you on the backside!

*The Lord CHIEF JUSTICE and his men enter.*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

What's the matter? Let's have some order here!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good my lord, be good to me. I beseech you stand to me.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

How now, Sir John? What, are you brawling here?  
Doth this become your place, your time, and business?  
55 You should have been well on your way to York.—  
(to FANG) Stand from him, fellow: wherefore hang'st thou  
upon him?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O my most worshipful lord, an 't please your Grace, I am a  
poor widow of Eastcheap, and he is arrested at my suit.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

For what sum?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

60 It is more than for some, my lord; it is for all I have. He hath  
eaten me out of house and home. He hath put all my  
substance  
into that fat belly of his. (to FALSTAFF) But I will have some of  
it out again, or I will ride thee o' nights like the mare.

**FALSTAFF**

I think I am as like to ride the mare if I have any vantage of

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good sir, be good to me. I beg you, stand up for me.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Well if it isn't Sir John! Are you making trouble here? Is this  
appropriate for a man of your position, your age, and your  
responsibilities? You should be well on your way to York by  
now. (to FANG) Get off him, man. Why are you holding him?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh, most excellent lord, begging your pardon: I'm a poor  
Eastcheap widow, and he's arrested on charges I brought  
against him.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What sum does he owe you?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

It's more than some, sir: it's all, all that I have. He's eaten me out  
of house and home. He's put everything I own into that fat  
belly of his. (to FALSTAFF) But I'll get some of it back again, or  
I'll ride you all night like a bad dream.

**FALSTAFF**

I think I might just ride you, if I get the chance to mount you.

65 ground to get up.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

How comes this, Sir John? Fie, what man of good temper would endure this tempest of exclamation? Are you not ashamed to enforce a poor widow to so rough a course to come by her own?

### **FALSTAFF**

70 (to MISTRESS QUICKLY) What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber at the round table by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the Prince broke 75 thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me Gossip Quickly, coming in to borrow a mess of 80 vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns, whereby thou didst desire to eat some, whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with

### **CHIEF JUSTICE**

What is this, Sir John? Damn! How could any decent man put up with this storm of screaming and cursing? Aren't you ashamed to force a poor widow to take these extreme measures simply to get what's hers?

### **FALSTAFF**

(to MISTRESS QUICKLY) What's the total I owe you?

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

My goodness! If you were an honest man, you'd give yourself to me, as well as the money. You swore to me—over a gold-plated wine goblet, in the Dolphin Room in my tavern, at the round table, next to the fire, on the Wednesday seven weeks after Easter, when the Prince swung at your head for claiming his father was a fake—you swore, while I was cleaning your wounds, to marry me and make me a proper lady and your wife. Can you deny it? Didn't Mrs. Baconfat, the butcher's wife, come into the room then and ask to borrow some vinegar, saying that she had some good prawns—and you wanted to eat some, and I told you that it was a bad idea, to eat shrimp when you had a fresh wound—and

such poor people, saying that ere long they should call me  
85 madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me fetch thee  
thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath. Deny it if  
thou canst.

### FALSTAFF

My lord, this is a poor mad soul, and she says up and down  
the town that her eldest son is like you. She hath been in  
good  
90 case, and the truth is, poverty hath distracted her. But, for  
these foolish officers, I beseech you I may have redress  
against them.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Sir John, Sir John, I am well acquainted with your manner  
of wrenching the true cause the false way. It is not a  
95 confident brow, nor the throng of words that come with such  
more than impudent sauciness from you, can thrust me from  
a level consideration. You have, as it appears to me,  
practiced upon the easy-yielding spirit of this woman, and  
made her serve your uses both in purse and in person.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

100 Yea, in truth, my lord.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Pray thee, peace.— (to FALSTAFF) Pay her the debt you owe

when she left, didn't you tell me to stop being friends with low  
types like her, because before long we'd be married and I'd be  
a proper lady? And didn't you kiss me and tell me to lend you  
thirty [shillings](#)? Put your hand on the bible and deny it, if you  
dare.

### FALSTAFF

Sir, this is a poor, insane soul. She's been saying all over town  
that her oldest son looks just like you. She was once rich, but  
poverty has driven her crazy. Now, as for these two foolish  
officers, I would like to press charges against them.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Sir John, Sir John. I know too well how you are accustomed to  
turning the truth into a big lie. But neither your confident  
demeanor nor the storm of words that accompanies your  
insolent disrespect will sway me from making a just  
consideration. As far as I can see, you've taken advantage of  
this trusting woman, and you've made her give you cash and  
other favors.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Yes, truthfully, sir.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

her, and unpay the villany you have done her. The one you may do with sterling money, and the other with current repentance.

**FALSTAFF**

105 My lord, I will not undergo this sneap without reply. You call honorable boldness "impudent sauciness." If a man will make curtsy and say nothing, he is virtuous. No, my lord, my humble duty remembered, I will not be your suitor. I say to you, I do desire deliverance from these officers, being upon  
110 hasty employment in the King's affairs.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

You speak as having power to do wrong; but answer in th' effect of your reputation, and satisfy this poor woman.

**FALSTAFF**

Come hither, hostess.

**FALSTAFF** takes **MISTRESS QUICKLY** aside

*Enter GOWER*

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Now, Master Gower, what news?

**GOWER**

115 The King, my lord, and Harry Prince of Wales

Quiet, please. (to FALSTAFF) Pay her what you owe her, and undo the wrongdoings you've done to her. You can do the first with money, and the second with a sincere apology.

**FALSTAFF**

Sir, I will not put up with this snub without a reply. You call my brave, honorable dealings insolent disrespect. Does a man have to stand here, silent and bowing, to be a virtuous man? No, sir. With all due respect, I won't bow down to you. I say that I want to be set free by these officers, seeing as I have urgent work to do for the King.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

You talk as though you have permission to break the law. But act appropriately to your status: satisfy this poor woman.

**FALSTAFF**

Come here, hostess.

**FALSTAFF** takes **MISTRESS QUICKLY** aside.

**GOWER** enters.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Master Gower, what's going on?

**GOWER**

Are near at hand. The rest the paper tells.

**FALSTAFF**

As I am a gentleman!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Faith, you said so before.

**FALSTAFF**

As I am a gentleman. Come. No more words of it.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

120 By this heavenly ground I tread on, I must be fain to pawn  
both my plate and the tapestry of my dining chambers.

**FALSTAFF**

Glasses, glasses, is the only drinking. And for thy walls, a  
pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal or the  
German hunting in waterwork is worth a thousand of these  
125 bed-hangers and these fly-bitten tapestries. Let it be ten  
pound, if thou canst. Come, an 'twere not for thy humors,  
there's not a better wench in England. Go wash thy face, and  
draw the action. Come, thou must not be in this humor with  
me. Dost not know me? Come, come, I know thou wast set  
130 on to this.

My lord, the King and Harry Prince of Wales are nearby. This letter will tell you the rest.

**FALSTAFF**

On my honor.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Honestly, that's what you said before.

**FALSTAFF**

On my honor. Come, let's not talk about it anymore.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By heaven above and below, I'll have to pawn my good china  
and the tapestries in my dining rooms.

**FALSTAFF**

It's not such a big deal. Glass is the only good thing to drink out  
of anyway. And as for the [walls](#), something pretty and comical  
—or a depiction of the prodigal son; or maybe one of those  
German hunting scenes, painted on the wall to look like a  
tapestry—why, those are worth a thousand of those bed  
curtains and moth-eaten tapestries.

Let me borrow just ten pounds, all right? Come on—other than  
your moodiness, you're the best wench in England. Go wash  
your face and withdraw the lawsuit. Come on—don't be this  
way with me. Don't you know me? Come, come, I know  
somebody put you up to this.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Pray thee, Sir John, let it be but twenty nobles. I' faith, I am loath to pawn my plate, so God save me, la.

**FALSTAFF**

Let it alone. I'll make other shift. You'll be a fool still.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, you shall have it, though I pawn my gown. I hope  
135 you'll come to supper. You'll pay me all together?

**FALSTAFF**

Will I live? (*to BARDOLPH*) Go with her, with her. Hook on,  
hook on.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Will you have Doll Tearsheet meet you at supper?

**FALSTAFF**

No more words. Let's have her.

*Exeunt MISTRESS QUICKLY, FANG, SNARE, BARDOLPH, and  
the PAGE*

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

140 I have heard better news.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Please, Sir John, let's call it [twenty nobles](#). I don't want to have to pawn my china, in God's name!

**FALSTAFF**

All right, forget it. I'll figure something else out. You'll always be a fool.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

All right, I'll lend it to you, even if I have to pawn my clothes. I hope you'll have dinner here tonight. You'll pay me the full amount then?

**FALSTAFF**

Will I live? (*to BARDOLPH*) Go, stick with her, stick with her. Don't let her out of your sight.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Do you want Doll Tearsheet to meet you at dinner?

**FALSTAFF**

No more talking. Let's have her.

*MISTRESS QUICKLY, BARDOLPH, the PAGE, FANG, and SNARE exit.*

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I've heard better news.

**FALSTAFF**

What's the news, my good lord?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Where lay the King last night?

**GOWER**

At Basingstoke, my lord.

**FALSTAFF**

I hope, my lord, all's well. What is the news, my lord?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

<sup>145</sup> Come all his forces back?

**GOWER**

No; fifteen hundred foot, five hundred horse  
Are marched up to my Lord of Lancaster  
Against Northumberland and the Archbishop.

**FALSTAFF**

Comes the King back from Wales, my noble lord?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

<sup>150</sup> You shall have letters of me presently.  
Come. Go along with me, good Master Gower.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord!

**FALSTAFF**

What's the news, my lord?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Where did the King spend last night?

**GOWER**

At Basingstoke, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

I hope everything's okay, sir. What's the news?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

And his armies have come back?

**GOWER**

No. Fifteen hundred infantrymen and five hundred horsemen  
are marching to meet Lord Lancaster, to fight against  
Northumberland and the Archbishop.

**FALSTAFF**

Is the King back from Wales, my noble lord?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I'll give you some letters shortly. Come with me, Master Gower.

**FALSTAFF**

Sir!

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What's the matter?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, shall I entreat you with me to dinner?

**GOWER**

155 I must wait upon my good lord here. I thank you, good Sir John.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Sir John, you loiter here too long, being you are to take soldiers up in counties as you go.

**FALSTAFF**

Will you sup with me, Master Gower?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

160 What foolish master taught you these manners, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, if they become me not, he was a fool that taught them me.—This is the right fencing grace, my lord: tap for tap, and so part fair.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Now the Lord lighten thee. Thou art a great fool.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What's the matter?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, would you like to join me for lunch?

**GOWER**

I have to attend to this noble man right here. But thank you, Sir John.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Sir John, you've been loitering here too long. You have to recruit soldiers in the counties you pass through on your way north.

**FALSTAFF**

Will you join me for supper, then, Master Gower?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

What foolish teacher taught you these manners, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, if my [manners](#) are inappropriate, I must have indeed been taught by a fool. That's how the game is played—tit for tat, and game over.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

God help you! You are a great fool.

*Exeunt*

*They exit.*

## Act 2 Scene 2

Enter **PRINCE HENRY** and **POINS**

**PRINCE HENRY**

Before God, I am exceeding weary.

**POINS**

Is 't come to that? I had thought weariness durst not have attached one of so high blood.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Faith, it does me; though it discolors the complexion of my  
5 greatness to acknowledge it. Doth it not show vilely in me  
to desire small beer?

**POINS**

Why, a prince should not be so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Belike then my appetite was not princely got, for, by my  
10 troth, I do now remember the poor creature small beer. But indeed these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name, or to know thy face tomorrow, or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast—with these, and those

**PRINCE HENRY** and **POINS** enter.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I swear to God, I'm exceedingly tired.

**POINS**

Really? I would have thought that weariness wouldn't dare afflict someone as highly born as you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, it afflicts me, although saying so dims my nobility somewhat. Does it make me seem coarse and common to say that I'd love a *small beer*?

**POINS**

A prince shouldn't be vulgarly inclined toward things like small beer.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Then I suppose don't have a prince's appetite, because right now all I can think about is small beer. But it's true: all these everyday considerations distance me from my own nobility. It's disgraceful that I should be familiar with a man like you! To know your name, your face, and your wardrobe so intimately that I know that you have two pairs of stockings: the ones

15 that were thy peach-colored ones—or to bear the inventory  
of thy shirts, as, one for superfluity and another for use. But  
that the tennis-court keeper knows better than I, for it is a  
low ebb of linen with thee when thou keepest not racket  
there, as thou hast not done a great while, because the rest  
of

20 the low countries have made a shift to eat up thy holland; and  
God knows whether those that bawl out the ruins of thy linen  
shall inherit His kingdom; but the midwives say the children  
are not in the fault, whereupon the world increases and  
kindreds are mightily strengthened.

### **POINS**

25 How ill it follows, after you have labored so hard, you should  
talk so idly! Tell me, how many good young princes would  
do so, their fathers being so sick as yours at this time is?

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Shall I tell thee one thing, Poins?

### **POINS**

Yes, faith, and let it be an excellent good thing.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

30 It shall serve among wits of no higher breeding than thine.

### **POINS**

you're wearing now, and those peach-colored ones. I even  
know how many shirts you have: one to wear, and one extra.  
But then, the keeper of the tennis courts knows your wardrobe  
better than I do, for when you've run out of clean shirts, you  
don't show up to play. And you haven't played in a while,  
because the whore houses have eaten all the rest of your  
money, which you'd otherwise use to buy more shirts. God only  
knows whether all the crying brats you've fathered will make it  
to heaven. But then, the midwives say that babies don't bear  
the sins of the parents. That's how the population increases,  
and families are strengthened.

### **POINS**

It seems wrong, after all your hard work in battle, that you  
should be spending your time now in idle chatter. How many  
other princes would behave like this if their fathers were as  
sick as yours?

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Can I tell you something, Poins?

### **POINS**

Sure; and make sure it's an excellent thing.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

It'll be fine, for people who aren't any smarter than you are.

### **POINS**

Go to. I stand the push of your one thing that you will tell.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Marry, I tell thee it is not meet that I should be sad, now my father is sick—albeit I could tell thee, as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend, I could be sad, and sad 35 indeed too.

### **POINS**

Very hardly, upon such a subject.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

By this hand, thou thinkest me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency. Let the end try the man. But I tell thee, my heart bleeds inwardly that my 40 father is so sick: and keeping such vile company as thou art hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow.

### **POINS**

The reason?

### **PRINCE HENRY**

What wouldst thou think of me if I should weep?

### **POINS**

I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

45 It would be every man's thought, and thou art a blessed

Go ahead. I'm can take whatever you have to say.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Here it is, then. It's not seemly for me to be sad over my father's illness. But I could tell you—as a person who, for lack of anyone else, I'm pleased to call my friend—that I could be sad. I could be very sad, indeed.

### **POINS**

It would be difficult to feel that way over a thing like this.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

I swear, you must think that I'm as sinful as you and Falstaff are, and as stubborn and persistent. We'll see about that. But I'm telling you: my heart is bleeding for my father, and for his illness. But because I'm hanging out with lowlifes like you, I can't show how sorrowful I am.

### **POINS**

Why?

### **PRINCE HENRY**

What would you think of me if I started crying?

### **POINS**

I would think you're a royal hypocrite.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

fellow to think as every man thinks. Never a man's thought in the world keeps the roadway better than thine. Every man would think me an hypocrite indeed. And what accites your most worshipful thought to think so?

### POINS

50 Why, because you have been so lewd and so much engraffed to Falstaff.

### PRINCE HENRY

And to thee.

### POINS

By this light, I am well spoke on. I can hear it with my own ears. The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second 55 brother, and that I am a proper fellow of my hands; and those two things, I confess, I cannot help. By the Mass, here comes Bardolph.

*Enter BARDOLPH and the PAGE*

### PRINCE HENRY

And the boy that I gave Falstaff. He had him from me Christian, and look if the fat villain have not transformed 60 him ape.

That's what everyone would be thinking. And what's great about you is that you think just the way everyone else does: nobody sticks to popular opinion quite as well as you. Everyone would think I was a hypocrite, indeed. And, your honor, what makes you think that?

### POINS

Because you've behaved so badly, and because you're so attached to Falstaff.

### PRINCE HENRY

And to you.

### POINS

Honestly, people think highly of me; I hear their praises with my own ears. The worst thing they can say about me is that, as a younger brother, I've had no inheritance from my family, and that I'm a good fighter. And I can't help either of those things. By God, here comes Bardolph.

*BARDOLPH and the PAGE enter.*

### PRINCE HENRY

And the boy who I sent to work for Falstaff. He was a normal boy when I sent him, and now look:  
*the fat bastard's turned him into an ape.*

**BARDOLPH**

God save your Grace.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And yours, most noble Bardolph.

**POINS**

(to BARDOLPH) Come, you virtuous ass, you bashful fool, must you be blushing? Wherefore blush you now? What a 65 maidenly man-at-arms are you become! Is 't such a matter to get a pottle-pot's maidenhead?

**PAGE**

He calls me e'en now, my lord, through a red lattice, and I could discern no part of his face from the window. At last I spied his eyes, and methought he had made two holes in the 70 ale-wife's new petticoat and so peeped through.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Has not the boy profited?

**BARDOLPH**

Away, you whoreson upright rabbit, away!

**PAGE**

Away, you rascally Althea's dream, away!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Instruct us, boy. What dream, boy?

**BARDOLPH**

God save your grace!

**PRINCE HENRY**

And yours, most noble Bardolph!

**POINS**

(to BARDOLPH) Come on, you principled ass, you timid fool! Why are you blushing? What a womanly solider you are! Is it that big a deal to deflower a two-quart [tankard of ale](#) ?

**PAGE**

Just now he called to me from behind a red window shade, and I couldn't tell his face from the curtain! Finally I saw his eyes, and I thought he'd made two holes in a whore's skirt and peeped through them!

**PRINCE HENRY**

This kid's learned a lot from Falstaff, hasn't he?

**BARDOLPH**

Get out of here, you little rabbit! Get out!

**PAGE**

You get out, you rotten Althea's dream!

**PRINCE HENRY**

What dream, boy? Tell us.

**PAGE**

75 Marry, my lord, Althea dreamt she was delivered of a firebrand, and therefore I call him her dream.

**PRINCE HENRY**

A crown's worth of good interpretation. There 'tis, boy.

**POINS**

O, that this good blossom could be kept from cankers! Well, there is sixpence to preserve thee.

**BARDOLPH**

80 An you do not make him hanged among you, the gallows shall have wrong.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And how doth thy master, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Well, my good lord. He heard of your Grace's coming to town. There's a letter for you.

**POINS**

85 Delivered with good respect. And how doth the Martlemas your master?

**BARDOLPH**

In bodily health, sir.

**PAGE**

Sir, Althea dreamed she gave birth to a red-hot iron. That's why I call him her dream; he's all red in the face.

**PRINCE HENRY**

That joke's worth a [crown](#) ! Here you go, boy.

**POINS**

I wish this wholesome little flower could be kept away from disease. Well, here's a sixpence for you.

**BARDOLPH**

If between the three of you this boy doesn't end up hanged, the gallows will be cheated.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How's your master Falstaff doing, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Fine, sir. He heard you were coming to town. Here's a letter for you.

**POINS**

Delivered very respectfully. How is that fattened calf, your boss?

**BARDOLPH**

His body's healthy, sir.

## **POINS**

Marry, the immortal part needs a physician, but that moves not him. Though that be sick, it dies not.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

90 (*reads to himself*) I do allow this wen to be as familiar with me as my dog, and he holds his place, for look you how he writes. (*he hands the letter to POINS*)

## **POINS**

(*reads*) *John Falstaff, knight.* Every man must know that as oft as he has occasion to name himself, even like those that 95 are kin to the King, for they never prick their finger but they say, "There's some of the King's blood spilt." "How comes that?" says he that takes upon him not to conceive. The answer is as ready as a borrower's cap: "I am the King's poor cousin, sir."

## **PRINCE HENRY**

100 Nay, they will be kin to us, or they will fetch it from Japheth. But to the letter. (*takes the letter and reads*) *Sir John Falstaff, knight, to the son of the King nearest his father, Harry Prince of Wales, greeting.*

## **POINS**

Why, this is a certificate.

## **POINS**

That's right, it's just his immortal soul that needs a doctor. But he doesn't care. His soul may be sick, but it won't die.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

(*reads to himself*) I allow this wart to be as familiar with me as my dog, and he holds onto his privileged position. Listen to how he writes. (*he hands the letter to POINS*)

## **POINS**

(*reads*) "John Falstaff, knight"—he always throws that title around, every chance he gets. It's like people who are related to the King: every time they get a tiny cut, they say, "Some of the King's blood has been spilled." Then someone pretends not to get it, and asks, "How do you mean?" The answer comes faster than a beggar can whip out his cap: "I'm the King's poor relative."

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Right. They all say they're related to us, even if they have to trace the family tree all the way back to Japhet, the common ancestor of all Europeans. But back to the letter. (*takes the letter and reads*) "Sir John Falstaff—knight to the son of the King, nearest to his father, Harry Prince of Wales—sends his greetings."

## **POINS**

Listen to that. It sounds like a contract.

**PRINCE HENRY**

105 Peace! (*reads*) *I will imitate the honorable Romans in brevity.*

**POINS**

He sure means brevity in breath, short-winded.

**PRINCE HENRY**

(*reads*) *I commend me to thee, I commend thee, and I leave thee. Be not too familiar with Poins, for he misuses thy favors so much that he swears thou art to marry his sister*

*Nell. Repent at idle times as thou mayest, and so, farewell. Thine by yea and no, which is as much as to say, as thou uses him, Jack Falstaff with my familiars, John with my brothers and sisters, and Sir John with all Europe.*

**POINS**

115 My lord, I'll steep this letter in sack and make him eat it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

That's to make him eat twenty of his words. But do you use me thus, Ned? Must I marry your sister?

**POINS**

God send the wench no worse fortune! But I never said so.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Quiet! (*reads*) "I will copy the Romans in shortness."

**POINS**

He must mean shortness of breath, and wheezing.

**PRINCE HENRY**

(*reads*) "I salute myself, I salute you, and I'm done. Don't get too close to Poins. He takes such rampant advantage of your kindness that he swears you will marry his sister Nell. Confess your sins when you have the time; and with that, farewell.

Yours up and down

(which is to say, in whatever way you feel like), I remain Jack Falstaff to my friends, John to my brothers and sisters, and Sir John to all Europe."

**POINS**

Sir, I'll soak this letter in wine and shove it down his throat.

**PRINCE HENRY**

That would be making him eat twenty of his words. But are you taking advantage of me like he says, Ned? Must I marry your sister?

**POINS**

It would be her lucky day if you did. But I never said that.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, thus we play the fools with the time, and the spirits of  
120 the wise sit in the clouds and mock us. (to BARDOLPH) Is your  
master here in London?

**BARDOLPH**

Yea, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Where sups he? Doth the old boar feed in the old frank?

**BARDOLPH**

At the old place, my lord, in Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HENRY**

125 What company?

**PAGE**

Ephesians, my lord, of the old church.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sup any women with him?

**PAGE**

None, my lord, but old Mistress Quickly and Mistress Doll  
Tearsheet.

**PRINCE HENRY**

130 What pagan may that be?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, we're wasting time, and the angels in heaven are  
mocking us. (to BARDOLPH) Is your boss here in London?

**BARDOLPH**

Yes, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Where's he eating tonight? Is the old pig eating in the old sty?

**BARDOLPH**

At the old place, my lord. In Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Who's with him?

**PAGE**

The usual old characters.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Are any women eating with him?

**PAGE**

No women sir. Just old Mistress Quickly and Mistress Doll  
Tearsheet.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What heathen is that?

**PAGE**

A proper gentlewoman, sir, and a kinswoman of my master's.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Even such kin as the parish heifers are to the town bull.—  
Shall we steal upon them, Ned, at supper?

**POINS**

135 I am your shadow, my lord. I'll follow you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirrah—you, boy—and Bardolph, no word to your master that I am yet come to town. (*gives them money*) There's for your silence.

**BARDOLPH**

I have no tongue, sir.

**PAGE**

140 And for mine, sir, I will govern it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Fare you well. Go.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH and PAGE*

This Doll Tearsheet should be some road.

**PAGE**

A proper lady, sir, and my master's relative.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Exactly the kind of relative as the country cows are to the town bull. Ned, should we spy on them as they eat supper?

**POINS**

I'm after you like a shadow, my lord: I'll follow you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirrah, you boy, and you, Bardolph—don't tell your master that I'm back in town. (*gives them money*) This is for your silence.

**BARDOLPH**

I have no tongue to speak with, sir.

**PAGE**

As for my tongue, I'll manage it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Farewell to you both; go now.

*BARDOLPH and the PAGE exit.*

This Doll Tearsheet must be some [road](#).

## **POINS**

I warrant you, as common as the way between Saint Alban's and London.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

145 How might we see Falstaff bestow himself tonight in his true colors, and not ourselves be seen?

## **POINS**

Put on two leathern jerkins and aprons, and wait upon him at his table as drawers.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

From a god to a bull: a heavy decension. It was Jove's case.

150 From a prince to a 'prentice: a low transformation that shall be mine, for in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly. Follow me, Ned.

*Exeunt*

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND, LADY NORTHUMBERLAND, and LADY PERCY*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

I pray thee, loving wife and gentle daughter, Give even way unto my rough affairs.

## **POINS**

Truly, she's as well-traveled as the highway to London.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

How can we see Falstaff behave like his true self tonight, and yet not be detected ourselves?

## **POINS**

We'll put on leather jackets and aprons and wait upon him as bartenders.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Should a God disguise himself as a bull? That's quite a degradation. Well, *Jove* did it. And should a prince disguise himself as an apprentice bartender and transform into something so lowly? Yes, I will: in every undertaking, the ends must match the means. Follow me, Ned.

*They exit.*

## **Act 2 Scene 3**

*NORTHUMBERLAND, LADY NORTHUMBERLAND, and LADY PERCY enter.*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Please, my loving wife and sweet daughter-in-law, support me in my difficult tasks. Don't let the grimness of these days be

Put not you on the visage of the times  
And be, like them, to Percy troublesome.

### LADY NORTHUMBERLAND

5 I have given over. I will speak no more.  
Do what you will; your wisdom be your guide.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Alas, sweet wife, my honor is at pawn,  
And, but my going, nothing can redeem it.

### LADY PERCY

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars.  
10 The time was, father, that you broke your word,  
When you were more endeared to it than now,  
When your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,  
Threw many a northward look to see his father  
Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.  
15 Who then persuaded you to stay at home?  
There were two honors lost, yours and your son's.  
For yours, the God of heaven brighten it.  
For his, it stuck upon him as the sun  
In the gray vault of heaven, and by his light  
20 Did all the chivalry of England move  
To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass  
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.  
He had no legs that practiced not his gait;

reflected in your faces; don't add to Percy's troubles.

### LADY NORTHUMBERLAND

I give up; I won't say any more. Do what you want. Let your wisdom guide you.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

For goodness sake, sweet wife, my honor is at stake. Nothing can redeem it except my going.

### LADY PERCY

For God's sake, don't go to these wars! Father-in-law, you once broke your word when you had better reason to keep it than you do now. Your own son Percy—my heart's beloved Harry—looked northward again and again, hoping to see his father coming with an army. But he hoped in vain. Who persuaded you to stay home that time? Two honors were lost in that battle: yours, and your son's. As for yours, I hope God will make it shine again. As for Harry's honor, it clung to him like the sun in a pale blue sky, and by its light every knight in England was moved to act bravely. He was the mirror in which noble youths dressed themselves. All men copied his way of walking, except those who had no legs.  
And talking loudly and quickly—the one flaw nature had given him—became the speech pattern for all brave men. Those who

And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,  
25 Became the accents of the valiant;  
For those that could speak low and tardily  
Would turn their own perfection to abuse

To seem like him. So that in speech, in gait,  
In diet, in affections of delight,  
30 In military rules, humors of blood,  
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,  
That fashioned others. And him—O wondrous him!  
O miracle of men!—him did you leave,  
Second to none, unseconded by you,  
35 To look upon the hideous god of war  
In disadvantage, to abide a field  
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name  
Did seem defensible. So you left him.  
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong  
40 To hold your honor more precise and nice  
With others than with him. Let them alone.  
The Marshal and the Archbishop are strong.  
Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,  
Today might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,  
45 Have talked of Monmouth's grave.

spoke softly and slowly would corrupt their proper speech, just  
to seem more like

Harry. In speech, bearing, and diet; in inclinations toward pleasure, in military actions, and in moods, he was the target, mirror, example, and rulebook that other men followed. And him—Oh wondrous him! Oh miracle of men!—you left him! The best man in the world, unsupported by you, faced the hideous god of war from a position of weakness. His only defense was the sound of his own name, and that is how you left him. Never insult his memory by letting your honor count more with strangers than with him. Leave them alone: Marshal Mowbray and the Archbishop are strong. If my darling Harry had had half their army, I might be hanging on his neck today, talking about Prince Hal's grave.

## NORTHUMBERLAND

Beshrew your heart,  
Fair daughter, you do draw my spirits from me

## NORTHUMBERLAND

For goodness sake, pretty daughter-in-law. You take me out of myself, reminding me again of these past mistakes. But I must

With new lamenting ancient oversights.  
But I must go and meet with danger there,  
Or it will seek me in another place  
50 And find me worse provided.

### LADY NORTHUMBERLAND

Oh, fly to Scotland  
Till that the nobles and the armèd commons  
Have of their puissance made a little taste.

### LADY PERCY

If they get ground and vantage of the King,  
Then join you with them like a rib of steel  
55 To make strength stronger; but, for all our loves,  
First let them try themselves. So did your son;  
He was so suffered. So came I a widow,  
And never shall have length of life enough

To rain upon remembrance with mine eyes  
60 That it may grow and sprout as high as heaven  
For recordation to my noble husband.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Come, come, go in with me. 'Tis with my mind  
As with the tide swelled up unto his height,  
That makes a still-stand, running neither way.  
65 Fain would I go to meet the Archbishop,

go and face danger there or danger will find me somewhere else, where I will be less prepared.

### LADY NORTHUMBERLAND

Oh, run to Scotland until these noblemen and their armies have skirmished against the king.

### LADY PERCY

If they make any headway against the King, then join them, and like a steel rod make their strength even stronger. But in the name of the love you feel for us, let them begin on their own. That's how your son fought. You allowed him to do that, and that's how I became a widow. If I spend the rest of my life pouring tears on

the plant of remembrance, it will never grow tall enough to pay proper tribute to my extraordinary husband.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Come. Come. Go inside with me. My thoughts are like the ocean at high tide—neither coming in nor going out, seeming to stand still. I want to go join the Archbishop, but many

But many thousand reasons hold me back.  
I will resolve for Scotland. There am I  
Till time and vantage crave my company.

*Exeunt*

*Enter two DRAWERS*

**FRANCIS**

What the devil hast thou brought there—applejohns? Thou knowest Sir John cannot endure an applejohn.

**SECOND DRAWER**

Mass, thou sayest true. The Prince once set a dish of applejohns before him and told him there were five more Sir 5 Johns and, putting off his hat, said "I will now take my leave of these six dry, round, old, withered knights." It angered him to the heart. But he hath forgot that.

**FRANCIS**

Why then, cover, and set them down, and see if thou canst find out Sneak's noise. Mistress Tearsheet would fain hear 10 some music.

*Enter THIRD DRAWER*

**THIRD DRAWER**

thousands of reasons are holding me back. I'll go to Scotland and wait there till events unfold and my help is called for.

*They exit.*

## Act 2 Scene 4

*Two DRAWERS enter.*

**FRANCIS**

What the hell have you got there? [Apple johns](#)? You know Sir John can't stand apple johns.

**SECOND DRAWER**

Damn, you're right. One day the Prince put a plate of applejohns in front of Falstaff and said, "Here are five more Sir Johns." Then the Prince took off his hat and said, "I'm now going to bid farewell to these six dry, round, old, withered knights." It angered Sir John deeply, but he got over it.

**FRANCIS**

Well then, put the table cloth on and set the dish down. Go see if you can find Sneak's band of musicians. Mistress Tearsheet wants to hear some music.

*Enter THIRD DRAWER*

**THIRD DRAWER**

Dispatch: the room where they supped is too hot. They'll come in straight.

### **FRANCIS**

Sirrah, here will be the Prince and Master Poins anon, and they will put on two of our jerkins and aprons, and Sir John  
15 must not know of it. Bardolph hath brought word.

### **THIRD DRAWER**

By the Mass, here will be old utis. It will be an excellent stratagem.

### **SECOND DRAWER**

I'll see if I can find out Sneak.

**FRANCIS** and **THE DRAWERS** exit

Enter **MISTRESS QUICKLY** and **DOLL TEARSHEET**

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I' faith, sweetheart, methinks now you are in an excellent  
20 good temporality. Your pulsidge beats as extraordinarily as heart would desire, and your color, I warrant you, is as red as any rose, in good truth, la. But, i' faith, you have drunk too much canaries, and that's a marvellous searching wine, and it perfumes the blood ere one can say "What's this?"

25 How do you now?

Hurry! The room they ate in was too hot, and they'll be here any minute.

### **FRANCIS**

Sirrah, the Prince and Poins will be here soon. They're going to put on a couple of our jackets and aprons. Sir John can't know it's them. Bardolph came and told me.

### **THIRD DRAWER**

Well, there's going to be hilarity here! What a great scheme!

### **SECOND DRAWER**

I'll see if I can find Sneak.

*The DRAWERS exit.*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY** and **DOLL TEARSHEET** enter.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I swear, sweetheart, you seem to be in a great [temporality](#). Your [pulsidge](#) is beating as strongly as you could want, and your color is as red as a rose; truly! But seriously, I do think you've drank too much of that sweet wine from the Canary Islands—it's a mighty powerful drink, and it'll get into your blood faster than you can say, "What's this?" How are you feeling now?

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Better than I was. Hem.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Why, that's well said. A good heart's worth gold.  
Lo, here comes Sir John.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

(sings) *When Arthur first in court—Empty the jordan.*  
30 (sings) *And was a worthy king—How now, Mistress Doll?*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Sick of a calm, yea, good faith.

**FALSTAFF**

So is all her sect. An they be once in a calm, they are sick.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

A pox damn you, muddy rascal. Is that all the comfort you give me?

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Better than I was before. (*she coughs or belches*)

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well said! A healthy heart is worth its weight in gold. Look, here comes Sir John.

**FALSTAFF** enters.

**FALSTAFF**

(singing)

**"WHEN ARTHUR FIRST IN COURT"—SOMEBODY EMPTY THE CHAMBER POT! "AND WAS A WORTHY KING"**

The lyrics are from a popular ballad of the time, "Sir Lancelot du Lake."

**"When Arthur first in court"—somebody empty the chamber pot! "And was a worthy king"** —how are you, Mistress Doll?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

She's sick of a  **qualm** , she is.

**FALSTAFF**

That's how all the women in her profession are. As soon as they're calm—and not in someone's bed—they get sick.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

You stupid bastard. Is this how you make me feel better?

**FALSTAFF**

35 You make fat rascals, Mistress Doll.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I make them? Gluttony and diseases make them; I make them not.

**FALSTAFF**

If the cook help to make the gluttony, you help to make the diseases, Doll. We catch of you, Doll, we catch of you. Grant  
40 that, my poor virtue, grant that.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Yea, joy, our chains and our jewels.

**FALSTAFF**

Your broaches, pearls, and ouches—for to serve bravely is to come halting off, you know; to come off the breach with his pike bent bravely, and to surgery bravely, to venture upon  
45 the charged chambers bravely—

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Hang yourself, you muddy conger, hang yourself!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By my troth, this is the old fashion. You two never meet but

**FALSTAFF**

You make fat bastards, Mistress Doll.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I make them fat? Gluttony and disease will make men fat; I have nothing to do with it.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, cooks help create gluttony, by making and selling food—the object of gluttony. And you help create diseases, Doll. We catch them from you, Doll, we catch them from you: admit it.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Sure, sweetheart. You catch us by the chains and the jewels, and then you steal them from us.

**FALSTAFF**

"Your [brooches, pearls, and gems](#)" —We fight bravely and then come away limping. We retreat from the breach in the wall with our weapons bravely bent. We head off to the doctor, bravely. And then we charge into the [loaded chambers](#) again, bravely.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Drop dead, you filthy eel. Drop dead!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

you fall to some discord. You are both, i' good truth, as rheumatic as two dry toasts. You cannot one bear with 50 another's confirmities. What the good-year! One must bear, and that must be you. You are the weaker vessel, as they say, the emptier vessel.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Can a weak empty vessel bear such a huge full hogshead? There's a whole merchant's venture of Bourdeaux stuff in 55 him. You have not seen a hulk better stuffed in the hold. — ome, I'll be friends with thee, Jack. Thou art going to the wars, and whether I shall ever see thee again or no, there is nobody cares.

*Enter FIRST DRAWER*

### FIRST DRAWER

Sir, Ancient Pistol's below and would speak with 60 you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Hang him, swaggering rascal! Let him not come hither. It is the foul-mouthed'st rogue in England.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

If he swagger, let him not come here. No, by my faith, I must live among my neighbors. I'll no swaggerers: I am in good

I *swear*, this is how it always is. You two even see each other without fighting. You're as hot as dry toast, you can't stand each other's bad qualities. Good grief! But one of you has to bear the burden, and that's you, Doll. You're the weaker sex, the empty vessel.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Can a weak, empty vessel bear the burden of such a huge, full barrel? There's a whole merchant's stock of Bordeaux wine in him; you've never seen a ship with a fuller cargo hold. Come, Jack, I'll be friends with

you. You're going off to war, and whether or not I ever see you again—well, who cares.

*The FIRST DRAWER enters.*

### FIRST DRAWER

Sir, Ensign Pistol's downstairs. He wants to talk with you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Let him drop dead, that hot-tempered jerk! Don't let him in: he's got the foulest mouth in England.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

If he's going to make trouble, don't let him in. No way; I have my neighbors to think about. I'll have no troublemakers here.

65 name and fame with the very best. Shut the door. There comes no swaggerers here. I have not lived all this while to have swaggering now. Shut the door, I pray you.

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear, hostess?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Pray you pacify yourself, Sir John. There comes no swaggerers  
70 here.

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear? It is mine ancient.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Tilly-vally, Sir John, ne'er tell me. And your ancient  
swaggerer comes not in my doors. I was before Master  
Tisick, the deputy t' other day, and, as he said to me—'twas  
75 no longer ago than Wednesday last, i' good faith—  
"Neighbour Quickly," says he—Master Dumb, our minister,  
was by then—"Neighbour Quickly," says he, "receive those  
that are civil, for," said he, "you are in an ill name." Now he  
said so, I can tell whereupon. "For," says he, "you are an  
80 honest woman, and well thought on. Therefore take heed  
what guests you receive. Receive," says he, "no swaggering  
companions." There comes none here. You would bless you

I've got my good reputation to watch out for. Shut the doors; no troublemakers are getting in here. I haven't lived this long to have trouble now. Shut the doors, please.

**FALSTAFF**

Do you hear, hostess?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Please, be quiet a second, Sir John. No troublemakers are coming in here.

**FALSTAFF**

Didn't you hear? It's my ensign.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh fiddlesticks, Sir John, I don't want to hear it. Your Ensign Troublemaker is not coming in here. I talked to Master Tisick, the deputy, the other day. And he said to me—it couldn't have been longer ago than last Wednesday—"I swear, neighbor Quickly," he said. (Master Dumbe, the minister, was here at the time.) "Neighbor Quickly," he said, "only let in people who are well behaved, because," he said, "your reputation is suffering." He said that, and I'll tell you why. "You're an honest woman, and people think highly of

you. So think about who you let in. Don't let in," he said, "any

to hear what he said. No, I'll no swaggerers.

### FALSTAFF

He's no swaggerer, hostess, a tame cheater, i' faith. You may  
85 stroke him as gently as a puppy greyhound. He'll not  
swagger with a Barbary hen if her feathers turn back in any  
show of resistance.—Call him up, drawer.

*Exit FIRST DRAWER*

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

"Cheater," call you him? I will bar no honest man my house,  
nor no cheater, but I do not love swaggering. By my troth,  
90 I am the worse when one says "swagger." Feel, masters, how  
I shake; look you, I warrant you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

So you do, hostess.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Do I? Yea, in very truth, do I, an 'twere an aspen leaf. I  
cannot abide swaggerers.

*Enter PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and the PAGE*

### PISTOL

troublemakers." And none are getting in. You'd be lucky if you heard what he said. No way, no troublemakers.

### FALSTAFF

He's not a troublemaker, hostess. He's a harmless cheater; you can pet him like a little puppy. He wouldn't even start a fight with a guinea-hen, if her feathers stood up in annoyance. Get him up here, drawer.

*FIRST DRAWER exits.*

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

You call him a [cheater](#)? I won't keep an honest man out of this bar, so I won't keep a cheater out, either.  
But I don't like troublemakers, I swear. I get sick when I hear the word, "troublemaker." Feel, masters: I'm shaking. Look, I'm telling you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

You are shaking.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

I am?—I am! I swear, I'm shaking like a big tree leaf. I can't stand troublemakers.

*PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and the PAGE enter.*

### PISTOL

95 God save you, Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

Welcome, Ancient Pistol. Here, Pistol, I charge you with a cup of sack. Do you discharge upon mine hostess.

### PISTOL

I will discharge upon her, Sir John, with two bullets.

### FALSTAFF

She is pistol-proof. Sir, you shall not hardly offend her.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

100 Come, I'll drink no proofs nor no bullets. I'll drink no more than will do me good, for no man's pleasure, I.

### PISTOL

Then to you, Mistress Dorothy! I will charge you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Charge me! I scorn you, scurvy companion. What, you poor, base, rascally, cheating lack-linen mate! Away, you mouldy 105 rogue, away! I am meat for your master.

### PISTOL

I know you, Mistress Dorothy.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Away, you cutpurse rascal, you filthy bung, away! By this

Good to see you, Sir John!

### FALSTAFF

Welcome, Ensign Pistol. Here, [Pistol](#). I charge you with a glass of wine. Now discharge on the hostess.

### PISTOL

I'll unload two big [bullets](#) on her, Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

She's Pistol-proof, sir. You'll hardly be able to injure her.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

I won't have any proofs or any bullets. I won't drink any more than I feel like, not for any man.

### PISTOL

Then here's to you, Mistress Dorothy, I'll charge you.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Charge me? Get lost, you sick jerk. What? You broke, rude, scheming, cheating, shirtless fool! Get away from me, you moldy bastard, away! I'm meant for your betters.

### PISTOL

I know you, Mistress Dorothy.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

wine, I'll thrust my knife in your mouldy chaps an you play  
the saucy cuttle with me. Away, you bottle-ale rascal, you  
110 basket-hilt stale juggler, you. Since when, I pray you, sir?  
God's light, with two points on your shoulder? Much!

### **PISTOL**

God let me not live, but I will murder your ruff for this.

### **FALSTAFF**

No more, Pistol. I would not have you go off here. Discharge  
yourself of our company, Pistol.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

115 No, good Captain Pistol, not here, sweet captain.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Captain? Thou abominable damned cheater, art thou not  
ashamed to be called captain? An captains were of my mind,  
they would truncheon you out for taking their names upon  
you before you have earned them. You a captain? You slave,

120 for what? For tearing a poor whore's ruff in a bawdy house?  
He a captain! Hang him, rogue. He lives upon mouldy  
stewed prunes and dried cakes. A captain? God's light, these  
villains will make the word as odious as the word "occupy,"  
which was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted.  
125 Therefore captains had need look to 't.

Get away, you pickpocket rascal! You dirty thief, away! I swear  
on this wine, I'll stick a knife in your rotten cheeks if you keep  
abusing me like this. Out, you boozy rascal! You imposter of a  
solider! Since when are you a soldier, I ask you? With two  
armor tags on your shoulder? I'm sure!

### **PISTOL**

I'll strangle your neck for that, or I'll die trying.

### **FALSTAFF**

Hold it, Pistol. I don't want you to go off here. Discharge  
someplace else, Pistol.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, good Captain Pistol. Not here, sweet captain.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Captain? You horrible, damned liar, aren't you ashamed to be  
called "captain"? If captains shared my opinions, they'd beat  
you for taking their rank without earning it. You, a captain? You  
bastard, for what? For

tearing a poor whore's clothes in a whorehouse? Him, a  
captain? Let him drop dead, the rogue! He lives off the moldy  
food you find in brothels. A captain? For God's sake! Men like  
him will make the word "captain" as nasty as the word "[occupy](#),"  
which was a fine word before it got corrupted. Captains had  
better watch out.

**BARDOLPH**

Pray thee go down, good ancient.

**FALSTAFF**

Hark thee hither, Mistress Doll.

**PISTOL**

Not I. I tell thee what, Corporal Bardolph, I could tear her.  
I'll be revenged of her.

**PAGE**

130 Pray thee go down.

**PISTOL**

I'll see her damned first to Pluto's damnèd lake, by this hand, to th' infernal deep with Erebus and tortures vile also. Hold hook and line, say I. Down, down, dogs! Down, Fates! Have we not Hiren here?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

135 Good Captain Peesell, be quiet. 'Tis very late, i' faith. I beseech you now, aggravate your choler.

**PISTOL**

These be good humors indeed. Shall pack-horses And hollow pampered jades of Asia, which cannot go but thirty mile a day,  
Compare with Caesars and with cannibals, and Troyant

**BARDOLPH**

Please, calm down, good ensign.

**FALSTAFF**

Listen here, Mistress Doll.

**PISTOL**

Not me. I'll tell you what, Corporal Bardolph, I could tear her. I'll get revenge on her.

**PAGE**

Please, calm down!

**PISTOL**

I'll see her damned first. To the waters of hell, I swear, to the endless deep, with chaos and vile tortures. Hold onto that pole, I say. Down, down, dogs! Down, fates! Here's my sword!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Captain Pisser, be quiet! It's late. I beg of you, stop being angry!

**PISTOL**

Now we're talking! Are we going to let old [nags](#) and pampered horses (who can't manage more than a few miles a day) be compared with kings, and generals, and mythic heroes? No!

Greeks? Nay, rather damn them with King Cerberus, and let the welkin roar. Shall we fall foul for toys?

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

140 By my troth, captain, these are very bitter words.

### BARDOLPH

Begone, good ancient. This will grow to a brawl anon.

### PISTOL

Die men like dogs! Give crowns like pins! Have we not  
Hiren here?

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

O' my word, captain, there's none such here. What the good-  
145 year, do you think I would deny her? For God's sake, be  
quiet.

### PISTOL

Then feed and be fat, my fair Calipolis. Come, give 's some  
sack. *Si fortuna me tormento, sperato me contento.* Fear we  
broadsides? No, let the fiend give fire. Give me some sack,  
150 and, sweetheart, lie thou there. (*lays down his sword*) Come  
we to full points here? And are etceteras nothing?

### FALSTAFF

Damn them to hell, and let the storms rage! Should we fight  
over nothing?

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

My goodness, captain! Those are strong words!

### BARDOLPH

You should go now, ensign. This is going to get out of control in  
a minute.

### PISTOL

Let men die like dogs! Give away kings' crowns like they're  
nothing! Isn't this a sword we have here?

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

My [word of honor](#), captain, there's no such thing here! For  
goodness sake! Do you think I'd say she's not if she were? For  
God's sake, be quiet!

### PISTOL

Then eat and grow fat, my sweet lady! Come, bring me some  
wine. *Si fortuna me tormento, sperato me contento.* Are we  
scared of an attack? No! Let the devil open fire. Give me some  
wine, and darling, lie there. (*he lays his sword down*) Is the party  
over? What about the rest of it, the [et ceteras](#) ?

### FALSTAFF

Pistol, I would be quiet.

### **PISTOL**

Sweet knight, I kiss thy neat. What, we have seen the seven stars.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

155 For God's sake, thrust him downstairs. I cannot endure such a fustian rascal.

### **PISTOL**

"Thrust him downstairs"? Know we not Galloway nags?

### **FALSTAFF**

Quoit him down, Bardolph, like a shove-groat shilling. Nay, an he do nothing but speak nothing, he shall be nothing here.

### **BARDOLPH**

160 Come, get you downstairs.

### **PISTOL**

What! shall we have incision? Shall we imbrue? (*snatches up his sword*) Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days. Why then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds untwine the Sisters Three. Come, Atropos, I say.

Pistol, I'd be quiet if I were you.

### **PISTOL**

Sweet knight, I kiss your fist. Look! It's so late—we can see the Big Dipper out.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

For God's sake, throw him down the stairs. I can't stand such a worthless jerk.

### **PISTOL**

Throw him down the stairs? Don't we know a common prostitute when we see one?

### **FALSTAFF**

Toss him down, Bardolph, like a coin on a game board. He does nothing but talk a bunch of nothing, so he's going to count for nothing here.

### **BARDOLPH**

Come on. Get downstairs.

### **PISTOL**

What? Is there going to be [cutting](#) now? Shall we be soaked in blood? (*he grabs his sword*) Then let death sing me a lullaby; let him end my melancholy days! Let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds unravel the thread of my life, spun by those three sisters of fate! Come, Atropos, cut off my thread!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

165 Here's goodly stuff toward!

**FALSTAFF**

Give me my rapier, boy.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I pray thee, Jack, I pray thee do not draw.

**FALSTAFF**

Get you downstairs. (*drawing and driving PISTO out*)

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Here's a goodly tumult. I'll forswear keeping house afore  
170 I'll be in these tirrits and frights. So, murder, I warrant now.  
Alas, alas, put up your naked weapons, put up your naked  
weapons.

*Exeunt PISTOL pursued by BARDOLPH*

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I pray thee, Jack, be quiet. The rascal's gone. Ah, you  
whoreson little valiant villain, you.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

175 Are you not hurt i' the groin? Methought he made a shrewd  
thrust at your belly.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

This ought to be good.

**FALSTAFF**

Give me my sword, boy.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Please, Jack, please; don't fight!

**FALSTAFF**

Get downstairs! (*he draws his sword and chases PISTOL*)

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

This is going to be some fight! I would sooner close this bar  
than put up with terrors and fits. It's murder, I swear! Oh my! Oh  
my! Put away your naked weapons! Put away your naked  
weapons!

*PISTOL exits, pursued by BARDOLPH.*

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Please, Jack, calm down; the jerk's gone. Oh you son-of-a-  
bitch, brave little bastard, you!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Did he hurt you in the groin? I thought he got in a good shot at  
your belly.

*BARDOLPH enters.*

**FALSTAFF**

Have you turned him out o' doors?

**BARDOLPH**

Yea, sir. The rascal's drunk. You have hurt him, sir, i' the shoulder.

**FALSTAFF**

A rascal to brave me!

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Ah, you sweet little rogue, you. Alas, poor ape, how thou sweat'st! Come, let me wipe thy face. Come on, you whoreson chops. Ah, rogue, i' faith, I love thee. Thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy, worth five of Agamemnon, and ten times better than the Nine Worthies. Ah, villain!

**FALSTAFF**

Ah, rascally slave! I will toss the rogue in a blanket.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Do, an thou darest for thy heart. An thou dost, I'll canvass thee between a pair of sheets.

*Enter musicians*

**FALSTAFF**

Did you kick him out of here?

**BARDOLPH**

Yup! The jerk's drunk. You hurt his shoulder.

**FALSTAFF**

That jerk! How dare he challenge me!

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Oh, you sweet little rogue, you! Oh my, you poor monkey, you're sweating! Come, let me wipe your face. Come on, you fat bastard. Oh, you rogue! I swear, I love you. You're as brave as [Hector of Troy](#), you're worth five Agamemnons, and you're ten times better than the nine wonders of the world! Oh, you villain!

**FALSTAFF**

The no-good jerk! I'll wrap the rogue in a blanket, the way they punish cowards.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Do it, if you dare. If you do, I'll toss you between a pair of sheets!

*The musicians enter.*

**PAGE**

The music is come, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Let them play.—Play, sirs.—Sit on my knee, Doll. A rascal bragging slave! The rogue fled from me like quicksilver.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

190 I' faith, and thou followed'st him like a church. Thou whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig, when wilt thou leave fighting a-days and foining a-nights and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?

*Enter, behind, PRINCE HENRY and POINS, disguised as drawers*

**FALSTAFF**

Peace, good Doll. Do not speak like a death's-head; do not bid

195 me remember mine end.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Sirrah, what humor's the Prince of?

**FALSTAFF**

A good shallow young fellow, he would have made a good pantler; he would a' chipped bread well.

**PAGE**

The music is here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Let them play. Play, sirs. Sit on my knee, Doll. A no-good, bragging jerk! The fool ran from me like quicksilver.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Truly, and you chased him like a church—slowly. You rotten little fat roasting pig! When will you stop fighting all day and thrusting all night, and start to get your body ready for its final resting place?

*Unseen, PRINCE HENRY and POINS enter, disguised as drawers.*

**FALSTAFF**

Quiet, Doll. Don't talk like a [death's-head](#). Don't make me think of my own end.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Sirrah, what's the [Prince](#) like?

**FALSTAFF**

He's a shallow youngster. He would have made a good pantry servant: he would have been great at trimming the crusts off bread.

## DOLL TEARSHEET

They say Poins has a good wit.

## FALSTAFF

200 He a good wit? Hang him, baboon. His wit's as thick as Tewksbury mustard. There's no more conceit in him than is in a mallet.

## DOLL TEARSHEET

Why does the Prince love him so then?

## FALSTAFF

Because their legs are both of a bigness, and he plays at  
205 quoits well, and eats conger and fennel, and drinks off  
candles' ends for flap-dragons, and rides the wild mare with  
the boys, and jumps upon joint stools, and swears with a  
good grace, and wears his boots very smooth, like unto the  
sign of the Leg, and breeds no bate with telling of discreet  
210 stories, and such other gambol faculties he has that show a  
weak mind and an able body, for the which the Prince admits  
him; for the Prince himself is such another. The weight of a  
hair will turn the scales between their avoirdupois.

## PRINCE HENRY

(to POINS) Would not this nave of a wheel have his ears cut off?

## DOLL TEARSHEET

They say Poins is smart.

## FALSTAFF

Him, smart? Hang him, he's a baboon! He's as thick as mustard, and no smarter than a sledgehammer.

## DOLL TEARSHEET

Then why does the Prince love him?

## FALSTAFF

Because their legs are the same size, and he likes to play the game of quoits and eat fatty foods; and he'll play drinking games, like dropping burning candle ends into his drinks. He plays on the see-saw with the boys, and pulls crazy stunts, and curses nicely. And his boots fit nice and smooth, just like the ones painted on the shoe store's signs. And he doesn't cause trouble by spilling secrets. He has all kinds of qualities associated with weak minds and healthy bodies, and that's why the Prince keeps him around: because the Prince is exactly the same. There's not a hair's difference between the two of them.

## PRINCE HENRY

(to POINS) We should cut this fatso's ears off.

**POINS**

215 Let's beat him before his whore.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Look whe'er the withered elder hath not his poll clawed like a parrot.

**POINS**

Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance?

**FALSTAFF**

220 Kiss me, Doll.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Saturn and Venus this year in conjunction! What says th' almanac to that?

**POINS**

And look whether the fiery trigon, his man, be not lisping to his master's old tables, his notebook, his counsel keeper.

**FALSTAFF**

225 (to DOLL) Thou dost give me flattering busses.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

By my troth, I kiss thee with a most constant heart.

**FALSTAFF****POINS**

Let's beat him in front of his whore.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Look at that old [geezer](#) having his head scratched like a parrot.

**POINS**

Isn't it odd that desire lasts so much longer than the ability to perform?

**FALSTAFF**

Kiss me, Doll.

**PRINCE HENRY**

[Saturn and Venus](#) must be aligned this year! What do you think the astrological tables have to say about that?

**POINS**

And look. That fiery-faced Bardolph is whispering sweet nothings to Quickly, his master's old confidante.

**FALSTAFF**

(to DOLL) You flatter me with your kisses.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I swear, my kisses are heartfelt.

**FALSTAFF**

I am old, I am old.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

I love thee better than I love e'er a scurvy young boy of them all.

### FALSTAFF

230 What stuff wilt have a kirtle of? I shall receive money o' Thursday; shalt have a cap tomorrow. A merry song! Come, it grows late. We'll to bed. Thou 'lt forget me when I am gone.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

By my troth, thou 'lt set me a-weeping an thou sayest so.  
235 Prove that ever I dress myself handsome till thy return. Well, harken a' th' end.

### FALSTAFF

Some sack, Francis.

### PRINCE HENRY AND POINS

Anon, anon, sir.

*Coming forward*

### FALSTAFF

Ha? A bastard son of the King's?—And art not thou  
240 Poins his brother?

I'm old. I'm old.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

I love you more than I could love any ridiculous young man in the world.

### FALSTAFF

What fabric do you want a new skirt made out of? I'll get paid on Thursday, so you'll get a new hat tomorrow. Let's have a happy song. It's getting late; let's go to bed. You'll forget me when I'm gone.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

I swear, you'll make me cry if you talk like that. I won't wear any beautiful clothing till you return. Well, we'll see what happens.

### FALSTAFF

Some wine, Francis.

### PRINCE HENRY AND POINS

Right away, sir!

*PRINCE HENRY and POINS reveal themselves.*

### FALSTAFF

What! A bastard son of the King? And aren't you Poins, his brother?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, thou globe of sinful continents, what a life dost thou lead?

**FALSTAFF**

A better than thou. I am a gentleman. Thou art a drawer.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Very true, sir, and I come to draw you out by the ears.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

245 O, the Lord preserve thy good Grace! By my troth, welcome to London. Now the Lord bless that sweet face of thine. O Jesu, are you come from Wales?

**FALSTAFF**

Thou whoreson mad compound of majesty, (*indicating DOLL*) by this light flesh and corrupt blood, thou art welcome.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

250 How? You fat fool, I scorn you.

**POINS**

My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge and turn all to a merriment, if you take not the heat.

**PRINCE HENRY****PRINCE HENRY**

Your globe, covered with continents of sin! What kind of life are you leading?

**FALSTAFF**

A better life than you. I'm a gentleman and you're just a drawer.

**PRINCE HENRY**

That's right, sir. And I'm going to draw you out of this room by the ears.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh, may God bless you, sir. I swear, welcome to London. God bless that sweet face of yours! Oh Jesus! Have you come from Wales?

**FALSTAFF**

You son of a bitch, you insane block of royalty! (*indicating DOLL*) I swear on this piece of weak flesh and corrupt blood that you're welcome here!

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

What? You fat fool! The hell with you!

**POINS**

My lord, if you don't strike while the iron's hot, he'll turn everything into a joke and rob you of your chance for revenge.

**PRINCE HENRY**

You whoreson candle-mine, you how vilely did you speak of  
me even now before this honest, virtuous, civil  
255 gentlewoman!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

God's blessing of your good heart, and so she is, by my troth.

**FALSTAFF**

Didst thou hear me?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yea, and you knew me, as you did when you ran away by  
Gad's Hill. You knew I was at your back, and spoke it on  
260 purpose to try my patience.

**FALSTAFF**

No, no, no; not so. I did not think thou wast within hearing.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I shall drive you, then, to confess the wilfull abuse, and then  
I know how to handle you.

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Hal, o' mine honor, no abuse.

**PRINCE HENRY**

265 Not to dispraise me and call me pantier and bread-chipper  
and I know not what?

You son of a whore, you giant piece of candle wax, you said  
such horrible things about me just now, in front of this honest,  
upstanding and well-behaved lady.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

May God bless your good heart! She is all that, I swear.

**FALSTAFF**

Did you hear me?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yes. And you knew I was there, right? It's just like when you ran  
away at [Gad's Hill](#): you knew I was the one who beat you, and  
you made up some story just to irritate me.

**FALSTAFF**

No, no, no. Not at all. I had no idea you were there.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Then I'm going to make you confess that you deliberately  
slandered me. And then I'll know what to do next.

**FALSTAFF**

No slander, Hal. On my honor, no slander.

**PRINCE HENRY**

No? To malign me, and call me a pantry servant and a bread-  
trimmer, and I don't know what else?

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Hal.

**POINS**

No abuse?

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Ned, i' th' world, honest Ned, none. I dispraised  
270 him before the wicked, that the wicked might not fall in love  
with thee; in which doing, I have done the part of a careful  
friend and a true subject, and thy father is to give me thanks  
for it. No abuse, Hal.—None, Ned, none. No, faith, boys, none.

**PRINCE HENRY**

See now whether pure fear and entire cowardice doth not  
275 make thee wrong this virtuous gentlewoman to close with  
us. Is she of the wicked, is thine hostess here of the wicked,  
or is thy boy of the wicked, or honest Bardolph, whose zeal  
burns in his nose, of the wicked?

**POINS**

Answer, thou dead elm, answer.

**FALSTAFF**

280 The fiend hath pricked down Bardolph irrecoverable, and  
his face is Lucifer's privy kitchen, where he doth nothing but  
roast malt-worms. For the boy, there is a good angel about  
him, but the devil outbids him too.

**FALSTAFF**

No slander, Hal.

**POINS**

No slander?

**FALSTAFF**

No slander, Ned, in the world, honest Ned, none. I maligned  
him only to the wicked, so that the wicked wouldn't fall in love  
with him. And by doing that, I've acted like a good friend and  
loyal subject, and your father should thank me for it. No  
slander, Hal, none, Ned. No, truly boys, none.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Now your absolute fear and utter cowardliness has made you  
wrong this good lady in order to make peace with us. Is she  
wicked? Is this hostess here wicked? Is your boy here wicked?  
Or honest Bardolph, whose piety burns in his face? Is he  
wicked?

**POINS**

Answer, you withered old trunk, answer.

**FALSTAFF**

The devil has marked Bardolph as long gone, and his face is  
Lucifer's kitchen, where only drunks are served. As for the boy,  
he may have a good spirit on one shoulder, but the devil on the  
other is stronger.

**PRINCE HENRY**

For the women?

**FALSTAFF**

285 For one of them, she's in hell already and burns poor souls.  
For the other, I owe her money, and whether she be damned  
for that I know not.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, I warrant you.

**FALSTAFF**

No, I think thou art not; I think thou art quit for that. Marry,  
290 there is another indictment upon thee for suffering flesh to  
be eaten in thy house contrary to the law, for the which I  
think thou wilt howl.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

All vitlars do so. What's a joint of mutton or two in a whole  
Lent?

**PRINCE HENRY**

295 You, gentlewoman.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

What says your Grace?

**FALSTAFF**

His grace says that which his flesh rebels against.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And the women?

**FALSTAFF**

One of them is in hell already, where she gets poor souls hot.  
As for the other, I owe her money. If she's damned for that, I  
have no idea.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I'm not, I promise you that.

**FALSTAFF**

No, I think you're not. I think you've been excused for that. But  
there's another charge against you. You serve flesh in this  
place, and that's against the law. You're going to hell for that.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Everybody who serves food does that. What's wrong with a  
bite or two of meat during Lent?

**PRINCE HENRY**

You, good lady—

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

What is it, gracious sir?

**FALSTAFF**

He may speak to you graciously, but his body feels otherwise.

*Knocking within*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Who knocks so loud at door? Look to th' door there, Francis.

*Enter PETO*

**PRINCE HENRY**

Peto, how now, what news?

**PETO**

300 The King your father is at Westminster,  
And there are twenty weak and wearied posts  
Come from the north, and as I came along  
I met and overtook a dozen captains,  
Bareheaded, sweating, knocking at the taverns  
305 And asking everyone for Sir John Falstaff.

**PRINCE HENRY**

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame  
So idly to profane the precious time  
When tempest of commotion, like the south  
Borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt  
310 And drop upon our bare unarmèd heads.—  
Give me my sword and cloak.—Falstaff, good night.

*Knocking is heard offstage.*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Who's knocking so loudly on the door? Francis, go see.

*PETO enters.*

**PRINCE HENRY**

Peto, how are you? What's going on?

**PETO**

Your father the King is in Westminster. Twenty exhausted messengers have arrived from the north. And, on my way here, I met a dozen captains, hustling and working hard, knocking on the door of every tavern and searching for Sir John Falstaff.

**PRINCE HENRY**

My God, Poins, I feel terrible wasting precious time on this idleness when a huge black storm is brewing, soon to open up on our bare, vulnerable heads. Give me my coat and my sword. Good night, Falstaff.

*Exeunt PRINCE HENRY, POINS, PETO and BARDOLPH*

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

**FALSTAFF**

Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we must hence and leave it unpicked.

*Knocking within*

More knocking at the door?

*Enter BARDOLPH*

How now, what's the matter?

**BARDOLPH**

315 You must away to court, sir, presently.

A dozen captains stay at door for you.

**FALSTAFF**

(to the PAGE) Pay the musicians, sirrah.—Farewell, hostess.—Farewell, Doll. You see, my good wenches, how men of merit are sought after. The undeserver may sleep 320 when the man of action is called on. Farewell, good wenches. If I be not sent away post, I will see you again ere I go.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I cannot speak. If my heart be not ready to burst—well, sweet Jack, have a care of thyself.

**FALSTAFF****FALSTAFF**

Now's the sweetest part of the night, and we have to leave without enjoying it.

*Knocking is heard offstage.*

More knocking!

*BARDOLPH enters.*

What's going on? What's the matter?

**BARDOLPH**

You have to go to the royal court immediately, sir. A dozen captains are at the door waiting for you.

**FALSTAFF**

(to the PAGE) Pay the musicians, Sirrah. Goodbye, waitress. Goodbye, Doll. See, wenches, how wanted we valuable men are? The good-for-nothing may sleep when the man of action is needed. Farewell, good wenches. If I'm not sent away immediately, I'll come see you again before I go.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I can't speak; my heart is ready to burst. Well, sweet Jack, take care of yourself.

**FALSTAFF**

325 Farewell, farewell.

*Exeunt FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, PAGE, and musicians*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, fare thee well. I have known thee these twenty-nine years, come peascod time, but an honester and truer-hearted man—well, fare thee well.

**BARDOLPH**

(within) Mistress Tearsheet!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

330 What's the matter?

**BARDOLPH**

(within) Bid Mistress Tearsheet come to my master.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O, run, Doll, run, run, good Doll. Come.—She comes blubbered.—Yea! Will you come, Doll?

*Exeunt*

Farewell, farewell.

**FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH exit.**

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, goodbye. I've known you twenty-nine years this June. But a more honest, more good-hearted man—well, fare you well.

**BARDOLPH**

(offstage) Mistress Tearsheet!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

What's the matter?

**BARDOLPH**

(offstage) Mistress Tearsheet, come to my master.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O, run, Doll, run; run, good Doll. Come.—She's coming, all crying and blubbering.—Will you come, Doll?

*They exit.*

## Act 3 Scene 1

Enter **KING** Henry in his nightgown, with a page

**KING**

**KING** Henry enters, wearing his nightgown. A page follows.

**KING**

Go call the Earls of Surrey and of Warwick;  
But, ere they come, bid them o'erread these letters  
And well consider of them. Make good speed.

*Exit page*

How many thousand of my poorest subjects  
5 Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?  
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,  
10 Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee  
And hushed with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,  
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody?  
15 O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile  
In loathsome beds and leavest the kingly couch  
A watch-case or a common 'larum bell?  
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the shipboy's eyes, and rock his brains  
20 In cradle of the rude imperious surge  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them  
With deafening clamor in the slippery clouds

Call the earls of Surrey and Warwick. Tell them to read over these letters before they come, and to think carefully about them. Hurry.

*The page exits.*

Thousands of even my poorest subjects are sleeping right now. Oh sleep! Oh sweet sleep, nature's gentle healer, what have I done to frighten you? You won't weigh down my eyelids anymore, or dull my mind to make me forget. Sleep, why do you lie in filthy hovels, stretched out on uncomfortable cots, where insects' buzzing is the lullaby? Why don't you lie in the sweet-smelling bedrooms of kings, under opulent canopies, lulled with soft and beautiful music? You drowsy god, why do you lie with the common people in their loathsome beds, leaving the royal bed lonely like a sentry post, or a bell tower? Will you even close the eyes of a ship boy, high up on the whirling mast, and rock him gently in a cradle made of rough, tossing seas and howling winds—winds which take the waves and, curling them over, crashes them through the air with such a deafening noise that they wake death itself? Can you, oh unfair sleep, give rest to a drenched little sailor in the midst of such roughness, and yet deny it to a king?

25 That with the hurly death itself awakes?  
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude.  
  
And, in the calmest and most stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
30 Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down.  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

*Enter WARWICK and SURREY*

**WARWICK**

Many good morrows to your Majesty.

**KING**

Is it good Morrow, lords?

**WARWICK**

'Tis one o'clock, and past.

**KING**

35 Why then, good Morrow to you all, my lords.  
Have you read o'er the letter that I sent you?

**WARWICK**

We have, my liege.

**KING**

Then you perceive the body of our kingdom

A king on the calmest, stillest night, with everything available for sleep? Then, you happy commoners, put yourselves to bed. The head that wears the crown sleeps uneasily.

**WARWICK and SURREY enter.**

**WARWICK**

Good morning, your highness.

**KING**

Is it morning, lords?

**WARWICK**

It's after one o'clock.

**KING**

Well, then, good morning to you all, my lords. Have you read the letters I sent you?

**WARWICK**

We have, your highness.

**KING**

How foul it is, what rank diseases grow  
40 And with what danger near the heart of it.

### WARWICK

It is but as a body yet distempered,  
Which to his former strength may be restored  
With good advice and little medicine.  
My Lord Northumberland will soon be cooled.

### KING

45 O God, that one might read the book of fate  
And see the revolution of the times  
Make mountains level, and the continent,  
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself  
Into the sea, and other times to see  
50 The beachy girdle of the ocean  
Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chance's mocks  
And changes fill the cup of alteration  
  
With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,  
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
55 What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.  
'Tis not ten years gone  
Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends,  
Did feast together, and in two years after  
60 Were they at wars. It is but eight years since

Then you can tell how sick the kingdom is. There are serious diseases spreading through its body, very near its heart.

### WARWICK

The body's only out of sorts. It can be brought back to full health through good care and some medicine.  
Northumberland will soon be suppressed.

### KING

Oh God! If only we could read the book of destiny! We'd see how time changes everything, bringing mountains low and melting the land—which is tired of being solid and firm—into the sea. We'd see how the beach is sometimes too wide for even the tide to conquer. We'd see how blind luck can make mockeries of men, and how change can affect you in countless ways.

If even the happiest youth could read this book, he'd look at the course of his life—the dangers he's endured, the challenges that still lie ahead—and he'd shut that book, sit down and die. It was less than ten years ago that Richard and Northumberland loved each other. Then two years later, they were at war. Just eight years ago, Northumberland was the man closest to my heart. Like a brother, he devoted himself to me, dedicating both life and limb to my cause. He even

This Percy was the man nearest my soul,  
Who like a brother toiled in my affairs  
And laid his love and life under my foot,  
Yea, for my sake, even to the eyes of Richard  
65 Gave him defiance. But which of you was by—  
(to WARWICK) You, cousin Nevil, as I may remember—  
When Richard, with his eye brimful of tears,  
Then checked and rated by Northumberland,  
Did speak these words, now proved a prophecy?  
70 "Northumberland, thou ladder by the which  
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne"—  
Though then, God knows, I had no such intent,  
But that necessity so bowed the state  
That I and greatness were compelled to kiss—  
75 "The time shall come," thus did he follow it,  
"The time will come that foul sin, gathering head,  
Shall break into corruption"—so went on,  
Foretelling this same time's condition  
And the division of our amity.

### WARWICK

80 There is a history in all men's lives  
Figuring the nature of the times deceased,  
The which observed, a man may prophesy,  
With a near aim, of the main chance of things  
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds

challenged Richard on my behalf. But which of you was there

—

I think it was you, Warwick—when Richard, his eyes brimming with tears because of Northumberland's rebellion, spoke these words that now seem prophetic: "Northumberland, you are the ladder that Bolingbroke has climbed to get to the throne." Although, God knows, it wasn't my intention then to become king. But the country needed it so badly, I was forced to rise up and become great. "The time will come," Richard continued, "when this terrible sin, growing in size, will break out into corruption." That's how he went on. He predicted our current condition, and the collapse of our alliances.

### WARWICK

There is a chronicle for every man's life, which shows what happened to him in times now past. If you study that chronicle, you can prophecy what lies ahead with some accuracy. The seeds of things to come are buried in the things that have

85 And weak beginnings lie intreasurèd.  
Such things become the hatch and brood of time,  
And by the necessary form of this,

King Richard might create a perfect guess  
That great Northumberland, then false to him,  
90 Would of that seed grow to a greater falseness,  
Which should not find a ground to root upon  
Unless on you.

### KING

Are these things then necessities?  
Then let us meet them like necessities.  
95 And that same word even now cries out on us.  
They say the Bishop and Northumberland  
Are fifty thousand strong.

### WARWICK

It cannot be, my lord.  
Rumor doth double, like the voice and echo,  
100 The numbers of the feared. Please it your Grace  
To go to bed. Upon my soul, my lord,  
The powers that you already have sent forth  
Shall bring this prize in very easily.  
To comfort you the more, I have received  
105 A certain instance that Glendower is dead.  
Your Majesty hath been this fortnight ill,

already happened. These seeds grow, and become the children of time.

King Richard could look at the pattern of what had gone before and predict perfectly that Northumberland's betrayal—then still a seed—would someday grow larger, if it could find suitable soil to root in. And you're the only soil it could have found.

### KING

Were these things necessary, then? Then we'll treat them like necessities, even though the very word "necessities" cries out against us. They say the Archbishop and Northumberland have fifty thousand men in their army.

### WARWICK

That can't be, my lord. Rumor, like an echo, doubles the size of our enemy's army. Please, your highness, go to bed. I swear on my soul that the army you've already sent out can win this battle easily. And here's more good news: I've heard for sure that Glendower is dead. You've been ill for two weeks now, your majesty. Keeping such irregular hours will surely make things worse.

And these unseasoned hours perforce must add  
Unto your sickness.

**KING**

I will take your counsel.  
And were these inward wars once out of hand,  
110 We would, dear lords, unto the Holy Land.

*Exeunt*

**KING**

I'll listen to your advice. And once we've got this civil war in hand, we will, my friends, march to the Holy Land.

*They exit.*

## Act 3 Scene 2

*Enter Justice SHALLOW and Justice SILENCE, with MOULDY, SHADOW, WART, FEEBLE, BULLCALF, and a servant or two*

**SHALLOW**

Come on, come on, come on. Give me your hand, sir, give me your hand, sir. An early stirrer, by the rood. And how doth my good cousin Silence?

**SILENCE**

Good Morrow, good cousin Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

5 And how doth my cousin your bedfellow? And your fairest daughter and mine, my goddaughter Ellen?

**SILENCE**

*Justice SHALLOW and Justice SILENCE enter. They are followed by MOULDY, SHADOW, WART, FEEBLE, BULLCALF, and a servant or two.*

**SHALLOW**

Come on, come on, come on, sir. Shake my hand, sir, shake my hand. You're an early riser, I swear. How are you, cousin Silence?

**SILENCE**

Good morning, cousin Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

And how's my cousin, your wife? And your prettiest daughter, my fair god-daughter Ellen?

**SILENCE**

Alas, a black ouzel, cousin Shallow.

### **SHALLOW**

By yea and no, sir. I dare say my cousin William is become a good scholar. He is at Oxford still, is he not?

### **SILENCE**

10 Indeed, sir, to my cost.

### **SHALLOW**

He must then to the Inns o' Court shortly. I was once of Clement's Inn, where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet.

### **SILENCE**

You were called "Lusty Shallow" then, cousin.

### **SHALLOW**

15 By the Mass, I was called anything, and I would have done anything indeed too, and roundly too. There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man. You had not four such swinge-bucklers in all the Inns o' Court

### **SHALLOW**

20 again. And I may say to you, we knew where the bona robas were and had the best of them all at commandment. Then was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas

I'm afraid she's got [dark hair](#), cousin Shallow!

### **SHALLOW**

By gum, I bet William's become a real scholar. He's still at Oxford, right?

### **SILENCE**

He sure is, and I'm the one who's paying for it.

### **SHALLOW**

He'll be going to law school soon. I studied law at [Clement's Inn](#), where I think they still talk about crazy old Shallow.

### **SILENCE**

You were known as lusty Shallow back then, cousin.

### **SHALLOW**

I was known as anything, I swear. And I would have done anything too, and all the way, too. I was there, and little John Doit from Staffordshire, and black-haired George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, from the Cotswolds. Since then, no law college

### **SHALLOW**

in the world has seen four swashbucklers like us. And let me tell you this: we knew where to find the highest-quality whores, and the best of them were at our beck and call. At that time,

Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

### SILENCE

This Sir John, cousin, that comes hither anon about soldiers?

### SHALLOW

25 The same Sir John, the very same. I see him break Scoggin's head at the court gate, when he was a crack not thus high; and  
the very same day did I fight with one Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Grey's Inn. Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent! And to see how many of my old acquaintance  
30 are dead.

### SILENCE

We shall all follow, cousin.

### SHALLOW

Certain, 'tis certain; very sure, very sure. Death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all. All shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford Fair?

### SILENCE

35 By my troth, cousin, I was not there.

### SHALLOW

Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, was just a boy. He worked as a page for Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk.

### SILENCE

Do you mean the same Sir John that's coming here soon to recruit soldiers?

### SHALLOW

The same Sir John, the very same. I saw him beat Skogan upon the head when he was a little tyke, not this high. The same day, I had a fight with a guy named Sampson Stockfish. He sold fruit behind Gray's Inn. Jesus, Jesus! I've had some crazy times! To think that so many of my old pals are dead!

### SILENCE

We'll all follow them, cousin.

### SHALLOW

Right you are, very right. That's for sure, that's for sure. Death, as the Psalms say, is certain. Everyone dies. How much are they getting for good young bulls at the Stamford county fair?

### SILENCE

Truly, I wasn't there.

### SHALLOW

Death is certain. Is old Dooble of your town living yet?

**SILENCE**

Dead, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Jesu, Jesu, dead! He drew a good bow, and dead? He shot a fine shoot. John o' Gaunt loved him well, and betted much  
40 money on his head. Dead! He would have clapped i' th' clout at twelve score, and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now?

**SILENCE**

Thereafter as they be, a score of good ewes may be worth ten  
45 pounds.

**SHALLOW**

And is old Dooble dead?

**SILENCE**

Here come two of Sir John Falstaff's men, as I think.

*Enter BARDOLPH and one with him*

**SHALLOW**

Good morrow, honest gentlemen.

Death is certain. Is old Double from your hometown still alive?

**SILENCE**

Dead, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Jesus, Jesus, dead! He was a good archer, and dead! He could fire one heck of a shot. John of Gaunt loved him, and used to wager on his shooting. Dead! He could hit a target from two hundred and forty yards, and he could shoot a straight arrow two hundred and eighty yards—maybe even two hundred and ninety. That was something to see. How much are they getting for twenty ewes?

**SILENCE**

Depends on the quality. Twenty good ewes could be worth ten pounds.

**SHALLOW**

And old Double's dead?

**SILENCE**

Here come two of Sir John Falstaff's men, I think.

*BARDOLPH and another man enter.*

Good morning, gentlemen.

**BARDOLPH**

I beseech you, which is Justice Shallow?

**SHALLOW**

50 I am Robert Shallow, sir, a poor esquire of this county and one of the King's justices of the peace. What is your good pleasure with me?

**BARDOLPH**

My captain, sir, commends him to you, my captain, Sir John Falstaff, a tall gentleman, by heaven, and a most gallant 55 leader.

**SHALLOW**

He greets me well, sir. I knew him a good backsword man. How doth the good knight? May I ask how my lady his wife doth?

**BARDOLPH**

Sir, pardon. A soldier is better accommodated than with a 60 wife.

**SHALLOW**

It is well said, in faith, sir, and it is well said indeed too. "Better accommodated." It is good, yea, indeed, is it. Good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable.

"Accommodated." It comes of *accommodo*. Very good, a

**BARDOLPH**

If you don't mind, which of you is Judge Shallow?

**SHALLOW**

I'm Robert Shallow, sir, a poor landowner in this county, and one of the King's justices of the peace. How can I help you?

**BARDOLPH**

My captain sends his regards. My captain, Sir John Falstaff. He's a valiant gentleman, I swear, and a brave leader.

**SHALLOW**

It's great to hear from him. I knew him to be a good fencer. How's the good knight doing? And, if you don't mind my asking, how's his wife?

**BARDOLPH**

I beg your pardon, sir. A soldier has no need for a wife; he is well enough accommodated.

**SHALLOW**

Well said, I swear, sir. Well said. "Well enough accommodated!" That's good. That's very good. Good turns

of phrase deserve to be praised. "Accommodated!" It comes

good phrase.

### BARDOLPH

65 Pardon, sir; I have heard the word—"phrase" call you it? By this day, I know not the phrase, but I will maintain the word with my sword to be a soldierlike word, and a word of exceeding good command, by heaven. "Accommodated," that is when a man is, as they say, accommodated, or when  
70 a man is being whereby he may be thought to be accommodated, which is an excellent thing.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

### SHALLOW

It is very just. Look, here comes good Sir John.—Give me your good hand, give me your Worship's good hand. By my troth, you like well and bear your years very well. Welcome,  
75 good Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

I am glad to see you well, good Master Robert Shallow.—Master Sure-card, as I think?

### SHALLOW

No, Sir John. It is my cousin Silence, in commission with me.

from the Latin, "accommodo." Very good. That's a good turn of phrase.

### BARDOLPH

Excuse me, sir. I've heard the word. You call it a turn of phrase? I don't know anything about phrases, but I'll fight for the word. It's a good, soldier-like word; a word with many uses, to be sure. "Accommodated." You can say that a man is accommodated when he has been furnished with supplies. And you can also say that a man is being accommodated when he's, you know, [being accommodated](#). Which is an excellent thing.

*FALSTAFF enters.*

### SHALLOW

It certainly is. Look, here comes good Sir John. Let me shake your hand; let me shake your hand, sir. I swear, you look good, like you haven't aged a day. Welcome, good Sir John.

### FALSTAFF

I'm glad to see you're well, Master Robert Shallow. And this is Master Surecard, isn't it?

### SHALLOW

No, Sir John. It's my cousin Silence. Like me, he's also a justice of the peace.

**FALSTAFF**

Good Master Silence, it well befits you should be of the  
80 peace.

**SILENCE**

Your good Worship is welcome.

**FALSTAFF**

Fie, this is hot weather, gentlemen. Have you provided me  
here half a dozen sufficient men?

**SHALLOW**

Marry, have we, sir. Will you sit?

**FALSTAFF**

85 Let me see them, I beseech you.

**SHALLOW**

Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Let me  
see, let me see, let me see. So, so, so, so, so. So, so. Yea,  
marry, sir.—Rafe Mouldy!—Let them appear as I call, let  
them do so, let them do so. Let me see, where is Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

90 Here, an it please you.

**SHALLOW**

What think you, Sir John? A good-limbed fellow; young,

**FALSTAFF**

Master Silence. Your name suits a justice of "the peace."

**SILENCE**

Welcome, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Damn! It's hot out, gentlemen. Have you found half a dozen  
able-bodied men for me?

**SHALLOW**

Yes sir, we have. Won't you sit?

**FALSTAFF**

Let me see them, please.

**SHALLOW**

Where's the list? Where's the list? Where's the list? Let's see,  
let's see, let's see. Right, right. Yes, sir: Ralph Mouldy! Let them  
come when I call. Let them do that, let them do that. Let's see.  
Where's Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

Here, sir.

**SHALLOW**

strong, and of good friends.

**FALSTAFF**

Is thy name Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

Yea, an 't please you.

**FALSTAFF**

95 'Tis the more time thou wert used.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, ha, ha, most excellent, i' faith! Things that are mouldy lack use. Very singular good, in faith. Well said, Sir John, very well said.

**FALSTAFF**

Prick him.

**MOULDY**

100 I was pricked well enough before, an you could have let me alone. My old dame will be undone now for one to do her husbandry and her drudgery. You need not to have pricked me. There are other men fitter to go out than I.

**FALSTAFF**

Go to. Peace, Mouldy. You shall go. Mouldy, it is time you were

What do you think, Sir John? He's got good muscles. Young, strong, and well-connected.

**FALSTAFF**

Are you Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

Yes, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Well then, it's about time you were put to use.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, ha, ha! Excellent, I swear! Things that don't get used enough do indeed become moldy. Good one, I swear. Well said, Sir John, very well said.

**FALSTAFF**

Prick him.

**MOULDY**

I've already been [pricked](#) well enough, thanks. You could have left me alone. My old lady's in trouble now: she won't have anyone to do her husbandry or her housework. You didn't have to prick me; there are [abler men](#) than me.

**FALSTAFF**

That's enough; quiet, Mouldy. You're going. Mouldy, it's time you were put to use.

105 spent.

**MOULDY**

Spent?

**SHALLOW**

Peace, fellow, peace. Stand aside. Know you where you are?—For th' other, Sir John. Let me see.—Simon Shadow!

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, marry, let me have him to sit under. He's like to be a  
110 cold soldier.

**SHALLOW**

Where's Shadow?

**SHADOW**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Shadow, whose son art thou?

**SHADOW**

My mother's son, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

115 Thy mother's son! Like enough, and thy father's shadow. So the son of the female is the shadow of the male. It is often so, indeed, but much of the father's substance.

**MOLDY**

Put to use?

**SHALLOW**

Quiet, man, quiet. Step aside. Don't you know where you are? Now the next, Sir John. Let's see. Simon Shadow!

**FALSTAFF**

Now you're talking. I'd like to sit under him. He'll be a cool soldier.

**SHALLOW**

Where's Shadow?

**SHADOW**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Shadow, whose son are you?

**SHADOW**

My mother's son, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Your mother's son? Probably, and you got your father's name. The woman's son is a portrait of the father; yes, that's usually

the case, though the son is little more than a dim copy, without any of the father's true substance.

**SHALLOW**

Do you like him, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Shadow will serve for summer. Prick him, for we have a  
120 number of shadows to fill up the muster book.

**SHALLOW**

Thomas Wart!

**FALSTAFF**

Where's he?

**WART**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Is thy name Wart?

**WART**

125 Yea, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Thou art a very ragged wart.

**SHALLOW****SHALLOW**

Do you like him, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

[Shadow](#) will be useful in the summer. Prick him, too. We'll need him, for there are a lot of shadows filling up this roster.

**SHALLOW**

Thomas Wart!

**FALSTAFF**

Where's he?

**WART**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Is your name Wart?

**WART**

Yup.

**FALSTAFF**

You're a pretty ragged wart.

**SHALLOW**

Shall I prick him down, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

It were superfluous, for his apparel is built upon his back,  
and the whole frame stands upon pins. Prick him no more.

**SHALLOW**

130 Ha, ha, ha. You can do it, sir, you can do it. I commend you  
well.—Francis Feeble!

**FEEBLE**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

What trade art thou, Feeble?

**FEEBLE**

A woman's tailor, sir.

**SHALLOW**

135 Shall I prick him, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

You may, but if he had been a man's tailor, he'd ha' pricked  
you.—Wilt thou make as many holes in an enemy's battle as  
thou hast done in a woman's petticoat?

Should I prick him on the list, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Not necessary. For look: his clothing is just a bunch of pieces  
sewn together, and his whole body rests on legs as skinny as  
pins. He's been pricked enough by pins and needles—don't  
prick him anymore.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, ha, ha! You are funny, sir. You are funny. I've got to hand it to  
you. Francis Feeble!

**FEEBLE**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

What kind of work do you do, Feeble?

**FEEBLE**

I'm a woman's tailor, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Should I prick him, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

You might as well. But if he had been a man's tailor, he would  
have already pricked you with his pins. Will you make as many  
holes in the enemy's armor as you have in women's  
underwear?

**FEEBLE**

I will do my good will, sir. You can have no more.

**FALSTAFF**

140 Well said, good woman's tailor, well said, courageous Feeble. Thou wilt be as valiant as the wrathful dove or most magnanimous mouse.—Prick the woman's tailor well. Master Shallow, deep, Master Shallow.

**FEEBLE**

I would Wart might have gone, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

145 I would thou wert a man's tailor, that thou mightst mend him and make him fit to go. I cannot put him to a private soldier that is the leader of so many thousands. Let that suffice, most forcible Feeble.

**FEEBLE**

It shall suffice, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

150 I am bound to thee, reverend Feeble.—Who is next?

**SHALLOW**

Peter Bullcalf o' th' green.

**FALSTAFF****FEEBLE**

I'll do my best, sir. I can't do any more.

**FALSTAFF**

Well said, good woman's tailor! Well said, courageous Feeble! You'll be as brave as the angriest dove or the most valiant mouse. Prick the woman's tailor. A big one, Master Shallow; a deep one, Master Shallow.

**FEEBLE**

I wish Wart were going, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

And I wish you were a man's tailor. You could have mended his clothes and made him fit to go. I can't make him a private soldier when he's already the leader of thousands—of lice, that is. But never mind, oh forcible Feeble.

**FEEBLE**

Never mind, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

I like you, good Feeble. Who's next?

**SHALLOW**

Peter Bullcalf from the village green!

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, marry, let's see Bullcalf.

**BULLCALF**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Fore God, a likely fellow. Come, prick me Bullcalf till he  
155 roar again.

**BULLCALF**

O Lord, good my lord captain—

**FALSTAFF**

What, dost thou roar before thou art pricked?

**BULLCALF**

O Lord, sir, I am a diseased man.

**FALSTAFF**

What disease hast thou?

**BULLCALF**

160 A whoreson cold, sir, a cough, sir, which I caught with  
ringing in the King's affairs upon his coronation day, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Come, thou shalt go to the wars in a gown. We will have  
away thy cold, and I will take such order that my friends  
shall ring for thee.—*(to SHALLOW)* Is here all?

Oh yeah. Let's see Bullcalf.

**BULLCALF**

Here, sir!

**FALSTAFF**

My God! What a great man! Prick Bullcalf until he shouts again.

**BULLCALF**

Oh Lord! My lord, good Captain—

**FALSTAFF**

What, you're yelling before you've even been pricked?

**BULLCALF**

Oh Lord, sir! I'm a sick man.

**FALSTAFF**

What disease do you have?

**BULLCALF**

A nasty cold, sir. A cough, sir. I caught it when I was ringing the  
church bells in honor of the King's coro-nation.

**FALSTAFF**

Then you'll go to war in a dressing gown. We'll get rid of your  
cold, and I'll give orders for some of my men to ring the bells  
for you while you're away. *(to SHALLOW)* Is this everybody?

**SHALLOW**

165 Here is two more called than your number. You must have but four here, sir, and so I pray you go in with me to dinner.

**FALSTAFF**

Come, I will go drink with you, but I cannot tarry dinner. I am glad to see you, by my troth, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

O, Sir John, do you remember since we lay all night in the  
170 windmill in Saint George's Field?

**FALSTAFF**

No more of that, good Master Shallow, no more of that.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, 'twas a merry night. And is Jane Nightwork alive?

**FALSTAFF**

She lives, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

She never could away with me.

**FALSTAFF**

175 Never, never; she would always say she could not abide Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW****SHALLOW**

We've got two more here than you need. You can have four, sir. Now, come inside and eat lunch with me.

**FALSTAFF**

I'll have a drink with you, but I can't stay to eat. But I'm truly glad to see you, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

Oh, Sir John, do you remember the time we spent all night in the windmill in St. George's field?

**FALSTAFF**

Don't go there, Master Shallow. Don't go there.

**SHALLOW**

Ha! That was a fun night. Is Jane Nightwork still alive?

**FALSTAFF**

She's alive, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

She never could stand me.

**FALSTAFF**

Never, never. She always said she couldn't stand Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

By the Mass, I could anger her to th' heart. She was then a bona roba. Doth she hold her own well?

**FALSTAFF**

Old, old, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

180 Nay, she must be old. She cannot choose but be old. Certain, she's old, and had Robin Nightwork by old Nightwork before I came to Clement's Inn.

**SILENCE**

That's fifty-five year ago.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that that this knight  
185 and I have seen!—Ha, Sir John, said I well?

**FALSTAFF**

We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

That we have, that we have, that we have. In faith, Sir John, we have. Our watchword was "Hem, boys." Come, let's to dinner; come, let's to dinner. Jesus, the days that we have  
190 seen! Come, come.

*Exeunt FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, and SILENCE*

Truly, I could anger her to the core. She was a good-looking wench then. Does she still look good?

**FALSTAFF**

Old, old, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

Well, she must be old. She's got no choice but to be old. Of course she's old. She gave birth to Robin Nightwork, the son of old man Nightwork, before I even got to Clement's Inn.

**SILENCE**

That's fifty-five years ago.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, cousin Silence, if only you'd seen what this knight and I have seen! Ha! Am I right, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

We've seen the clock strike midnight, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

We sure have, we sure have, we sure have. I swear, Sir John, we sure have. Our slogan was "Down the hatch, boys!" Come, let's have lunch, let's have lunch. Jesus, the things we've seen! Come, come.

*FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, and SILENCE exit.*

## BULLCALF

Good Master Corporate Bardolph, stand my friend, and here's four Harry ten-shillings in French crowns for you. In very truth, sir, I had as lief be hanged, sir, as go. And yet, for mine own part, sir, I do not care, but rather because I am 195 unwilling, and, for mine own part, have a desire to stay with my friends. Else, sir, I did not care, for mine own part, so much.

## BARDOLPH

Go to. Stand aside.

## MOULDY

And, good Master Corporal Captain, for my old dame's sake, stand my friend. She has nobody to do anything about 200 her when I am gone, and she is old and cannot help herself: You shall have forty, sir.

## BARDOLPH

Go to. Stand aside.

## FEEBLE

By my troth, I care not. A man can die but once. We owe God a death. I'll ne'er bear a base mind. An 't be my destiny, so; 205 an 't be not, so. No man's too good to serve 's prince, and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next.

## BULLCALF

Good Master [Corporate](#) Bardolph, be my friend. Here are some French crowns for you, worth four [Harry ten shillings](#). I'm telling you, sir, I'd just as soon be hanged as go fight. It's not that I care about my well-being. It's just that I'm not willing to go, and furthermore, I'd like to stay here with my friends. But really, I don't care about myself.

## BARDOLPH

Whatever. Stand over there.

## MOULDY

And, good Master Corporal Captain, for my old lady's sake, be my friend. She has nobody here to help her do anything once I'm gone. She's old and can't do much by herself. I'll give you forty shillings, sir.

## BARDOLPH

Whatever. Stand over there.

## FEEBLE

I'll tell you the truth: I don't care one way or the other. You only die once, and we all owe God a death. I won't do anything underhanded. If it's my fate, it's my fate. If not, not. No man is too good to serve his country. Whatever happens, happens. If you die this year, you're paid up for next year.

**BARDOLPH**

Well said. Th' art a good fellow.

**FEEBLE**

Faith, I'll bear no base mind.

*Enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, and SILENCE*

**FALSTAFF**

210 Come, sir, which men shall I have?

**SHALLOW**

Four of which you please.

**BARDOLPH**

Sir, a word with you. (*aside to FALSTAFF*) I have three pound to free Mouldy and Bullcalf.

**FALSTAFF**

Go to, well.

**SHALLOW**

215 Come, Sir John, which four will you have?

**FALSTAFF**

Do you choose for me.

**SHALLOW**

Marry, then, Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, and Shadow.

**BARDOLPH**

Well said. You're a good man.

**FEEBLE**

I'm telling you. I won't do anything underhanded.

*FALSTAFF, SHALLOW and SILENCE enter.*

**FALSTAFF**

All right, sir. Which men can I have?

**SHALLOW**

Any four you choose.

**BARDOLPH**

Sir, may I have a word with you? (*whispers to FALSTAFF*) I've gotten three pounds to free Mouldy and Bullcalf.

**FALSTAFF**

No kidding. Great.

**SHALLOW**

Come on, Sir John, which four do you want?

**FALSTAFF**

You pick.

**SHALLOW**

All right, then. Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, and Shadow.

### FALSTAFF

Mouldy and Bullcalf! For you, Mouldy, stay at home till you are past service.—And for your part, Bullcalf, grow till you 220 come unto it. I will none of you.

*Exeunt MOULDY and BULLCALF*

### SHALLOW

Sir John, Sir John, do not yourself wrong. They are your likeliest men, and I would have you served with the best.

### FALSTAFF

Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man? Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big 225 assemblance of a man? Give me the spirit, Master Shallow.

Here's Wart. You see what a ragged appearance it is. He shall

charge you and discharge you with the motion of a pewterer's hammer, come off and on swifter than he that gibbets on the brewer's bucket. And this same half-faced 230 fellow, Shadow, give me this man. He presents no mark to the enemy. The foeman may with as great aim level at the edge of a penknife. And for a retreat, how swiftly will this Feeble the woman's tailor, run off! O, give me the spare men, and spare me the great ones.—Put me a caliver into 235 Wart's hand, Bardolph.

### FALSTAFF

Mouldy and Bullcalf. Mouldy, you stay home till you're too old to fight. And as for you, Bullcalf, wait till you've reached fighting age. I don't want either of you.

*MOULDY and BULLCALF exit.*

### SHALLOW

Sir John, Sir John. Don't make a mistake. They're the best men of the bunch, and I want you to have only the best.

### FALSTAFF

Master Shallow, are you going to tell me how to choose a soldier? Do you think I care about a man's body,

strength, height, bulk, and overall size? Give me his spirit, Master Shallow! Take a look at Wart. You see how ragged he looks? He can load and fire steadily—as steadily as a tinsmith's hammer. He can advance and regroup fast—faster than a brewer's delivery pail can be refilled. And this skinny guy, Shadow—give me this man. He offers no target to the enemy. The enemy might as well try aiming at a knife's edge. And as for retreating, Feeble, the woman's tailor, will run faster than you can imagine. Oh, give me the spare men and spare me the great ones! Bardolph, give Wart a musket.

## BARDOLPH

Hold, Wart. Traverse. Thus, thus, thus.

## FALSTAFF

Come, manage me your caliver: so, very well, go to, very good, exceeding good. O, give me always a little, lean, old, chopped, bald shot. Well said, i' faith, Wart. Th' art a good  
240 scab. Hold, there's a tester for thee.

## SHALLOW

He is not his craft's master. He doth not do it right. I remember at Mile End Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn—I was then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show—there was a little quiver fellow, and he would manage you his piece thus. And  
245 he would about and about, and come you in, and come you in. "Rah, tah, tah," would he say. "Bounce," would he say, and away again would he go, and again would he come. I shall ne'er see such a fellow.

## FALSTAFF

These fellows will do well, Master Shallow.—God keep  
250 you, Master Silence. I will not use many words with you. Fare you well, gentlemen both. I thank you. I must a dozen mile to-night.—Bardolph, give the soldiers coats.

## SHALLOW

Sir John, the Lord bless you. God prosper your affairs. God

## BARDOLPH

Here you go, Wart. Present arms! Right shoulder, arms! Left shoulder, arms!

## FALSTAFF

Come on, handle your weapon. Yes, good. Very good. Very, very good. Oh, give me a little, skinny, old, dried-out, bald rifleman any day. Good job, Wart. You're a good scab of a guy. Wait, here's a [tester](#) for you.

## SHALLOW

He's no expert. He's not doing it right. I remember up at Mile-End Park, when I was at Clement's Inn—I played the fool in the archery pageant. There was a nimble little guy, and he would handle his weapon like this, and he would run all over the place, and he'd charge and charge. "Rat-a-tat tat," he'd say. "Bang!" he'd say. Then he'd run away, then come back. I never saw anybody like him.

## FALSTAFF

These guys will be fine, Master Shallow. God bless you, Master Silence—I won't say much to you. Farewell, gentlemen, and thank you. I have to march twelve miles tonight. Bardolph, give the soldiers uniforms.

## SHALLOW

send us peace. At your return, visit our house. Let our old

255 acquaintance be renewed. Peradventure I will with you to the court.

**FALSTAFF**

Fore God, would you would, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

Go to. I have spoke at a word. God keep you.

**FALSTAFF**

Fare you well, gentle gentlemen.

*Exeunt SHALLOW and SILENCE*

260 On, Bardolph. Lead the men away.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH and the recruits*

As I return, I will fetch off these justices. I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow. Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth and the  
265 feats he hath done about Turnbull Street, and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese paring. When he was naked, he was, for

God bless you, Sir John. May God bring you good luck, and bring us peace. When you come back, pay us

a visit. Let's renew our old friendship. Maybe I'll even come with you to the royal court!

**FALSTAFF**

I swear, I wish you would, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

I meant what I said. May God keep you.

**FALSTAFF**

Farewell, gentle gentlemen.

*SHALLOW and SILENCE exit.*

March, Bardolph. Lead the men away.

*BARDOLPH and the recruits exit.*

When I come back, I'll expose these judges for the frauds that they are. I can see through this Judge Shallow. Lord, Lord; we old men sure know how to tell lies! This dried-up old judge has done nothing but go on and on to me about how wild he was when he was as a youth, and how many stunts he pulled in the seedy parts of town. Every third word he speaks is a lie, and he'll tell lies quicker than a Turk will scramble to pay the sultan. I remember him at Clement's Inn: he looked like a man

all the world, like a forked radish with a head fantastically  
270 carved upon it with a knife. He was so forlorn that his dimensions to any thick sight were invincible. He was the very genius of famine, yet lecherous as a monkey, and the whores called him "mandrake." He came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the  
275 overscutched huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and swore they were his fancies or his good-nights.

And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John o' Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him, and I'll be sworn he ne'er saw him but once in the

280 tilt-yard, and then he burst his head for crowding among the Marshal's men. I saw it and told John o' Gaunt he beat his own name, for you might have thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him, a court. And now has he land and beefs. Well, I'll  
285 be acquainted with him, if I return, and 't shall go hard but I'll make him a philosopher's two stones to me. If the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him. Let time shape, and there an end.

someone carved after dinner out of a scrap of cheese. When he was naked he looked like a [mandrake root](#), with a fanciful head someone had carved in with a knife. He was so skinny that he was invisible to any man with imperfect vision; he truly was the embodiment of starvation. But he was as horny as a monkey: the whores called him "mandrake," because mandrake stimulates the sex drive. He was always a little bit behind the times. He would hear the wagon drivers sing their songs, and then he'd go to his worn-out whores and sing them what he'd heard, pretending he had written them himself. And now this vile stick has become a landowner, and he talks about John of Gaunt like he was his own brother. I swear, he only saw Gaunt

once, and that was in the arena at the jousting tournament; John of Gaunt cut Shallow's head with his sword. I saw it all, and I told John of Gaunt that he had beaten his own name, since Shallow was such a gaunt man back then. You could fit him and all his clothes into the skin an eel sheds. An instrument case was as huge as a mansion to him, as big as a courtroom. Now he has land and livestock. Well, I'll be his friend if I come back. He won't like it, but I'll turn him into an unending source of wealth for myself. If small fish can be bait for big fish, I see no reason why I can't snap my jaws at Shallow. Time will tell, and that's all I have to say about that.

*He exits.*

*Exit*

## Act 4 Scene 1

Enter the **ARCHBISHOP** of York, **MOWBRAY**, **HASTINGS**, and others

**ARCHBISHOP**

What is this forest called?

**HASTINGS**

'Tis Gaultree Forest, an 't shall please your Grace.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Here stand, my lords, and send discoverers forth  
To know the numbers of our enemies.

**HASTINGS**

5 We have sent forth already.

**ARCHBISHOP**

'Tis well done.  
My friends and brethren in these great affairs,  
I must acquaint you that I have received  
New-dated letters from Northumberland,  
Their cold intent, tenor, and substance, thus:  
10 Here doth he wish his person, with such powers  
As might hold sortance with his quality,  
The which he could not levy; whereupon  
He is retired, to ripe his growing fortunes,

**ARCHBISHOP** of York, **MOWBRAY**, **HASTINGS**, and others enter.

**ARCHBISHOP**

What's the name of this forest?

**HASTINGS**

Gaultree Forest, your grace.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Stop here, sirs. Send out scouts to find out how many soldiers  
our enemy has.

**HASTINGS**

We've already done that.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Well done. My friends and brothers in this great undertaking, I  
have to share with you that I've received new letters from  
Northumberland. They have a chilling purpose, tone, and  
content. He says that he wishes he could be here in person,  
with an army as strong someone of his rank should have, but  
he couldn't raise one. So he's going to go to Scotland to  
increase his power. He prays that your armies will prevail  
against the terrible power of the enemy.

To Scotland, and concludes in hearty prayers  
15 That your attempts may overlive the hazard  
And fearful melting of their opposite.

### MOWBRAY

Thus do the hopes we have in him touch ground  
And dash themselves to pieces.

*Enter a MESSENGER*

### HASTINGS

Now, what news?

### MESSENGER

West of this forest, scarcely off a mile,  
20 In goodly form comes on the enemy,  
And, by the ground they hide, I judge their number  
Upon or near the rate of thirty thousand.

### MOWBRAY

The just proportion that we gave them out.  
Let us sway on and face them in the field.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

### ARCHBISHOP

25 What well-appointed leader fronts us here?

### MOWBRAY

### MOWBRAY

And with that, any hope we had for him is thrown to the ground  
and dashed to pieces.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

### HASTINGS

What's happening?

### MESSENGER

The enemy is west of this forest, and less than a mile away.  
They look powerful, and, from the amount of space they're  
taking up, I'd say they have close to thirty thousand soldiers.

### MOWBRAY

That's exactly the number we thought they had. Let's march  
ahead and engage them in battle.

*WESTMORELAND enters.*

### ARCHBISHOP

Who's this well-equipped leader coming here to confront us?

### MOWBRAY

I think it is my Lord of Westmoreland.

### **WESTMORELAND**

Health and fair greeting from our general,  
The Prince Lord John and Duke of Lancaster.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

Say on, my Lord of Westmoreland, in peace,  
30 What doth concern your coming.

### **WESTMORELAND**

Then, my lord,  
Unto your Grace do I in chief address  
The substance of my speech. If that rebellion  
Came like itself, in base and abject routs,  
Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rage,  
35 And countenanced by boys and beggary—  
I say, if damn'd commotion so appeared  
In his true, native, and most proper shape,  
You, reverend father, and these noble lords  
Had not been here to dress the ugly form  
40 Of base and bloody insurrection

With your fair honors. You, Lord Archbishop,  
Whose see is by a civil peace maintained,  
Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touched,  
Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutored,

I think it's Lord Westmoreland.

### **WESTMORELAND**

Our general, the Prince Lord John of Lancaster, sends  
greetings and wishes you good health.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

Speak in peace, Lord Westmoreland. What's the reason you've  
come here?

### **WESTMORELAND**

The most important part of my message is for you, your grace.  
You, who are a holy man, and these good gentlemen as well—  
you would not be here, lending dignity to this bloody  
insurrection, if it appeared as rebellion normally does: like a  
lowborn mob, led by bloody youths uniformed in rags, and  
supported by boys and beggars.

You, Lord Archbishop—whose diocese is peaceful and law-abiding; whose beard has turned white, signifying a peaceful life; whose education and learning are the products of peaceful times; who is the dove and very blessed embodiment

45 Whose white investments figure innocence,  
The dove and very blessed spirit of peace,  
Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself  
Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace,  
Into the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war,  
50 Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,  
Your pens to lances, and your tongue divine  
To a trumpet and a point of war?

### ARCHBISHOP

Wherefore do I this? So the question stands.  
Briefly, to this end: we are all diseased,  
55 And with our surfeiting and wanton hours  
Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,  
And we must bleed for it; of which disease  
Our late King Richard, being infected, died.  
But, my most noble Lord of Westmoreland,  
60 I take not on me here as a physician,  
Nor do I as an enemy to peace  
Troop in the throngs of military men,  
But rather show awhile like fearful war  
To diet rank minds sick of happiness  
65 And purge th' obstructions which begin to stop  
Our very veins of life. Hear me more plainly.  
I have in equal balance justly weighed  
What wrongs our arms may do, what wrongs we suffer,

of peace—why are you translating yourself from the graceful language of peace into the harsh, violent language of war? You're turning your books into coffins, your ink into blood, your pens into swords, and your holy words into a trumpet that sounds a call to arms.

### ARCHBISHOP

Why am I doing this? That is the question. The short answer is this: we're all sick. We've eaten and drunk too much and stayed up all night, and now we have a burning fever whose only cure is bloodletting. Richard, our late King, was infected with this disease and died from it. But, my good Lord Westmoreland, I'm not here as a physician, nor am I marching with this army as an enemy of peace. What I'm doing is making a frightening show of war, to stop people from indulging all their vices. This will clear the hardening of the arteries which threatens to kill us all. Let me speak more plainly. I've carefully considered the options, weighing the harm our armies are likely to cause against the harm we're already suffering, and I find that our grievances are stronger than our offenses. We can see where things are headed, and the rough times ahead leave us with no choice but to step away from our quiet lives. We have a list of grievances which we can publish at the appropriate time. We

And find our griefs heavier than our offenses.

70 We see which way the stream of time doth run

And are enforced from our most quiet there

By the rough torrent of occasion,

And have the summary of all our griefs,

When time shall serve, to show in articles;

75 Which long ere this we offered to the King

And might by no suit gain our audience.

When we are wronged and would unfold our griefs,

We are denied access unto his person

Even by those men that most have done us wrong.

80 The dangers of the days but newly gone,

Whose memory is written on the earth

With yet appearing blood, and the examples

Of every minute's instance, present now,

Hath put us in these ill-beseeming arms,

85 Not to break peace or any branch of it,

But to establish here a peace indeed,

Concurring both in name and quality.

## WESTMORELAND

When ever yet was your appeal denied?

Wherein have you been gallèd by the King?

90 What peer hath been suborned to grate on you,

That you should seal this lawless bloody book

Of forged rebellion with a seal divine

offered that list to the King a long time ago, but we could never get an audience with him.

We were wronged, and when we tried to speak to the King about it, we were denied access to him by the very men who had wronged us most. We're in this seemingly unbecoming armor because of the terrible recent violence—the bloodshed from which is still visible on the ground—and because of the terrible things happening now, every minute. We don't want to harm peace in any way. We want instead to establish a peace that's real and meaningful.

## WESTMORELAND

When was your request to see the King denied? How has the king harmed you? What lord in the King's court has been sent out to do you wrong? And why would you put your holy stamp of approval on an illegal uprising and give religious blessing to a violent civil war?

And consecrate commotion's bitter edge?

### ARCHBISHOP

My brother general, the commonwealth,  
95 To brother born an household cruelty,  
I make my quarrel in particular.

### WESTMORELAND

There is no need of any such redress,  
Or if there were, it not belongs to you.

### MOWBRAY

Why not to him in part, and to us all  
100 That feel the bruises of the days before  
And suffer the condition of these times  
To lay a heavy and unequal hand  
Upon our honors?

### WESTMORELAND

O, my good Lord Mowbray,  
Construe the times to their necessities,  
  
105 And you shall say indeed it is the time,  
And not the King, that doth you injuries.  
Yet for your part, it not appears to me  
Either from the King or in the present time  
That you should have an inch of any ground  
  
110 To build a grief on. Were you not restored

### ARCHBISHOP

The *grievances* borne by my fellow Englishmen, and the cruel  
murder of Scroop, my own brother: these are the reasons I've  
made this fight my own.

### WESTMORELAND

There's no need for any repayment like that; and even if there  
were, you should not be the person to benefit.

### MOWBRAY

Why shouldn't he benefit at least a little? Why shouldn't we all  
benefit, who suffered in these recent battles, and who have  
allowed our honor to be damaged by the terrible things  
happening now?

### WESTMORELAND

Oh, my good Lord Mowbray, if you think about what is  
necessary in times of war, you'll see that it is the situation  
  
that harms you, and not the King himself. But as for you in  
particular, it seems to me that you have no foundation on  
which to build a quarrel with either the King or your current  
situation. Wasn't the entire estate of the Duke of Norfolk, your  
father, just given back to you?

To all the Duke of Norfolk's seignories,  
Your noble and right well remembered father's?

### MOWBRAY

What thing, in honor, had my father lost,  
That need to be revived and breathed in me?  
115 The King that loved him, as the state stood then,  
Was force perforce compelled to banish him,  
And then that Harry Bolingbroke and he,  
Being mounted and both rousèd in their seats,  
Their neighing coursers daring of the spur,  
120 Their armèd staves in charge, their beavers down,  
Their eyes of fire sparkling through sights of steel  
And the loud trumpet blowing them together,  
Then, then, when there was nothing could have stayed  
My father from the breast of Bolingbroke,  
125 O, when the King did throw his warder down—  
His own life hung upon the staff he threw—  
Then threw he down himself and all their lives  
That by indictment and by dint of sword  
Have since miscarried under Bolingbroke.

### WESTMORELAND

130 You speak, Lord Mowbray, now you know not what.  
The Earl of Hereford was reputed then  
In England the most valiant gentleman.  
Who knows on whom fortune would then have smiled?

### MOWBRAY

What did my father lose that I now need to restore? Richard,  
the King at the time, loved my father, but given what was  
happening he had no choice but to banish him. And then, at  
Coventry, my father and Harry Bolingbroke met in a formal  
[challenge](#). They were both mounted on their horses and ready  
to charge. Their horses were neighing, anxiously waiting for  
their riders' spurs to drive them forward. Their steel-tipped  
lances were ready for the attack. The visors of their helmets  
were down. Their eyes were on fire behind the steel slits. The  
trumpet sounded, and then—when there was nothing that  
could have stopped my father from killing Bolingbroke—the  
King prevented the fight by throwing down his royal scepter.  
That scepter was a symbol of his life; when he threw it down,  
he threw down his life and the lives of every man that has  
since died at war under the leadership of Bolingbroke.

### WESTMORELAND

You don't know what you're talking about, Lord Mowbray.  
Bolingbroke at the time was considered the bravest gentleman  
in England. Who knows who would have won that fight? But  
even if your father had won, he never would have made it out

But if your father had been victor there,  
135 He ne'er had borne it out of Coventry;  
For all the country in a general voice  
Cried hate upon him; and all their prayers and love

Were set on Hereford, whom they doted on  
And blessed and graced, indeed more than the King.  
140 But this is mere digression from my purpose.  
Here come I from our princely general  
To know your griefs, to tell you from his Grace  
That he will give you audience; and wherein  
It shall appear that your demands are just,  
145 You shall enjoy them, everything set off  
That might so much as think you enemies.

### MOWBRAY

But he hath forced us to compel this offer;  
And it proceeds from policy, not love.

### WESTMORELAND

Mowbray, you overween to take it so.  
150 This offer comes from mercy, not from fear.  
For, lo, within a ken our army lies,  
Upon mine honor, all too confident  
To give admittance to a thought of fear.  
Our battle is more full of names than yours,  
155 Our men more perfect in the use of arms,

of Coventry. The whole country hated him, and they loved and prayed for Bolingbroke.

They blessed him and adored him even more than the King.  
But I digress. I was sent here by our general, the Prince, to hear your grievances, and to tell you that he's prepared to listen to you. If it appears that your demands are legitimate, he'll give you what you want—except for those things which might suggest that you're his enemies.

### MOWBRAY

But he's made us force him to listen to us. His offer isn't motivated by love; it's a political move.

### WESTMORELAND

Mowbray, you're out of line to think that. His offer is made out of mercy, not fear. Just look, you can see our army from here. I give you my word of honor: that army is so confident, it won't even allow the thought of fear to enter. Our army has more important people than yours, and better soldiers; our armor is every bit as strong as yours, and our cause is better. It's only

Our armor all as strong, our cause the best.  
Then reason will our hearts should be as good.  
Say you not then our offer is compelled.

### **MOWBRAY**

Well, by my will, we shall admit no parley.

### **WESTMORELAND**

160 That argues but the shame of your offense.  
A rotten case abides no handling.

### **HASTINGS**

Hath the Prince John a full commission,  
In very ample virtue of his father,  
To hear and absolutely to determine  
165 Of what conditions we shall stand upon?

### **WESTMORELAND**

That is intended in the General's name.  
I muse you make so slight a question.

### **ARCBISHOP**

Then take, my Lord of Westmoreland, this schedule,  
For this contains our general grievances.  
170 Each several article herein redressed,  
All members of our cause, both here and hence,  
That are insinewed to this action,

logical that we should be as courageous as you are. So don't say you've forced the Prince to do anything at all.

### **MOWBRAY**

Well, I say we won't agree to any conference.

### **WESTMORELAND**

That just proves that what you're doing here is shameful. A rotten container falls apart at the touch; likewise, a rotten cause cannot withstand scrutiny and argument.

### **HASTINGS**

Has the King given Prince John his full authorization to listen to our complaint, and address it in any way the Prince sees fit?

### **WESTMORELAND**

That goes without saying. I'm amazed you'd even ask such a foolish question.

### **ARCBISHOP**

Then, Lord Westmoreland, take this document. It lists our grievances. If each complaint listed here is addressed, and if everyone on our side, both here and elsewhere, is granted a full pardon and immediate satisfaction of our demands, then

Acquitted by a true substantial form  
And present execution of our wills  
175 To us and to our purposes confined,  
We come within our awful banks again  
And knit our powers to the arm of peace.

### **WESTMORELAND**

This will I show the General. Please you, lords,  
In sight of both our battles we may meet,  
180 And either end in peace, which God so frame,  
Or to the place of difference call the swords  
Which must decide it.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

My lord, we will do so.

*Exit WESTMORELAND*

### **MOWBRAY**

There is a thing within my bosom tells me  
That no conditions of our peace can stand.

### **HASTINGS**

185 Fear you not that. If we can make our peace  
Upon such large terms and so absolute  
As our conditions shall consist upon,  
Our peace shall stand as firm as rocky mountains.

we'll return to our own boundaries again and work together for the cause of peace.

### **WESTMORELAND**

I'll show this to the general. Please, let's meet at a place where both our armies can see us. Then either let our talks end in peace—God willing!—or let us take the fight to the battlefield where it will be decided.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

My lord, we will do so.

**WESTMORELAND** exits.

### **MOWBRAY**

Something in my heart tells me that no peace we agree to could possibly last.

### **HASTINGS**

Don't worry about that. If we can come to terms that are as comprehensive as the ones we're insisting upon, then the peace will be as durable as rocky mountains.

## MOWBRAY

Yea, but our valuation shall be such  
190 That every slight and false-derivèd cause,  
Yea, every idle, nice, and wanton reason,  
Shall to the King taste of this action,  
  
That, were our royal faiths martyrs in love,  
We shall be winnowed with so rough a wind  
195 That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff  
And good from bad find no partition.

## ARCHBISHOP

No, no, my lord. Note this: the King is weary  
Of dainty and such picking grievances,  
For he hath found to end one doubt by death  
200 Revives two greater in the heirs of life;  
And therefore will he wipe his tables clean  
And keep no telltale to his memory  
That may repeat and history his loss  
To new remembrance. For full well he knows  
205 He cannot so precisely weed this land  
As his misdoubts present occasion;  
His foes are so enrooted with his friends  
That, plucking to unfix an enemy,  
He doth unfasten so and shake a friend;

## MOWBRAY

Yes, but in the future the King will think so poorly of us that  
every little slight, every false accusation, every tiny, silly,  
frivolous thing will seem to him to be a revival of this rebellion.  
Even if we were as devoted to the King as martyrs are to their  
causes, he'll regard us so skeptically that even the good things  
we do for him

won't count; he won't be able to distinguish them from the bad.

## ARCHBISHOP

No, no, sir. Listen, the king is tired of getting upset over every  
little thing. He's discovered that ending one problem by killing  
someone only creates two bigger problems in the people left  
alive. So from now on, he'll wipe his memory clean, and forget  
anything that might remind him of the bad things from his past.  
He knows that he can't just eliminate every single opponent  
who crops up.  
  
His enemies are rooted in with his friends, to the extent that, if  
he tries to pull up an enemy, he'll also uproot and discard a  
friend. This country's like a misbehaving wife, who, just when  
her husband is about to hit her, holds his baby up, and freezes  
the intended punishment in the very arm that was poised to  
apply it.

210 So that this land, like an offensive wife  
That hath enraged him on to offer strokes,  
As he is striking holds his infant up  
And hangs resolved correction in the arm  
That was upreared to execution.

### HASTINGS

215 Besides, the King hath wasted all his rods  
On late offenders, that he now doth lack  
The very instruments of chastisement,  
So that his power, like to a fangless lion,  
May offer but not hold.

### ARCHBISHOP

'Tis very true,  
220 And therefore be assured, my good Lord Marshal,  
If we do now make our atonement well,  
Our peace will, like a broken limb united,  
Grow stronger for the breaking.

### MOWBRAY

Be it so.  
Here is returned my Lord of Westmoreland.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

### WESTMORELAND

225 The Prince is here at hand. Pleaseth your lordship

### HASTINGS

Besides, the King has expended all his energy for punishment on the recent rebellion. He has nothing left to punish with. His power is like a lion with no teeth: it can threaten, but it can't do any harm.

### ARCHBISHOP

That's true. Rest assured, my good Lord Marshal, if our reconciliation is sincere, then peace will be like a broken bone, which grows stronger for having once been broken.

### MOWBRAY

I hope so. Lord Westmoreland is back.

*WESTMORELAND enters.*

### WESTMORELAND

To meet his Grace just distance 'tween our armies.

### MOWBRAY

Your Grace of York, in God's name then set forward.

### ARCHBISHOP

Before, and greet his Grace.—(to WESTMORELAND) My lord,  
we come.

*The ARCHBISHOP, MOWBRAY, YORK, HASTINGS and the others go forward*

*Enter Prince John of LANCASTER and officers with him*

### LANCASTER

You are well encountered here, my cousin Mowbray.—

230 Good day to you, gentle Lord Archbishop,—

And so to you, Lord Hastings, and to all.—

My Lord of York, it better showed with you

When that your flock, assembled by the bell,

Encircled you to hear with reverence

235 Your exposition on the holy text

Than now to see you here, an iron man talking,

Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,

Turning the word to sword, and life to death.

That man that sits within a monarch's heart

240 And ripens in the sunshine of his favor,

The Prince is nearby. If you will, please meet him at a spot halfway between our two armies.

### MOWBRAY

Your grace, Archbishop of York, go forward in God's name.

### ARCHBISHOP

Lead on, and greet his highness. (to WESTMORELAND) Sir, we're on our way.

*The ARCHBISHOP, MOWBRAY, YORK, HASTINGS, and the others cross the stage.*

*Prince John of LANCASTER enters, with officers.*

### LANCASTER

I'm glad to see you, my cousin Mowbray. Good day to you, gentle Archbishop, and to you, Lord Hastings, and to all. Lord Archbishop, it was better to see you when worshippers—called together by the church bell—surrounded you to hear Biblical sermons than it is to see you here, in armor; cheering a mob of rebels with your war drums, turning your words to weapons, and your life into death.

When a man is close to the King's heart, and grows strong under the King's protection, only to turn against him—alas!

What evils that man will unleash, hidden from view by the King's own reputation! This is exactly how it is with you, Lord Bishop.

Would he abuse the countenance of the King,  
Alack, what mischiefs might he set abroach  
In shadow of such greatness! With you, Lord Bishop.

It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken  
245 How deep you were within the books of God,  
To us the speaker in His parliament,  
To us th' imagined voice of God himself,  
The very opener and intelligencer  
Between the grace, the sanctities, of heaven,  
250 And our dull workings? O, who shall believe  
But you misuse the reverence of your place,  
Employ the countenance and grace of heaven  
As a false favorite doth his prince's name,  
In deeds dishonorable? You have ta'en up,  
255 Under the counterfeited zeal of God,  
The subjects of His substitute, my father,  
And both against the peace of heaven and him  
Have here up-swarmed them.

### ARCHBISHOP

Good my Lord of Lancaster,  
260 I am not here against your father's peace,  
But, as I told my Lord of Westmoreland,  
The time misordered doth, in common sense,  
 Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form  
To hold our safety up. I sent your Grace

Who hasn't heard how profound your religious knowledge is?  
To us, you were our representative in God's own parliament. To  
us, you might as well have been

God's own voice: the interpreter and ambassador between  
God's heavenly ways and our own dull, mortal actions. And  
now, who would say anything but that you are abusing the  
holiness of your position, using the outward show of godliness  
to do terrible things, like a treacherous courtier uses the King's  
good name? You have pretended to be acting in God's name  
as you encourage the subjects of God's deputy, my father, to  
rise up against the peace of both heaven and the King.

### ARCHBISHOP

Good Lord of Lancaster, I am not here as an enemy your  
father's peace. But, as I told Westmoreland, these tumultuous  
times have forced us to behave in these monstrous ways, out  
of common sense and a regard for our own safety. I sent you a  
detailed list of our grievances, but you angrily shoved it aside.  
That's why this [Hydra of a war](#) has broken out. You can get rid

265 The parcels and particulars of our grief,  
The which hath been with scorn shoved from the court,  
Whereon this Hydra son of war is born,  
Whose dangerous eyes may well be charmed asleep  
With grant of our most just and right desires,  
270 And true obedience, of this madness cured,  
Stoop tamely to the foot of majesty.

### **MOWBRAY**

If not, we ready are to try our fortunes  
To the last man.

### **HASTINGS**

And though we here fall down,  
We have supplies to second our attempt;  
275 If they miscarry, theirs shall second them,

And so success of mischief shall be born,  
And heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up  
Whiles England shall have generation.

### **LANCASTER**

You are too shallow, Hastings, much too shallow  
280 To sound the bottom of the after-times.

### **WESTMORELAND**

Pleaseth your Grace to answer them directly  
How far forth you do like their articles.

of it by agreeing to the just and right things we demand. If you do that, this disease of war will be cured, and the monster will bow at your feet, tame and obedient.

### **MOWBRAY**

If you don't, we're ready to fight to the last man.

### **HASTINGS**

And if those of us who are here should fail, we have reinforcements standing by. If they fail, they have reinforcements to back them up,

and in this way the fight will go on from father to son for all time until England itself has no more new generations.

### **LANCASTER**

You're not wise enough, Hastings, not wise enough at all to see into eternity.

### **WESTMORELAND**

Your highness, why not tell them directly what you think of their list of grievances.

### **LANCASTER**

I like them all, and do allow them well,  
And swear here by the honor of my blood,  
285 My father's purposes have been mistook,  
And some about him have too lavishly  
Wrested his meaning and authority.  
(to ARCHBISHOP) My lord, these griefs shall be with speed  
redressed;  
Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,  
290 Discharge your powers unto their several counties,  
As we will ours, and here, between the armies,  
Let's drink together friendly and embrace,  
That all their eyes may bear those tokens home  
Of our restorèd love and amity.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

295 I take your princely word for these redresses.

### **LANCASTER**

I give it you, and will maintain my word,  
And thereupon I drink unto your Grace.

### **HASTINGS**

Go, captain, and deliver to the army  
This news of peace. Let them have pay, and part.  
300 I know it will well please them. Hie thee, captain.

### **LANCASTER**

I agree with all of them, and I admit that they're legitimate. I swear, on my family's honor: my father's intentions have been misunderstood, and some of his subordinates have overstepped their authority in executing his orders.  
(to ARCHBISHOP) Sir, we will make good on the wrongs that have been done to you, I swear on my soul. If this pleases you, then disperse your armies and send them back where they came from; we shall do the same. And here, where both armies can see us, we'll embrace and drink a friendly toast to one another. The soldiers will go home with evidence that we're friends once again.

### **ARCHBISHOP**

I'll take your word as a prince that you'll make good on these things.

### **LANCASTER**

I give you my word, and I'll keep it. And with that, I drink a toast to you.

### **HASTINGS**

Go, captain. Tell the army this news of peace. Pay them, and send them away. I know it will make them happy. Hurry, captain.

*Exit officer*

**ARCHBISHOP**

To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.

**WESTMORELAND**

I pledge your Grace, and if you knew what pains  
I have bestowed to breed this present peace,  
You would drink freely. But my love to you  
305 Shall show itself more openly hereafter.

**ARCHBISHOP**

I do not doubt you.

**WESTMORELAND**

I am glad of it.—  
Health to my lord and gentle cousin, Mowbray.

**MOWBRAY**

You wish me health in very happy season,  
For I am on the sudden something ill.

**ARCHBISHOP**

310 Against ill chances men are ever merry,  
But heaviness foreruns the good event.

**WESTMORELAND**

Therefore be merry, coz; since sudden sorrow

*An officer exits.*

**ARCHBISHOP**

Here's to you, good Lord Westmoreland.

**WESTMORELAND**

I drink to your grace. If you knew how hard I've worked to bring  
about this peaceful resolution, you'd really drink up. But my  
love for you will be more apparent from now on.

**ARCHBISHOP**

I don't doubt it.

**WESTMORELAND**

I'm glad. And here's to your health, my gentle cousin Lord  
Mowbray.

**MOWBRAY**

You wish me good health at a very good moment, because for  
some reason I'm suddenly feeling ill.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Men are always merry in the face of bad situations, but a heavy  
heart predicts a happy event.

**WESTMORELAND**

Serves to say thus: "Some good thing comes tomorrow."

**ARCHBISHOP**

Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.

**MOWBRAY**

315 So much the worse if your own rule be true.

*Shouts within*

**LANCASTER**

The word of peace is rendered. Hark how they shout.

**MOWBRAY**

This had been cheerful after victory.

**ARCHBISHOP**

A peace is of the nature of a conquest,  
For then both parties nobly are subdued,

320 And neither party loser.

**LANCASTER**

Go, my lord,  
And let our army be discharged too.

**Exit WESTMORELAND**

And, good my lord, so please you, let our trains

So be happy, kinsman. A sudden feeling of melancholy is just a sign that says, "Something good is coming tomorrow."

**ARCHBISHOP**

Believe me, I'm in really good spirits.

**MOWBRAY**

Which is not a good thing, if your own rule is correct.

*Shouts are heard offstage.*

**LANCASTER**

The news of peace has been announced. Listen to them shout!

**MOWBRAY**

They sound like they are cheering a victory.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Peace is a victory of sorts: both sides stop fighting honorably,  
but neither loses.

**LANCASTER**

Go and disperse our army, too, Lord Westmoreland.

**WESTMORELAND exits.**

Good Archbishop, let's have both our troops march past us

March by us, that we may peruse the men  
We should have coped withal.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Go, good Lord Hastings,  
325 And ere they be dismissed, let them march by.

*Exit HASTINGS*

**LANCASTER**

I trust, lords, we shall lie tonight together.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

Now, cousin, wherefore stands our army still?

**WESTMORELAND**

The leaders, having charge from you to stand,  
Will not go off until they hear you speak.

**LANCASTER**

330 They know their duties.

*Enter HASTINGS*

**HASTINGS**

My lord, our army is dispersed already.  
Like youthful steers unyoked, they take their courses  
East, west, north, south, or, like a school broke up,

here so that we can see the men we would have fought against.

**ARCHBISHOP**

Go, Lord Hastings, and have them march past before they're dismissed.

*HASTINGS exits.*

**LANCASTER**

I hope, sirs, that we'll spend tonight in the same camp.

*WESTMORELAND enters.*

Cousin, why is our army still standing?

**WESTMORELAND**

The leaders have orders from you to stand fast, and they won't disperse until they hear you give the order.

**LANCASTER**

They know how to follow orders.

*HASTINGS enters.*

**HASTINGS**

Our army is already dispersed. They've headed off to the east, west, north, and south like young bulls whose yokes have

Each hurries toward his home and sporting-place.

### **WESTMORELAND**

335 Good tidings, my Lord Hastings, for the which  
I do arrest thee, traitor, of high treason.—  
And you, Lord Archbishop, and you, Lord Mowbray,  
Of capital treason I attach you both.

### **MOWBRAY**

Is this proceeding just and honorable?

### **WESTMORELAND**

340 Is your assembly so?

### **ARCHBISHOP**

Will you thus break your faith?

### **LANCASTER**

I pawned thee none.  
I promised you redress of these same grievances  
Whereof you did complain, which, by mine honor,  
I will perform with a most Christian care.  
345 But for you rebels, look to taste the due  
Meet for rebellion and such acts as yours.  
Most shallowly did you these arms commence,  
Fondly brought here, and foolishly sent hence.—  
Strike up our drums; pursue the scattered stray.

been removed. The men are like children after school, each hurrying toward their homes or the playground.

### **WESTMORELAND**

That's good news, Lord Hastings. And hearing it, I now arrest you, traitor, for high treason. And you, Archbishop, and you, Lord Mowbray. I arrest you both for capital treason.

### **MOWBRAY**

Is this action just and honorable?

### **WESTMORELAND**

Was your rebellion just and honorable?

### **ARCHBISHOP**

Will you break faith with us like this?

### **LANCASTER**

I never promised you my faith. I promised to make good on the grievances you complained of. And, on my honor, I will do that as carefully as possible. But now, you rebels will get exactly what you deserve for the things you've done. You raised armies over nothing, brought them here stupidly, and then foolishly sent them away. Bang on our drums! Capture the soldiers who are scattering away. God, not we, has fought today and won. Guards, escort these traitors to the place of

350 God, and not we, hath safely fought today.—  
Some guard these traitors to the block of death,  
Treason's true bed and yelder-up of breath.

*Exeunt*

their death. That's where treason belongs, and where they'll draw their last breath.

*They exit.*

## Act 4 Scene 2

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter FALSTAFF and COLEVILE, meeting*

**FALSTAFF**

What's your name, sir? Of what condition are you, and of what place, I pray?

**COLEVILE**

I am a knight, sir, and my name is Colevile of the Dale.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, then, Colevile is your name, a knight is your degree,  
5 and your place the Dale. Colevile shall be still your name, a traitor your degree, and the dungeon your place, a place deep enough so shall you be still Colevile of the Dale.

**COLEVILE**

Are not you Sir John Falstaff?

**FALSTAFF**

**FALSTAFF**

What's your name, sir? What's your rank, and where are you from?

**COLEVILE**

I am a knight, sir. My name is Coleville of the Valley.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, then, Coleville is your name, your rank is knight, and the valley is where you're from. Coleville will still be your name now that "traitor" is your rank, and the dungeon is where you'll be. It's a place so deep that you'll still be in a kind of valley.

**COLEVILE**

Aren't you Sir John Falstaff?

**FALSTAFF**

As good a man as he, sir, whoe'er I am. Do ye yield, sir, or  
10 shall I sweat for you? If I do sweat, they are the drops of thy  
lovers and they weep for thy death. Therefore rouse up fear  
and trembling, and do observance to my mercy.

### COLEVILE

I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that thought yield  
me.

### FALSTAFF

15 I have a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine, and not  
a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name. An  
I had but a belly of any indifferency, I were simply the most  
active fellow in Europe. My womb, my womb, my womb  
undoes me. Here comes our general.

*Enter Prince John of LANCASTER, WESTMORELAND, BLUNT,  
and others*

### LANCASTER

The heat is past. Follow no further now.

*A retreat is sounded.*

Call in the powers, good cousin Westmoreland.

*Exit WESTMORELAND*

I'm as good a man as Falstaff, whoever I am. Will you  
surrender? Or am I going to have to break a sweat making you  
surrender? If I sweat, the drops will be the tears of your loved  
ones, weeping over your death. So you'd better get scared and  
start to shake, and start praying to me for mercy.

### COLEVILLE

I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and so I surrender.

### FALSTAFF

My enormous belly can speak in many languages, and each  
language proclaims my name and my name alone. If I had a  
moderately sized belly, all I'd be is an anonymous but very  
successful soldier. But my belly, my belly, my belly blows my  
cover. Here comes the general.

*John of LANCASTER, WESTMORELAND, BLUNT, and others  
enter.*

### LANCASTER

The danger's over: let's stop here.

*The trumpets sound a retreat.*

Call off the operation, Westmoreland.

*WESTMORELAND exits.*

Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?

When everything is ended, then you come.

20 These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,

One time or other break some gallows' back.

### FALSTAFF

I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus. I never knew yet but rebuke and check was the reward of valor. Do you think me a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? Have I in my poor 25 and old motion the expedition of thought? I have speeded hither with the very extremest inch of possibility. I have foundered ninescore and odd posts, and here, travel-tainted as I am, have in my pure and immaculate valor taken Sir John Colevile of the Dale, a most furious knight and 30 valorous enemy. But what of that? He saw me and yielded, that I may justly say, with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, "There, cousin, I came, saw, and overcame."

### LANCASTER

It was more of his courtesy than your deserving.

### FALSTAFF

I know not. Here he is, and here I yield him. And I beseech 35 your Grace let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds, or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top on 't, Colevile kissing my foot;

Falstaff, where have you been all this time? When everything is over, that's when you start. This habit of laziness of yours will bust a gallows to bits one of these days, mark my words.

### FALSTAFF

I'm sorry to hear you say that: I never realized that brave behavior should be rewarded with scolding and admonishing. Do you think I'm a bird, or an arrow, or a bullet? With this old, broken-down body, do you think I can move as fast as thought? I've gotten here as fast as humanly possible. I've burned out more than 180 horses, and—even though I'm spent from all that travel—I've managed, with my extraordinary bravery, to capture Sir John Coleville of the Valley, a brave knight and terrible enemy. But so what? He simply saw me and surrendered. So I can say, just like Julius Caesar, that "I came, I saw, I conquered."

### LANCASTER

He was just being polite; it's not as if you did something to deserve it.

### FALSTAFF

I don't know about that. Here he is: I turn him over to you. Please, sir, have it added to the record of things accomplished today. If you don't, I'll have a ballad printed about it, with a

to the which course if I be enforced, if you do not all show

like gilt twopences to me, and I in the clear sky of fame  
o'ershine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of  
the element (which show like pins' heads to her), believe not  
the word of the noble. Therefore let me have right, and let  
desert mount.

**LANCASTER**

40 Thine's too heavy to mount.

**FALSTAFF**

Let it shine, then.

**LANCASTER**

Thine's too thick to shine.

**FALSTAFF**

Let it do something, my good lord, that may do me good, and  
call it what you will.

**LANCASTER**

45 Is thy name Colevile?

**COLEVILE**

It is, my lord.

**LANCASTER**

picture of Coleville kissing my foot on the cover. And if I'm  
forced to do that, and I

don't make you look like counterfeits next to me, and if my  
fame doesn't outshine yours like the full moon outshines the  
stars (which look like pin pricks in the sky next to the moon)—  
well then, you can call me a liar. Now give me what I deserve,  
and let my merits mount on top of each other, in a great pile.

**LANCASTER**

Your pile would be too heavy for me to bear.

**FALSTAFF**

Let my merits shine, then.

**LANCASTER**

You're too dense to shine.

**FALSTAFF**

Then let it do something that will do me good, whatever you  
want to call it.

**LANCASTER**

Is your name Coleville?

**COLEVILE**

It is, sir.

**LANCASTER**

A famous rebel art thou, Colevile.

**FALSTAFF**

And a famous true subject took him.

**COLEVILE**

I am, my lord, but as my betters are  
That led me hither. Had they been ruled by me,  
50 You should have won them dearer than you have.

**FALSTAFF**

I know not how they sold themselves, but thou, like a kind  
fellow, gavest thyself away gratis, and I thank thee for thee.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

**LANCASTER**

Now, have you left pursuit?

**WESTMORELAND**

Retreat is made and execution stayed.

**LANCASTER**

Send Colevile with his confederates  
55 To York, to present execution.—  
Blunt, lead him hence, and see you guard him sure.

You're a famous rebel, Colevile.

**FALSTAFF**

And a famous and loyal subject captured him.

**COLEVILE**

I'm now in the same situation as my superiors, who led me  
here. But if I had been in charge, your victory would have cost  
you more than it has.

**FALSTAFF**

I don't know how much your superiors cost us, but you, like a  
generous man, gave yourself away for free, and I thank you for  
it.

**WESTMORELAND** enters.

**LANCASTER**

Have you called off the troops?

**WESTMORELAND**

The order to pull back has been given, and the slaughter has  
been stopped.

**LANCASTER**

Send Colevile and his confederates to York, to be put to death  
immediately. Blunt, lead him away, and guard him carefully.

*Exeunt BLUNT with COLEVILE*

And now dispatch we toward the court, my lords.  
I hear the King my father is sore sick.  
Our news shall go before us to his Majesty,  
60 (to WESTMORELAND) Which, cousin, you shall bear to  
comfort  
him,  
And we with sober speed will follow you.

#### FALSTAFF

My lord, I beseech you give me leave to go through  
Gloucestershire, and, when you come to court, stand my  
good lord, pray, in your good report.

#### LANCASTER

65 Fare you well, Falstaff. I, in my condition,  
Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

*Exeunt all but FALSTAFF*

#### FALSTAFF

I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your  
dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy  
doth not love me, nor a man cannot make him laugh. But  
70 that's no marvel; he drinks no wine. There's never none of  
these demure boys come to any proof, for thin drink doth so  
overcool their blood, and making many fish meals, that they

*BLUNT exits with COLEVILE.*

And now, let's get going back to the royal court: I understand  
that the King, my father, is gravely ill. Send news of our victory  
ahead of us. (to WESTMORELAND) You, cousin, will bring him  
this news and comfort him with it. We'll follow you as quickly  
as we can.

#### FALSTAFF

Sir, please give me permission to go via Gloucestershire. When  
you get to the court, please vouch for my good work here.

#### LANCASTER

Goodbye, Falstaff. By speaking on your behalf as a prince, I'll  
be speaking better of you than you deserve.

*Everyone exits except FALSTAFF.*

#### FALSTAFF

I wish you had the wit to accomplish that: it would be worth all  
your land. My goodness, this young, serious-minded boy  
doesn't like me, and no one can make him laugh. But I guess  
that's not surprising; after all, he doesn't drink any wine. None  
of those prim boys ever amount to anything: weak beer and  
too many fish dinners makes their blood cool. They all turn

fall into a kind of male green-sickness, and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and  
75 cowards, which some of us should be too, but for inflammation.

A good sherris sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish and dull and crury vapors which environ it, makes it  
80 apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white  
85 and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherris warms it and makes it course from the inwards to the parts' extremes. It illumineth the face, which as a beacon gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and  
90 inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage, and this valor comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil till sack  
95 commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant, for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land,

anemic, like young girls. And then, when they finally get married, they can only father girls because they don't have the stuff to produce sons. Non-drinkers are all generally fools and cowards. The rest of us would probably be

the same way, except that we're always drunk. A good sherry wine operates in two ways. First, it rises into the brain and dries out all the foolish, dull, clogged-up fogs that have gathered there. It makes the brain sharp, quick, and inventive; full of nimble, fiery, and beautiful ideas. The voice and tongue give birth to those ideas which, when they grow up, become excellent wit. The second power of good wine is the warming of the blood. Before wine, the blood is cold and sluggish, and this makes the liver—the organ of passion—chilly and pale. A chilly, pale liver is the sign of cowardice and faint-heartedness. But wine warms the blood, making it course from the inner organs to all the extremities. The blood brightens the face, and the rest of the body—which is like a little kingdom in itself—takes that brightening as a signal. Then the spirits of the blood and all the internal organs gather together behind their captain: the heart. The heart draws strength from these followers and, enlarged by them, can accomplish any courageous deed. This is the bravery that comes from wine. Without wine, skill in weaponry doesn't matter. Wine is what sets that skill in motion. Education is nothing more than idle gold in the devil's hands, until wine rouses it and puts it to

manured, husbanded, and tilled with excellent endeavor of  
drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is  
100 become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the  
first human principle I would teach them should be to  
forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

How now, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

The army is discharged all and gone.

**FALSTAFF**

105 Let them go. I'll through Gloucestershire, and there will I  
visit Master Robert Shallow, Esquire. I have him already  
temp'ring between my finger and my thumb, and shortly  
will I seal with him. Come away.

*Exeunt*

*Enter KING Henry, his sons Thomas Duke of CLARENCE and  
Humphrey Duke of GLOUCESTER, with WARWICK and others*

good use. That's how Prince Harry became valiant. He's taken  
the cold blood he inherited from his father and—like  
unproductive farmland—he fertilized it, planted it, and cared  
for it, through the hard work of drinking vast amounts of good  
and potent wine. And so now, he's become hot and  
courageous. If I had a thousand sons, the first rule of behavior I  
would teach them would be to avoid weak drinks, and get  
themselves addicted to wine.

**BARDOLPH** enters.

What is it, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

The army is dismissed, and everyone's gone.

**FALSTAFF**

Let them go. I'll head to Gloucestershire. I'll visit Master Robert  
Shallow, Esquire. I've already got him under my thumb, as soft  
as wax. Soon I'll seal the deal. Let's go.

*They exit.*

## Act 4 Scene 3

*KING Henry, his sons Thomas Duke of CLARENCE and  
Humphrey Duke of GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, and others enter.*

**KING**

Now, lords, if God doth give successful end  
To this debate that bleedeth at our doors,  
We will our youth lead on to higher fields  
And draw no swords but what are sanctified.  
5 Our navy is addressed, our power collected,  
Our substitutes in absence well invested,  
And everything lies level to our wish.  
Only we want a little personal strength;  
And pause us till these rebels now afoot  
10 Come underneath the yoke of government.

**WARWICK**

Both which we doubt not but your Majesty  
Shall soon enjoy.

**KING**

Humphrey, my son of Gloucester,  
Where is the Prince your brother?

**GLOUCESTER**

I think he's gone to hunt, my lord, at Windsor.

**KING**

15 And how accompanied?

**GLOUCESTER**

I do not know, my lord.

**KING**

Now, my lords: if God grants us a victory in this violent civil war  
that bleeds at our very doorsteps, I will lead our young people  
in a greater cause, and fight nothing but holy wars. Our navy is  
ready, our army is assembled, the leaders who are my  
subordinates have their orders, and everything is standing by  
to achieve my main aim. The only drawback is that I'm feeling a  
little weak. So let's wait a short while, until the rebels, now on  
the run, are brought back in line and are made obedient again.

**WARWICK**

We are sure that you'll soon enjoy both good health and the  
rebels' defeat.

**KING**

My son Humphrey of Gloucester, where is your brother, Prince  
Hal?

**GLOUCESTER**

I think he's gone hunting at Windsor.

**KING**

Who's with him?

**GLOUCESTER**

I don't know, father.

**KING**

Is not his brother Thomas of Clarence with him?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, my good lord, he is in presence here.

**CLARENCE**

What would my lord and father?

**KING**

Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.

20 How chance thou art not with the Prince thy brother?

He loves thee, and thou dost neglect him, Thomas.

Thou hast a better place in his affection

Than all thy brothers. Cherish it, my boy,

And noble offices thou mayst effect

25 Of mediation, after I am dead,

Between his greatness and thy other brethren.

Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love,

Nor lose the good advantage of his grace

By seeming cold or careless of his will.

30 For he is gracious if he be observed;

He hath a tear for pity and a hand

Open as day for melting charity;

Yet notwithstanding, being incensed he is flint,

As humorous as winter, and as sudden

35 As flaws congealed in the spring of day.

**KING**

Isn't his brother, Thomas of Clarence, with him?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, father. He's here.

**CLARENCE**

What is it you'd like, father?

**KING**

Only good things for you, Thomas. Why aren't you with the Prince, your brother? He loves you and you are neglecting him. He cares more about you than any of his other brothers, Thomas; cherish that fact, my boy. After I'm dead, you'll be in a strong position to help maintain good relations between Prince Hal and his brothers.

So don't ignore him. Don't turn away his love, and don't ruin your good relationship with him by seeming cold or distant. He's kind if he gets his way; he has compassion for others, and he's generous with charity. But despite all this, once he gets angry, he becomes like a stone. He can be as tempestuous as winter, and can change himself as suddenly as snowflakes at dawn can turn to hail. So watch his temper.

When he does something wrong, let him know it—gently, and when he's in a happy mood. But when he's ornery, give him room. Wait till his bad mood works itself out, like a beached whale that kills itself by struggling to return to sea. If you can

His temper therefore must be well observed.  
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,  
When thou perceive his blood inclined to mirth;  
But, being moody, give him time and scope  
40 Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,  
Confound themselves with working. Learn this, Thomas,  
And thou shalt prove a shelter to thy friends,  
A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in,  
That the united vessel of their blood,  
45 Mingled with venom of suggestion  
(As, force perforce, the age will pour it in),  
Shall never leak, though it do work as strong  
As aconitum or rash gunpowder.

**CLARENCE**

I shall observe him with all care and love.

**KING**

50 Why art thou not at Windsor with him, Thomas?

**CLARENCE**

He is not there today; he dines in London.

**KING**

And how accompanied? Canst thou tell that?

**CLARENCE**

With Poins and other his continual followers.

do this, you'll be a shelter for your friends, and a golden chain that links your brothers together. Once they're united, the poison of criticism and rumor—which in this day and age is sure to be aimed at them—can't do them any harm, no matter how explosive and destructive it may be.

**CLARENCE**

I'll watch over him with as much care and love as possible.

**KING**

Then why aren't you with him at Windsor?

**CLARENCE**

He's not there today. He's in London.

**KING**

Who's with him? Do you know?

**CLARENCE**

Poins, and the usual suspects.

## KING

Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds,  
55 And he, the noble image of my youth,  
Is overspread with them; therefore my grief  
Stretches itself beyond the hour of death.  
The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape,  
In forms imaginary, th' unguided days  
60 And rotten times that you shall look upon  
When I am sleeping with my ancestors.  
For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,  
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,  
When means and lavish manners meet together,  
65 O, with what wings shall his affections fly  
Towards fronting peril and opposed decay!

## WARWICK

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite.  
The Prince but studies his companions  
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,  
70 'Tis needful that the most immodest word  
Be looked upon and learned; which, once attained,  
Your Highness knows, comes to no further use  
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,  
The Prince will, in the perfectness of time,  
75 Cast off his followers, and their memory  
Shall as a pattern or a measure live,

## KING

Weeds grow best in the richest soil, and he—like myself at that age—is overrun by them. My sadness, then, cannot end with my death. When I imagine the lawless days and rotten times that you will face when I am dead and sleeping with my ancestors, the blood weeps from my heart.  
When Hal's headstrong wildness has free rein; when aggression and passion are his advisors; when he has full opportunity to indulge in his riotous inclinations, then—Oh!—his criminal desires will fly like a bird towards danger and ruin.

## WARWICK

Your highness, you've got him all wrong. The Prince is only studying his criminal companions, the way one studies a foreign language. In order to truly learn a language, one must learn even the most immodest curse word—which, as you know, is only learned in order to be identified and, thereafter, avoided. So, like vulgar language, the Prince will get rid of his followers when the time is right. Then they'll live on in his memory as guidelines, by which he'll judge the conduct of others. In this sense, he'll change his past bad deeds to good ends.

By which his Grace must mete the lives of others,  
Turning past evils to advantages.

**KING**

'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb  
80 In the dead carrion.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

Who's here? Westmoreland?

**WESTMORELAND**

Health to my sovereign, and new happiness  
Added to that that I am to deliver.  
  
Prince John your son doth kiss your Grace's hand.  
  
Mowbray, the Bishop Scroop, Hastings, and all  
85 Are brought to the correction of your law.  
  
There is not now a rebel's sword unsheathed  
But peace puts forth her olive everywhere.  
  
The manner how this action hath been borne  
Here at more leisure may your Highness read  
90 With every course in his particular.

**KING**

O Westmoreland, thou art a summer bird,  
Which ever in the haunch of winter sings  
The lifting up of day.

**KING**

It's rare that a bee builds its nest in a dead animal's carcass.  
The Prince won't leave his current company.

**WESTMORELAND** enters.

Who's there? Westmoreland?

**WESTMORELAND**

I wish your highness good health, and happy news beyond the report I have to deliver! Prince John sends his respects:  
  
Mowbray, the Archbishop, Hastings and the rest are under arrest. There are no more rebels anywhere; the olive branch of peace has been extended everywhere.  
  
Here's a letter explaining what happened. When you have time, you can read it and learn every detail.

**KING**

Oh Westmoreland; you're like a summer bird, which sings the dawn in as winter ends.

**Enter HARCOURT**

Here comes more news.

**HARCOURT**

95 From enemies heaven keep your Majesty,  
And when they stand against you, may they fall  
As those that I am come to tell you of.  
The Earl Northumberland and the Lord Bardolph,  
With a great power of English and of Scots,  
100 Are by the shrieve of Yorkshire overthrown.  
The manner and true order of the fight  
This packet, please it you, contains at large.

**KING**

And wherefore should these good news make me sick?  
Will fortune never come with both hands full,  
105 But write her fair words still in foulest letters?  
She either gives a stomach and no food—  
  
Such are the poor, in health—or else a feast  
And takes away the stomach—such are the rich,  
That have abundance and enjoy it not.  
110 I should rejoice now at this happy news,  
And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy.  
O, me! Come near me, now I am much ill.

**HARCOURT enters.**

Look, here's more news.

**HARCOURT**

May heaven protect your highness from all enemies—and when they do rise up, may they fall just like the ones I've come to tell you about. The Earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolph, with their mighty armies of Englishmen and Scotsmen, were defeated by the Sheriff of Yorkshire. This letter will tell you the details.

**KING**

Why am I sick at this good news? Why can't life ever bring you things with their appropriate complements? Why is good news so often conveyed in ugly terms? Life either gives you hunger but no food—which is the

experience of poor, healthy people—or it gives you a feast with no appetite—which is how the rich live, who have wealth and abundance but cannot enjoy it. I should be celebrating this good news, and yet my eyesight is failing, and my brain is delirious. Oh God! Come to me, I'm very sick.

**GLOUCESTER**

Comfort, your Majesty.

**CLARENCE**

O, my royal father!

**WESTMORELAND**

My sovereign lord, cheer up yourself, look up.

**WARWICK**

115 Be patient, princes. You do know these fits  
Are with his Highness very ordinary.  
Stand from him, give him air. He'll straight be well.

**CLARENCE**

No, no, he cannot long hold out these pangs.  
Th' incessant care and labor of his mind  
120 Hath wrought the mure that should confine it in  
So thin that life looks through and will break out.

**GLOUCESTER**

The people fear me, for they do observe  
Unfathered heirs and loathly births of nature.  
The seasons change their manners, as the year  
125 Had found some months asleep and leapt them over.

**CLARENCE**

The river hath thrice flowed, no ebb between,

Take care, your highness!

**CLARENCE**

Oh, my royal father!

**WESTMORELAND**

My lord, feel better; take courage.

**WARWICK**

Wait a minute, princes. You know his highness has these episodes all the time. Move away from him. Give him air; he'll be all right soon.

**CLARENCE**

No, no, he can't survive these attacks much longer. His mind's endless worry and concern have so shaken his body that it can barely hold together.

**GLOUCESTER**

The people are frightening me. They've seen terrible omens: children who seem to have supernatural fathers, and gruesomely deformed infants. The weather is in disarray, as if the calendar discovered some months were fast asleep, and decided to skip over them.

**CLARENCE**

And the old folk, time's doting chronicles,  
Say it did so a little time before  
That our great-grandsire, Edward, sicked and died.

### **WARWICK**

130 Speak lower, princes, for the King recovers.

### **GLOUCESTER**

This apoplexy will certain be his end.

### **KING**

I pray you, take me up and bear me hence  
Into some other chamber. Softly, pray.

*They carry the KING to a bed.*

Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends,  
135 Unless some dull and favorable hand  
Will whisper music to my weary spirit.

### **WARWICK**

Call for the music in the other room.

### **KING**

Set me the crown upon my pillow here.

### **CLARENCE**

His eye is hollow, and he changes much.

The river has flooded three times, without receding between floods. The old people—those living history books—say that the last time this happened was when our great-grandfather, King Edward, fell ill and died.

### **WARWICK**

Speak more softly, princes: the King is recovering.

### **GLOUCESTER**

These attacks will be the death of him.

### **KING**

Please, carry me into another room. Quietly. Please.

*They carry the KING to a bed.*

Please be silent, my friends, unless someone can play some restful, whispering music for my exhausted spirit.

### **WARWICK**

Call the musicians in from the other room.

### **KING**

Put the crown here on my pillow.

### **CLARENCE**

His eyes are sunken, and he seems very pale.

**WARWICK**

140 Less noise, less noise.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY*

**PRINCE HENRY**

Who saw the Duke of Clarence?

**CLARENCE**

I am here, brother, full of heaviness.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How now! Rain within doors, and none abroad?

How doth the King?

**GLOUCESTER**

Exceeding ill.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Heard he the good news yet? Tell it him.

**GLOUCESTER**

145 He altered much upon the hearing it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

If he be sick with joy, he'll recover without physic.

**WARWICK**

Not so much noise, my lords.—Sweet Prince, speak low.

**WARWICK**

Less noise, less noise!

*PRINCE HENRY enters.*

**PRINCE HENRY**

Has anybody seen the Duke of Clarence?

**CLARENCE**

I'm here, brother, full of sadness.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What's going on? Raining inside while it's dry outside? How's the King?

**GLOUCESTER**

Extremely sick.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Has he heard the good news yet? Tell him.

**GLOUCESTER**

Yes, he heard it, and it affected him deeply.

**PRINCE HENRY**

If he's sick from joy, then he'll get better without medicine.

**WARWICK**

The King your father is disposed to sleep.

**CLARENCE**

Let us withdraw into the other room.

**WARWICK**

150 Will 't please your Grace to go along with us?

**PRINCE HENRY**

No, I will sit and watch here by the King.

*Exeunt all but PRINCE HENRY*

Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,  
Being so troublesome a bedfellow?  
O polished perturbation, golden care,  
155 That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide  
To many a watchful night! sleep with it now;  
Yet not so sound and half so deeply sweet  
As he whose brow with homely biggen bound  
Snores out the watch of night. O majesty,  
160 When thou dost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit  
Like a rich armor worn in heat of day,  
That scald'st with safety. By his gates of breath  
There lies a downy feather which stirs not;  
Did he suspire, that light and weightless down  
165 Perforce must move. My gracious lord, my father,

Not so loud, sirs. Prince, speak more quietly. Your father the King is trying to sleep.

**CLARENCE**

Let's go into the other room.

**WARWICK**

Will you come with us?

**PRINCE HENRY**

No. I'll stay here with the King.

*Everyone exits except PRINCE HENRY.*

Why does the crown lie there on his pillow, when it's such a troublesome bedfellow? Oh polished aggravation, golden anxiety! You keep the eyelids open wide, to face countless sleepless nights. You sleep with the crown now, father, but you don't sleep as soundly, or half so deeply, as that man whose head is bound with nothing more than a cheap nightcap, who snores through the night. Oh, you crown! When you pinch the person wearing you, you're like a great suit of armor worn on a hot day—you burn the person you're protecting. There's a feather near my father's lips, and it's not moving: if he were breathing, that light, weightless thing would move. My gracious lord! Father! This is a deep sleep indeed—this is a sleep that has removed the golden ring from the heads of many English kings. Father, I owe you tears and a deep grief, and my love,

This sleep is sound indeed. This is a sleep  
That from this golden rigol hath divorced  
So many English kings. Thy due from me  
Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,

170 Which nature, love, and filial tenderness  
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.  
My due from thee is this imperial crown,  
Which, as immediate as thy place and blood,

Derives itself to me. (*he puts the crown on his head*) Lo,  
where it sits,

175 Which God shall guard. And put the world's whole strength  
Into one giant arm, it shall not force  
This lineal honor from me. This from thee  
Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me.

*Exit PRINCE HENRY*

**KING**

(*waking*) Warwick! Gloucester! Clarence!

*Enter WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest*

**CLARENCE**

Doth the King call?

**WARWICK**

180 What would your Majesty? How fares your Grace?

the bonds of family, and a son's tender feelings will make sure  
that I pay you lavishly. Your debt to me is this kingly crown,  
which I am owed as your heir-apparent.

(*he puts the crown on his head*) Look, here it sits, and God will  
guard it. Even if all the strength in the world were gathered into  
a single, giant arm, it wouldn't be able to force this inherited  
honor from me. I will leave this to my son as you've left it to  
me.

**PRINCE HENRY** exits.

**KING**

(*waking*) Warwick! Gloucester! Clarence!

**WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest enter.**

**CLARENCE**

Did you call, sir?

**WARWICK**

What can we do for you, your highness? How are you feeling?

**KING**

Why did you leave me here alone, my lords?

**CLARENCE**

We left the Prince my brother here, my liege,  
Who undertook to sit and watch by you.

**KING**

The Prince of Wales? Where is he? Let me see him.

185 He is not here.

**WARWICK**

This door is open. He is gone this way.

**GLOUCESTER**

He came not through the chamber where we stayed.

**KING**

Where is the crown? Who took it from my pillow?

**WARWICK**

When we withdrew, my liege, we left it here.

**KING**

190 The Prince hath ta'en it hence. Go seek him out.  
Is he so hasty that he doth suppose my sleep my death?  
Find him, my Lord of Warwick. Chide him hither.

*Exit WARWICK*

**KING**

Why did you leave me alone, sirs?

**CLARENCE**

We left my brother, Prince Hal, here. He decided to sit with you.

**KING**

The Prince of Wales? Where is he? I want to see him. He's not here.

**WARWICK**

This door's open. He went this way.

**GLOUCESTER**

He didn't come through the room we were in.

**KING**

Where's the crown? Who took it off my pillow?

**WARWICK**

When we left, sir, it was here.

**KING**

The Prince has taken it. Go, find him. Is he in such a hurry that he thinks my sleep is my death? Find him, Lord Warwick. Rebuke him, and bring him here.

*WARWICK exits.*

This part of his conjoins with my disease  
And helps to end me. See, sons, what things you are,  
195 How quickly nature falls into revolt  
When gold becomes her object!  
For this the foolish overcareful fathers  
Have broke their sleep with thoughts,  
Their brains with care, their bones with industry.  
200 For this they have engrossèd and piled up  
The canker'd heaps of strange-achievèd gold.  
For this they have been thoughtful to invest  
Their sons with arts and martial exercises—  
When, like the bee, tolling from every flower  
205 The virtuous sweets,  
Our thighs packed with wax, our mouths with honey,  
We bring it to the hive and, like the bees,  
Are murdered for our pains. This bitter taste  
Yield his engrossments to the ending father.

*Enter WARWICK*

210 Now, where is he that will not stay so long  
Till his friend sickness hath determined me?

**WARWICK**

My lord, I found the Prince in the next room,  
Washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks,  
With such a deep demeanor in great sorrow

Henry's actions join forces with my illness, and together they will kill me. Sons, look at what things you are. See how quickly blood bonds are broken, once money's involved. This is what happens to foolish, overly concerned fathers who ruin their sleep with worry, burden their minds with anxiety, and break their bodies with hard work. This is what happens to fathers who amass vast amounts of money, earned in unsavory ways. This is what happens to fathers who have taken care to give their sons good educations, and train them in matters of war. Fathers are like bees, collecting sweet pollen from all the flowers in the world. We pack our thighs full of wax and our mouths full of honey, only to be killed when we return to the hive. This is the bitter fate of the dying father, no matter what he has accumulated in his life.

*WARWICK enters.*

Where is that impatient man who can't even wait for his friend, sickness, to put an end to me?

**WARWICK**

Sir, I found the Prince in the next room, with tears flowing down his cheeks. He looked so sorrowful that a tyrant—who never

215 That tyranny, which never quaffed but blood,  
Would, by beholding him, have washed his knife  
With gentle eyedrops. He is coming hither.

**KING**

But wherefore did he take away the crown?

*Enter PRINCE HENRY*

Lo where he comes.—Come hither to me, Harry.—  
220 Depart the chamber. Leave us here alone.

*Exeunt all but the KING and PRINCE HENRY*

**PRINCE HENRY**

I never thought to hear you speak again.

**KING**

Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.  
I stay too long by thee; I weary thee.  
Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair  
225 That thou wilt needs invest thee with my honors  
Before thy hour be ripe? O foolish youth,  
Thou seek'st the greatness that will overwhelm thee.  
Stay but a little, for my cloud of dignity  
Is held from falling with so weak a wind  
230 That it will quickly drop. My day is dim.  
Thou hast stol'n that which after some few hours

drank anything but blood—would, upon seeing him, have washed the blood from his knife with tears. He's on his way.

**KING**

But why did he take away the crown?

**PRINCE HENRY** enters.

Look, here he comes. Come here, Harry. (*to the rest*) Leave the room, and leave us here alone.

*Everyone leaves except the KING and PRINCE HENRY.*

**PRINCE HENRY**

I never thought I'd hear you speak again.

**KING**

You thought that because you wished it to be true. I live too long for you; you're tired of me. Are you so desperate for my throne that you would take the honors of kingship before it's your time? Oh you foolish youth! You long for power that will end up overwhelming you. Wait a little while. What power I have left is held together so weakly that the lightest breeze would blow it away: my life is fading.  
You stole something from me that would freely have been yours in just a few hours. On my deathbed, you've confirmed all my expectations. All your life you showed that you didn't

Were thine without offense, and at my death  
Thou hast sealed up my expectation.  
Thy life did manifest thou loved'st me not,  
235 And thou wilt have me die assured of it.  
Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,  
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart  
To stab at half an hour of my life.  
What, canst thou not forbear me half an hour?  
240 Then get thee gone and dig my grave thyself.  
And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear  
That thou art crownèd, not that I am dead.  
Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse  
Be drops of balm to sanctify thy head:  
245 Only compound me with forgotten dust.  
Give that which gave thee life unto the worms.  
Pluck down my officers, break my decrees,  
  
For now a time is come to mock at form.  
Harry the Fifth is crowned. Up, vanity,  
250 Down, royal state, all you sage counsellors, hence,  
And to the English court assemble now,  
From every region, apes of idleness.  
Now, neighbor confines, purge you of your scum.  
Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,  
255 Revel the night, rob, murder, and commit  
The oldest sins the newest kind of ways?

love me, and now I will die certain of it. There are a thousand daggers in your thoughts, which you've sharpened on your stony heart with the hopes of stabbing me in the little time I have left. What? Couldn't you endure me for half an hour? Then go and dig my grave yourself, and ring the bells to mark your coronation, not my death. Let all the tears that should be shed on my hearse be drops of holy water to bless your head.

Just mix me up with the forgotten dust, and give my body—which gave you life—to the worms. Fire my officers, undo my laws; for now the time has come to jeer at authority. Henry the Fifth is crowned: up with foolishness! Down with decorum! Be gone, all you wise advisers! Assemble lazy apes from every region, and make them the royal court of England! Now, you neighboring countries, get rid of your scum. Do you have a criminal who swears, drinks, dances, parties all night, robs, murders, and commits the oldest sins in the newest ways?

Be happy, he will trouble you no more.  
England shall double gild his treble guilt.  
England shall give him office, honor, might,  
260 For the fifth Harry from curbed license plucks  
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog  
Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent.  
O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!  
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,  
265 What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?  
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,  
Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants.

### PRINCE HENRY

O pardon me, my liege! But for my tears,  
The moist impediments unto my speech,  
270 I had forestalled this dear and deep rebuke  
Ere you with grief had spoke and I had heard  
The course of it so far. There is your crown,  
And He that wears the crown immortally  
Long guard it yours. If I affect it more  
275 Than as your honor and as your renown,  
Let me no more from this obedience rise,  
Which my most inward true and duteous spirit  
Teacheth this prostrate and exterior bending.  
God witness with me, when I here came in  
280 And found no course of breath within your Majesty,

Then be happy: that man won't trouble you any longer.  
England will paint over his guilt with gold. England will give  
him a position, honor, power. Because Henry the Fifth has  
removed the barriers to anarchy: he's taken the restraining  
muzzle off the dog of misbehavior, and that wild dog will sink  
his teeth into the flesh of every decent person. Oh my poor  
kingdom, sick from this civil war! When all my hard work  
couldn't keep disorder at bay, what will you do when disorder  
becomes your caretaker? Oh, you'll be a wilderness again, and  
all the wolves who lived here once will once again be your  
only citizens.

### PRINCE HENRY

Oh forgive me, your highness. If it weren't for these tears—  
which are impeding my speech—I would have stopped this  
harsh scolding before you, in your grief, had spoken and before  
I had listened so long. There's your crown. May God, who  
wears the crown eternally, guard it as yours for a long time. If I  
care for the crown in any way other than as a symbol of your  
honor and reputation, let me never rise from this kneeling  
position. It is my deepest and most dutiful feelings which teach  
my body to bend and bow to you, causing my outer body to  
reflect my inner feelings. May God be my witness: when I came  
in here and saw that you weren't breathing, my blood ran cold.  
If I'm lying,

How cold it struck my heart! If I do feign,

O, let me in my present wildness die

And never live to show th' incredulous world

The noble change that I have purposèd.

285 Coming to look on you, thinking you dead,

And dead almost, my liege, to think you were,

I spake unto this crown as having sense,

And thus upbraided it: "The care on thee depending

Hath fed upon the body of my father;

290 Therefore thou best of gold art worst of gold.

Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,

Preserving life in med'cine potable;

But thou, most fine, most honored, most renowned,

Hast eat thy bearer up." Thus, my most royal liege,

295 Accusing it, I put it on my head

To try with it, as with an enemy

That had before my face murdered my father,

The quarrel of a true inheritor.

But if it did infect my blood with joy

300 Or swell my thoughts to any strain of pride,

If any rebel or vain spirit of mine

Did with the least affection of a welcome

Give entertainment to the might of it,

Let God forever keep it from my head

305 And make me as the poorest vassal is

may I die as the wild youth I was before, and never live to show the dubious world the transformation I have been planning.

Coming to see you, thinking you were dead—and being nearly dead myself, just thinking that you were—I spoke to this crown as though it were alive. I scolded it like this: "The worry you've caused has eaten my father alive. So you, the best piece of gold, are actually the worst piece of gold. Other gold, perhaps worth less, is more precious, since it at least brings us health when mixed in our drinks. But you—the best, the most honored, the most famous—have consumed the person wearing you." And as I accused it, I put it on my head, to fight against it as an enemy who'd killed my father before my very eyes. It was the fight of a loyal child.

But may God keep it from me forever—making me like the poorest servant bowing down before it in awe and terror—if it in any way made me happy or arrogant, or if any part of me was the least bit pleased to welcome it and the power it brings.

That doth with awe and terror kneel to it.

**KING**

O my son,  
God put it in thy mind to take it hence  
That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,  
310 Pleading so wisely in excuse of it.

Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed  
And hear, I think, the very latest counsel  
That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,  
By what bypaths and indirect crook'd ways  
315 I met this crown, and I myself know well  
How troublesome it sat upon my head.  
To thee it shall descend with better quiet,

Better opinion, better confirmation,  
For all the soil of the achievement goes  
320 With me into the earth. It seemed in me  
But as an honor snatched with boist'rous hand,  
And I had many living to upbraid  
My gain of it by their assistances,  
Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,  
325 Wounding supposèd peace. All these bold fears  
Thou see'st with peril I have answerèd,  
For all my reign hath been but as a scene  
Acting that argument. And now my death  
Changes the mood, for what in me was purchased

**KING**

Oh my son, God made you take it from me so that, in pleading your case so beautifully, you would make me love you more! Come here, Harry. Sit by my bed and listen to what I think will be the last advice I ever give. God knows the unusual paths and indirect, crooked ways that led me to this crown. And I know very well how much anxiety it has caused as I've worn it. It will fall to you in bitter peace, with

better support and stronger approval. The stain of its obtainment dies now, with me. On me, the crown seemed like an honor grabbed with a violent hand, and many people lived to remind me that they had helped me take it. Eventually, those daily reminders grew into war and bloodshed, doing damage to the peace. You can see how much pain it's caused me as I've fought my foes. My entire reign has been like a play, in which we rehash that disagreement.

Now my death changes the show. What I bought, you will inherit. You'll wear the crown by right of succession. But even though you have a firmer claim to the crown than I had, it's not firm enough. Anger is still fresh, and my former friends—whom

330 Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort.  
So thou the garland wear'st successively.  
Yet though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,  
Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green,  
And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,  
335 Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out,  
By whose fell working I was first advanced  
And by whose power I well might lodge a fear  
To be again displaced; which to avoid,  
I cut them off and had a purpose now  
340 To lead out many to the Holy Land,  
Lest rest and lying still might make them look  
Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,  
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,  
345 May waste the memory of the former days.  
More would I, but my lungs are wasted so  
That strength of speech is utterly denied me.  
How I came by the crown, O God forgive,  
And grant it may with thee in true peace live.

### PRINCE HENRY

350 My gracious liege,  
You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me.  
  
Then plain and right must my possession be,  
Which I with more than with a common pain

you must make into your friends—have only recently been disarmed. It was their power that first got me the crown, and I feared that same power could take me down. To avoid that, I defeated their rebellion, and planned to lead an army to the Holy Land. I thought that, with nothing to occupy themselves, they'd start eyeing me and my crown.  
Therefore, my Harry, make it your policy to focus the distracted minds of the people with foreign wars. Military actions abroad will make people forget about troubling matters in the past. I'd say more, but my lungs are so worn out that I don't have the strength to speak. God forgive me for how I came by the crown, and may he grant that you enjoy it in peace.

### PRINCE HENRY

My gracious lord, you won it, wore it, kept it, then gave it to me.  
My possession of it must therefore be honest  
  
and lawful. And I will work as hard as I can to defend this crown against any man.

'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain.

*Enter Lord John of LANCASTER*

**KING**

355 Look, look, here comes my John of Lancaster.

**LANCASTER**

Health, peace, and happiness to my royal father.

**KING**

Thou bring'st me happiness and peace, son John,  
But health, alack, with youthful wings is flown  
From this bare withered trunk. Upon thy sight  
360 My worldly business makes a period.  
Where is my Lord of Warwick?

**PRINCE HENRY**

My Lord of Warwick.

*Enter WARWICK and others*

**KING**

Doth any name particular belong  
Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?

**WARWICK**

365 'Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord.

*Lord John of LANCASTER enters.*

**KING**

Look, look, here comes my son, John of Lancaster.

**LANCASTER**

Health, peace, and happiness to my royal father!

**KING**

You bring me happiness and peace, John. But health,  
unfortunately, has flown from this shrunken body. Now that I've  
seen you, I have nothing more to do in this world. Where is  
Lord Warwick?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Lord Warwick!

*WARWICK and others enter.*

**KING**

Does the room I first collapsed in have a name?

**WARWICK**

It's called the Jerusalem Room, your highness.

**KING**

Laud be to God! Even there my life must end.

It hath been prophesied to me many years,

I should not die but in Jerusalem,

Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land.

370 But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie.

In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

*Exeunt*

*Enter SHALLOW, FALSTAFF, PAGE, and BARDOLPH*

**SHALLOW**

By cock and pie, sir, you shall not away tonight.—What,

Davy, I say!

**FALSTAFF**

You must excuse me, Master Robert Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

I will not excuse you. You shall not be excused. Excuses

5 shall not be admitted. There is no excuse shall serve. You

shall not be excused.—Why, Davy!

*Enter DAVY*

**DAVY****KING**

Praise be to God! That's where I must die. For years it's been predicted that I would die in Jerusalem; I foolishly thought that meant the Holy Land. But carry me to that room, and there I'll lie. In that Jerusalem will Harry die.

*They exit.*

## Act 5 Scene 1

*SHALLOW, FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, and the PAGE enter.*

**SHALLOW**

By gum, sir, you will not leave tonight. Hey, Davy!

**FALSTAFF**

Please excuse me, Master Robert Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

I will not excuse you. You will not be excused. Excuses will not

be allowed. No excuse will do. You will not be excused. Hey,

Davy!

*DAVY enters.*

**DAVY**

Here, sir.

### **SHALLOW**

Davy, Davy, Davy, Davy, let me see, Davy, let me see, Davy,  
let me see. Yea, marry, William cook, bid him come  
10 hither.—Sir John, you shall not be excused.

### **DAVY**

Marry, sir, thus: those precepts cannot be served. And again,  
sir, shall we sow the hade land with wheat?

### **SHALLOW**

With red wheat, Davy. But for William cook, are there no  
young pigeons?

### **DAVY**

15 Yes, sir. Here is now the smith's note for shoeing and plow  
irons.

### **SHALLOW**

Let it be cast and paid.—Sir John, you shall not be excused.

### **DAVY**

Now, sir, a new link to the bucket must needs be had. And,  
sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages about the  
20 sack he lost the other day at Hinckley Fair?

### **SHALLOW**

Here, sir.

### **SHALLOW**

Davy, Davy, Davy, Davy, let's see, Davy, let's see, Davy, let's see.  
Oh yes, right: tell William the cook to come here. Sir John, you  
will not be excused.

### **DAVY**

Well sir, here's the thing. Those warrants couldn't be served.  
And once more, sir, should we plant wheat at the field's edges?

### **SHALLOW**

Plant red wheat, Davy. But as for William the cook—aren't there  
any young pigeons?

### **DAVY**

Yes, sir. Here's the bill from the blacksmith for horseshoes and  
plow blades.

### **SHALLOW**

Check the figures and then and pay it. Sir John, you will not be  
excused.

### **DAVY**

Now, sir, we need some new chain for the bucket. And sir, do  
you plan to dock William's pay for the wine he lost at the  
Hinckley fair?

### **SHALLOW**

He shall answer it. Some pigeons, Davy, a couple of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William cook.

**DAVY**

Doth the man of war stay all night, sir?

**SHALLOW**

Yea, Davy. I will use him well. A friend i' th' court is better  
25 than a penny in purse. Use his men well, Davy, for they are arrant knaves and will backbite.

**DAVY**

No worse than they are back-bitten, sir, for they have marvellous foul linen.

**SHALLOW**

Well-conceited, Davy. About thy business, Davy.

**DAVY**

30 I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes o' th' hill.

**SHALLOW**

There is many complaints, Davy, against that Visor. That Visor is an arrant knave, on my knowledge.

**DAVY**

I grant your Worship that he is a knave, sir, but yet, God

He'll pay for that. Some pigeons, Davy; a couple of short-legged hens, a leg of lamb, and any fun little fancy dishes. Tell William the cook.

**DAVY**

Is the soldier staying all night?

**SHALLOW**

Yes, Davy. I'll take good care of him. A friend at court is better than money in your pocket. Take good care of his men, Davy. They're good-for-nothings, and they'll bite you.

**DAVY**

No worse than they're bitten, sir. Their clothes are full of lice.

**SHALLOW**

Good one, Davy. Get on with your work, Davy.

**DAVY**

Please, sir, rule in favor of William Visor of Woncot in his lawsuit against Clement Perkes of the hill.

**SHALLOW**

Davy, there are a lot of suits against that Visor. That Visor is a good-for-nothing, as best I can tell.

**DAVY**

35 forbid, sir, but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself when a knave is not. I have served your Worship truly, sir, this eight years; an if I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have

40 a very little credit with your Worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir; therefore I beseech you let him be countenanced.

### **SHALLOW**

Go to, I say he shall have no wrong. Look about, Davy.

### *Exit DAVY*

Where are you, Sir John? Come, come, come, off with your  
45 boots.—Give me your hand, Master Bardolph.

### **BARDOLPH**

I am glad to see your Worship.

### **SHALLOW**

I thank thee with all my heart, kind Master Bardolph, (*to the PAGE*) and welcome, my tall fellow.—Come, Sir John.

### **FALSTAFF**

I'll follow you, good Master Robert Shallow.

I agree with your honor that he's a good-for-nothing, but God forbid that a good-for-nothing should be denied a favor when his friend asks for one on his behalf. An honest man can speak for himself, but a good-for-nothing can't. I've worked for you for eight years, sir. If I can't get you to rule in favor of a good-

for-nothing once in a while, then obviously you don't think very much of me. That good-for-nothing is my good friend, sir. So I ask you, please: rule in his favor.

### **SHALLOW**

Stop now; I tell you he won't be wronged. Now get going, Davy.

### *DAVY exits.*

Where are you, Sir John? Come, come, come. Take your boots off. Let me shake your hand, Master Bardolph.

### **BARDOLPH**

I'm glad to see you, your honor.

### **SHALLOW**

I thank you with all my heart, Master Bardolph. (*to the PAGE*) Welcome, you tall fellow. Come, Sir John.

### **FALSTAFF**

I'll be right behind you, Master Robert Shallow.

*Exit SHALLOW*

50 Bardolph, look to our horses.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH and PAGE*

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his. They, by observing of him, do bear  
55 themselves like foolish justices; he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like servingman. Their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society that they flock together in consent like so many wild geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humor his  
60 men with the imputation of being near their master; if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no man could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another. Therefore let men take heed of their  
65 company. I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to

keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions, which is four terms, or two actions, and a' shall laugh without intervallums. O, it is much that a lie with a slight oath and a jest with a sad brow will do with a fellow that

*SHALLOW exits.*

Bardolph, get our horses ready.

*BARDOLPH and the PAGE exit.*

If I were cut into pieces, I'd make four dozen bearded broomsticks like this Master Shallow. It's amazing to see the similarity between his men's dispositions and his own. They watch him and behave like foolish judges, and he, by associating with them, turns into a judge-like workman. Their spirits are so closely joined by their intimate involvement, they're like a flock of wild geese that fly in formation. If I needed a favor from Judge Shallow, I would make his men think that I'm a close friend of his. If I needed something from his men, I would flatter Shallow by telling him that no one commands servants better than he does. One thing's for sure: the behavior of a wise man and that of an idiot are contagious, like diseases. They spread from person to person, which is why people must be careful about

the company they keep. I'll come up with enough material about this Shallow to keep Prince Hal laughing nonstop for a year. That's how much time it takes for the current fashion to change six times, or for two lawsuits to be completed. He'll laugh with no intermission. Oh, a lie told with a measure of

never had the ache in his shoulders. O, you shall see him  
laugh till his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up.

**SHALLOW**

(within) Sir John.

**FALSTAFF**

I come, Master Shallow; I come, Master Shallow.

*Exit*

Enter **WARWICK** and the Lord **CHIEF JUSTICE**

**WARWICK**

How now, my Lord Chief Justice, whither away?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

How doth the King?

**WARWICK**

Exceeding well. His cares are now all ended.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I hope, not dead.

truth—or a joke told with a serious face—will go far with a young fellow, who has never had his shoulders weighed down by old age or worries. Oh, he'll laugh until his face looks like a wet coat that was hung poorly—it'll be all wrinkled from laughter.

**SHALLOW**

(offstage) Sir John!

**FALSTAFF**

Coming, Master Shallow! Coming!

*He exits.*

## Act 5 Scene 2

**WARWICK** and the Lord **CHIEF JUSTICE** enter.

**WARWICK**

What's happening, my Lord Chief Justice? Where are you going?

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

How's the King doing?

**WARWICK**

Very well. All his worries are ended now.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Not dead, I hope.

**WARWICK**

He's walked the way of nature,  
5 And to our purposes he lives no more.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I would his Majesty had called me with him.  
The service that I truly did his life  
Hath left me open to all injuries.

**WARWICK**

Indeed, I think the young King loves you not.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

10 I know he doth not, and do arm myself  
To welcome the condition of the time,  
Which cannot look more hideously upon me  
Than I have drawn it in my fantasy.

*Enter LANCASTER, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, and others*

**WARWICK**

Here come the heavy issue of dead Harry.  
15 O, that the living Harry had the temper  
Of he the worst of these three gentlemen!  
How many nobles then should hold their places  
That must strike sail to spirits of vile sort!

**CHIEF JUSTICE****WARWICK**

He's gone down nature's path; for our purposes, he is no longer living.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I wish his majesty had brought me with him. The work I did for him while he was alive makes me very vulnerable, now that he's dead.

**WARWICK**

Indeed, I think the young King has no love for you.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I know he doesn't. I'm preparing myself to deal with whatever happens, which can't be any worse than what I've imagined.

*LANCASTER, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, and others enter.*

**WARWICK**

Here come the heavy-hearted children of dead Harry. If only the living Harry had the character of the worst of these three young men. Then a lot of noblemen would remain secure, instead of having to step aside to make room for lowlives.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

O God, I fear all will be overturned.

**LANCASTER**

20 Good morrow, cousin Warwick, good morrow.

**GLOUCESTER AND CLARENCE**

Good morrow, cousin.

**LANCASTER**

We meet like men that had forgot to speak.

**WARWICK**

We do remember, but our argument  
Is all too heavy to admit much talk.

**LANCASTER**

25 Well, peace be with him that hath made us heavy.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Peace be with us, lest we be heavier.

**GLOUCESTER**

O, good my lord, you have lost a friend indeed,  
And I dare swear you borrow not that face  
Of seeming sorrow; it is sure your own.

**LANCASTER**

30 Though no man be assured what grace to find,  
You stand in coldest expectation.

Oh God! I'm afraid everything will be turned upside-down.

**LANCASTER**

Good morning, cousin Warwick, good morning.

**GLOUCESTER AND CLARENCE**

Good morning, cousin.

**LANCASTER**

We're all like men who don't remember how to speak.

**WARWICK**

We remember how, but what we have to say is so sad that we  
cannot speak.

**LANCASTER**

Well, peace be with the man who has made us sad.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Peace be with us, or else we'll be even sadder!

**GLOUCESTER**

Oh, my good lord, you've lost a friend, indeed. I'm sure you're  
not borrowing that sorrowful face; it's certainly your own.

**LANCASTER**

Even though no man can know what blessings will come his  
way, he must expect the worst. I am sorry; I wish it were

I am the sorrier; would 'twere otherwise.

### CLARENCE

Well, you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair,  
Which swims against your stream of quality.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

35 Sweet princes, what I did I did in honor,  
Led by th' impartial conduct of my soul;  
And never shall you see that I will beg  
A ragged and forestalled remission.  
If truth and upright innocency fail me,  
40 I'll to the King my master that is dead  
And tell him who hath sent me after him.

### WARWICK

Here comes the Prince.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY (now King Henry V), attended*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Good morrow, and God save your Majesty.

### PRINCE HENRY

This new and gorgeous garment majesty  
45 Sits not so easy on me as you think.—  
Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.  
This is the English, not the Turkish court;

otherwise.

### CLARENCE

Well, now you are only allowed to speak well of Sir John Falstaff, which goes against the nature of a man of your quality.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Sweet princes, what I did, I did honorably, impartially, and with a clear conscience. You won't see me begging vilely for a pardon, which is sure to be withdrawn as soon as it is given. If truth and honest innocence don't help me, then I'll join my dead King and tell him who sent me.

### WARWICK

Here comes the Prince.

*PRINCE HENRY (now King Henry V) enters, with attendants.*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Good morning, and God save your majesty!

### PRINCE HENRY

This new and gorgeous robe of majesty doesn't fit me as comfortably as you think. Brothers, your sadness is mixed with fear. This is the English court, not the Turkish one. I'm not Amurath, who had his brothers killed when he inherited his

Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,  
But Harry Harry. Yet be sad, good brothers,  
50 For, by my faith, it very well becomes you.  
Sorrow so royally in you appears  
That I will deeply put the fashion on  
And wear it in my heart. Why then, be sad.  
But entertain no more of it, good brothers,  
55 Than a joint burden laid upon us all.  
For me, by heaven, I bid you be assured,  
I'll be your father and your brother too.  
Let me but bear your love, I 'll bear your cares.  
Yet weep that Harry's dead, and so will I,  
60 But Harry lives that shall convert those tears  
By number into hours of happiness.

### PRINCES

We hope no otherwise from your Majesty.

### PRINCE HENRY

You all look strangely on me. (*to the CHIEF JUSTICE*) And you  
most.  
You are, I think, assured I love you not.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

65 I am assured, if I be measured rightly,  
Your Majesty hath no just cause to hate me.

### PRINCE HENRY

father King Amurath's crown; I'm a Harry, following another Harry. But be sad, brothers, because truly, it suits you. You look so regal in your sorrow that I will solemnly put it on as well, and wear it in my heart. Be sad, but don't let it be anything more than a burden we all share jointly. I want you to rest assured that as far as I'm concerned, I'll be both your father and your brother now. Just trust me with your love, and you can trust me to care for you. Keep weeping for Harry, who is dead; I will, as well. But one Harry still lives, and he will convert those tears one by one into hours of happiness.

### PRINCES

We hope that's exactly what you'll do.

### PRINCE HENRY

You're all looking at me strangely. (*to the CHIEF JUSTICE*) You, most of all. I think you're certain that I don't love you.

### CHIEF JUSTICE

I'm certain that, if my actions are fairly considered, your majesty will find no just reason to hate me.

### PRINCE HENRY

No?

How might a prince of my great hopes forget  
So great indignities you laid upon me?

70 What, rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison  
Th' immediate heir of England? Was this easy?  
May this be washed in Lethe and forgotten?

### CHIEF JUSTICE

I then did use the person of your father;  
The image of his power lay then in me.

75 And in th' administration of his law,  
Whiles I was busy for the commonwealth,  
Your Highness pleased to forget my place,  
The majesty and power of law and justice,  
The image of the King whom I presented,  
80 And struck me in my very seat of judgment,  
Whereon, as an offender to your father,  
I gave bold way to my authority  
And did commit you. If the deed were ill,  
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,  
85 To have a son set your decrees at nought?  
To pluck down justice from your awful bench?  
To trip the course of law and blunt the sword  
That guards the peace and safety of your person?  
Nay more, to spurn at your most royal image  
90 And mock your workings in a second body?

No? How can a great prince like me forget the terrible wrongs you did me? What were you thinking, to scold, punish, and violently imprison the heir to the English throne? Was this nothing? Should this be dipped in the river of forgetfulness and simply ignored?

### CHIEF JUSTICE

I acted with the authority of your father, whose power was vested in me. And when it came to the law—which I was busy enforcing, for the good of the country—you chose to ignore my rank, and the majesty and power of law and justice which I bore as a representative of the King. You struck me in the head, the very location of my judgment. With that action, you committed a crime against your father's own laws. So I did what my power demanded, and imprisoned you. If that was wrong, then—now that you wear the crown—I hope you'll someday be satisfied with a son who mocks your laws, who scorns the judges who rule in your authority, who disrupts the course of law, and blunts the swords that guard your personal peace and safety.

No, even worse than that: a son who disrespects your deputies, and the officers you appoint in your name. Question yourself, and imagine being in your father's position. Be a father, and imagine a son. Listen to your own dignity being profaned. Watch as your most solemn laws are laughed at so

Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;  
Be now the father and propose a son,  
Hear your own dignity so much profaned,  
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,  
95 Behold yourself so by a son disdained,  
And then imagine me taking your part  
And in your power soft silencing your son.  
After this cold considerance, sentence me,  
And, as you are a king, speak in your state

100 What I have done that misbecame my place,  
My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

### PRINCE HENRY

You are right, justice, and you weigh this well.  
Therefore still bear the balance and the sword.  
And I do wish your honors may increase  
105 Till you do live to see a son of mine  
Offend you and obey you as I did.  
So shall I live to speak my father's words:  
"Happy am I that have a man so bold  
That dares do justice on my proper son;  
110 And not less happy, having such a son  
That would deliver up his greatness so  
Into the hands of justice." You did commit me,  
For which I do commit into your hand  
Th' unstainèd sword that you have used to bear,

lightly. Behold yourself being so disdained by a son. And then imagine that I take your side, and that in your name I gently silence your son. Soberly consider this, and then pronounce my sentence. As king, tell me

what I have done that was so unseemly for my station, myself, or my king's authority.

### PRINCE HENRY

You're right, Chief Justice, and you have considered this well. Therefore, keep your position as judge and enforcer. I hope that your honors increase, and that you live to see a son of mine offend and then obey you, as I have. I will live to speak my father's words: "I am a happy man, to have a man brave enough to punish my own son; and I'm no less happy to have a son that would surrender his greatness, and put himself in the hands of the law."

You imprisoned me, and for that I charge you to continue in my service, with this reminder: you must always be as courageous, just, and impartial as you were with me. Shake my hand. You'll be like a father to me, and I will say whatever it is you whisper in my ear. I will bow to you, and keep myself humble in the

115 With this remembrance: that you use the same  
With the like bold, just, and impartial spirit  
As you have done 'gainst me. There is my hand.  
You shall be as a father to my youth,  
My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear,  
120 And I will stoop and humble my intents  
To your well-practiced wise directions.—  
And, princes all, believe me, I beseech you:  
My father is gone wild into his grave,  
For in his tomb lie my affections,  
125 And with his spirit sadly I survive  
To mock the expectation of the world,  
To frustrate prophecies, and to raze out  
Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down  
After my seeming. The tide of blood in me  
130 Hath proudly flowed in vanity till now.  
Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,  
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods  
And flow henceforth in formal majesty.  
Now call we our high court of parliament,  
  
135 And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel  
That the great body of our state may go  
In equal rank with the best governed nation;  
That war, or peace, or both at once, may be  
As things acquainted and familiar to us,

face of your wisdom and experience. And princes, believe me, please: my father lies wild in his grave, for he took my recklessness with him when he died. His sober spirit survives in me, and I will flout the world's expectations. I will prove their prophecies false, and flush out the rotten opinions of those who judged me based on what I once seemed to be. My behavior, the tide of my blood, used to flow proudly and vainly. But now, it ebbs and turns back toward the sea, where it will mingle with the ocean's majesty and flow back through my body with formal dignity. Now I will assemble my parliament, and choose such noble officers and advisors that our great country will be able to march alongside the best governed nations. We'll become acquainted and familiar

with the states of war, peace, or both at once; in this, Chief Justice, my new father, you will be my closest advisor. Once my coronation has been completed, I will, as I said before, summon all the nobility. And if God endorses my good

140 In which you, father, shall have foremost hand.  
Our coronation done, we will accite,  
As I before remembered, all our state.  
And, God consigning to my good intents,  
No prince nor peer shall have just cause to say  
145 God shorten Harry's happy life one day.

*Exeunt*

intentions, no prince or lord will have reason to say that he wishes God would shorten my happy life by even a single day.

*They exit.*

## Act 5 Scene 3

Enter **FALSTAFF**, **SHALLOW**, **SILENCE**, **DAVY**, **BARDOLPH**, and the **PAGE**

### SHALLOW

Nay, you shall see my orchard, where, in an arbor, we will eat a last year's pippin of my own grafting, with a dish of caraways, and so forth.—Come, cousin Silence.—And then to bed.

### FALSTAFF

5 Fore God, you have here a goodly dwelling and a rich.

### SHALLOW

Barren, barren, barren, beggars all, beggars all, Sir John. Marry, good air.—Spread, Davy, spread, Davy. Well said, Davy.

### FALSTAFF

**FALSTAFF**, **SHALLOW**, **SILENCE**, **DAVY**, **BARDOLPH**, and the **PAGE** enter.

### SHALLOW

No, you're going to see my orchard. We'll sit in an arbor and eat some of the pippin apples I cross-bred last season, along with some caraway seeds and so on. Come on, Silence. Then we'll go to bed.

### FALSTAFF

I swear, you have a good-looking place here, and it's fancy.

### SHALLOW

Cheap, cheap, cheap. We're broke, broke, Sir John. But one thing we do have is good air. Set the table, Davy, set the table. Good job, Davy.

### FALSTAFF

This Davy serves you for good uses. He is your servingman  
10 and your husband.

### **SHALLOW**

A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet, Sir John. By the Mass, I have drunk too much sack at supper. A good varlet. Now sit down, now sit down.—Come, cousin.

### **SILENCE**

Ah, sirrah, quoth he, we shall  
15 Do nothing but eat and make good cheer,  
(sings) And praise God for the merry year,  
When flesh is cheap and females dear,  
And lusty lads roam here and there  
So merrily,  
20 And ever among so merrily.

### **FALSTAFF**

There's a merry heart!—Good Master Silence, I'll give you a health for that anon.

### **SHALLOW**

Give Master Bardolph some wine, Davy.

### **DAVY**

Sweet sir, sit. I'll be with you anon. Most sweet sir, sit.  
25 Master page, good master page, sit. Proface. What you want in meat, we'll have in drink, but you must bear. The heart's

This Davy does a lot for you. He's your right-hand man as well as your steward.

### **SHALLOW**

A good servant, a very good servant, Sir John. By God, I had too much wine with dinner. A good servant. Now sit down, sit down. Come on, cousin.

### **SILENCE**

Ah, Sirrah, he said. We will:  
Do nothing but eat and celebrate,  
(sings) And praise God for this happy year,  
When flesh is cheap but women are costly,  
And lusty men roam here and there,  
So merrily,  
And always so merrily.

### **FALSTAFF**

That's a merry heart! Master Silence, I'll drink a toast to you in a minute.

### **SHALLOW**

Davy, get Master Bardolph some wine.

### **DAVY**

Sit, kind sir; I'll be with you in a second. Very kind sir, please sit. Here's to you! What we lack in food, we make up for in drink. You must endure it; good intentions are what count.

all.

*Exit DAVY*

### **SHALLOW**

Be merry, Master Bardolph. —And, my little soldier there,  
be merry.

### **SILENCE**

30 (*sings*) Be merry, be merry, my wife has all,  
For women are shrews, both short and tall.  
'Tis merry in hall when beards wag all,  
And welcome merry Shrovetide.  
Be merry, be merry.

### **FALSTAFF**

35 I did not think Master Silence had been a man of this mettle.

### **SILENCE**

Who, I? I have been merry twice and once ere now.

*Enter DAVY*

### **DAVY**

(to BARDOLPH) There's a dish of leather-coats for you.

### **SHALLOW**

Davy!

*DAVY exits.*

### **SHALLOW**

Enjoy yourself, Master Bardolph, and you, my little soldier,  
enjoy yourself.

### **SILENCE**

(*sings*) Enjoy, enjoy! My wife has it all,  
Women are shrews, whether they're short or they're tall,  
It's a merry party when men laugh and joke,  
So let's enjoy ourselves this *Shrovetide* ,  
Enjoy, enjoy!

### **FALSTAFF**

I didn't think Master Silence had this in him.

### **SILENCE**

Who, me? I've let loose once or twice in my life.

*DAVY enters.*

### **DAVY**

(to BARDOLPH) Here's a dish of red apples for you.

### **SHALLOW**

Davy!

**DAVY**

Your Worship, I'll be with you straight.—

40 (to BARDOLPH) A cup of wine, sir?

**SILENCE**

(*sings*) A cup of wine that's brisk and fine,  
And drink unto thee, leman mine,  
And a merry heart lives long-a.

**FALSTAFF**

Well said, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

45 And we shall be merry; now comes in the sweet o' th' night.

**FALSTAFF**

Health and long life to you, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

(*sings*) Fill the cup, and let it come,  
I'll pledge you a mile to th' bottom.

**SHALLOW**

Honest Bardolph, welcome. If thou wantest anything and  
wilt not call, beshrew thy heart.—

50 (to the PAGE) Welcome, my little tiny thief, and welcome  
indeed too. I'll drink to Master Bardolph, and to all the  
cabileros about London.

**DAVY**

Yes, sir! I'll be with you in a second. (to BARDOLPH) A cup of  
wine, sir?

**SILENCE**

(*sings*) A cup of wine that's fresh and fine,  
And drink to you, darling mine,  
And a happy heart lives long!

**FALSTAFF**

Well said, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

And we will enjoy ourselves. Now's the best time of night.

**FALSTAFF**

Here's to your health and long life, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

(*sings*) Fill the cup, and pass it here,  
I'll drink it to the bottom, even if it's a mile down.

**SHALLOW**

Welcome, honest Master Bardolph. If you want something and  
don't ask for it, that's your tough luck. (to the PAGE) Welcome,  
my little tiny thief, welcome indeed. I'll drink to Master  
Bardolph, and to all the good sports around London.

**DAVY**

I hope to see London once ere I die.

**BARDOLPH**

An I might see you there, Davy!

**SHALLOW**

55 By the Mass, you'll crack a quart together, ha, will you not,  
Master Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Yea, sir, in a pottle-pot.

**SHALLOW**

By God's liggens, I thank thee. The knave will stick by thee,  
I can assure thee that. He will not out, he. 'Tis true bred!

**BARDOLPH**

60 And I'll stick by him, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Why, there spoke a king. Lack nothing, be merry.  
One knocks at the door within  
Look who's at door there, ho. Who knocks?

*Exit DAVY*

**FALSTAFF**

(to SILENCE) Why, now you have done me right.

**DAVY**

I hope to see London once before I die.

**BARDOLPH**

If I see you there, Davy—

**SHALLOW**

By God, you'll break open a quart bottle together, ha! Won't  
you, Master Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Yessir, in a two-quart glass.

**SHALLOW**

By God's fingers, I thank you. This rogue will stick with you, I  
promise you that. He won't fail, he's true blue.

**BARDOLPH**

And I'll stick with him, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Spoken like a king. Take whatever you want: enjoy yourselves!  
*Knocking is heard offstage.*  
Hey, see who's at the door there! Who's knocking?

**DAVY** exits.

**FALSTAFF**

(to SILENCE) You're really keeping up with me!

**SILENCE**

65 (*sings*) Do me right,  
And dub me knight,  
Samingo.  
Is 't not so?

**FALSTAFF**

'Tis so.

**SILENCE**

70 Is 't so? Why then, say an old man can do somewhat.

*Enter DAVY*

**DAVY**

An 't please your Worship, there's one Pistol come from the court with news.

**FALSTAFF**

From the court? Let him come in.

*Enter PISTOL*

How now, Pistol?

**PISTOL**

75 Sir John, God save you.

**SILENCE**

(*sings*) Keep up with me,  
Then dub me a knight!  
*Samingo!*  
Right?

**FALSTAFF**

Right.

**SILENCE**

Right? Then you've got to admit that an old man can do some things.

*DAVY returns.*

**DAVY**

Sir, if I may say so, there's someone named Pistol here from the royal court. He's got news.

**FALSTAFF**

From the royal court? Let him in.

*PISTOL enters.*

What's up, Pistol?

**PISTOL**

God save you, Sir John.

**FALSTAFF**

What wind blew you hither, Pistol?

**PISTOL**

Not the ill wind which blows no man to good. Sweet knight,  
thou art now one of the greatest men in this realm.

**SILENCE**

By 'r Lady, I think he be, but Goodman Puff of Barson.

**PISTOL**

Puff?

80 Puff in thy teeth, most recreant coward base!—  
Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,  
And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,  
And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,  
And golden times, and happy news of price.

**FALSTAFF**

85 I pray thee now, deliver them like a man of this world.

**PISTOL**

A foute for the world and worldlings base!  
I speak of Africa and golden joys.

**FALSTAFF****FALSTAFF**

What wind blew you here, Pistol?

**PISTOL**

Not the evil wind that blows no one toward any good. Sweet knight, you are now one of the hugest men in the country.

**SILENCE**

I swear, I think he is—except for the good fellow Puff, from Barson.

**PISTOL**

Puff? Puff in your face, you degenerate coward! Sir John, I'm your Pistol and your friend, and I rode at full tilt to find you here. I bring you reports, and good luck, and golden times, and happy, valuable news.

**FALSTAFF**

Then please, deliver this news like a human being who lives in this world.

**PISTOL**

Damn this world, and the vile little people who live in it! I'm talking about Africa, and its golden joys.

**FALSTAFF**

O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?  
Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.

### SILENCE

90 (*sings*) And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John.

### PISTOL

Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons,  
And shall good news be baffled?  
Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.

### SILENCE

Honest gentleman, I know not your breeding.

### PISTOL

95 Why then, lament therefor.

### SHALLOW

Give me pardon, sir. If, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it there's but two ways, either to utter them, or to conceal them. I am, sir, under the King in some authority.

### PISTOL

Under which king, besonian? Speak or die.

### SHALLOW

100 Under King Harry.

Oh, you vulgar Assyrian knight, what is your news? Convey to [King Cophetua](#) the story therein.

### SILENCE

(*sings*) [And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John](#).

### PISTOL

Will junkyard dogs attack the Muses, goddesses of poetry?  
Will my good news be thwarted this way? Then Pistol, go ahead and plead with the Furies, the goddesses of revenge.

### SILENCE

Honest gentleman, I don't know what kind of family you're from.

### PISTOL

That's your loss.

### SHALLOW

Forgive me saying so, sir, but if you've got news from the court, then you have only two choices: you can either tell it or not tell it. I have some authority from the King, you know.

### PISTOL

From which king, you beggar? Speak, or die.

### SHALLOW

For King Henry.

**PISTOL**

Harry the Fourth, or Fifth?

**SHALLOW**

Harry the Fourth.

**PISTOL**

A foute for thine office!—

Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is king.

105 Harry the Fifth's the man. I speak the truth.

When Pistol lies, do this (*he makes an obscene gesture*) and  
fig me, like

The bragging Spaniard.

**FALSTAFF**

What, is the old king dead?

**PISTOL**

As nail in door. The things I speak are just.

**FALSTAFF**

110 Away, Bardolph.—Saddle my horse.—Master Robert  
Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land,  
'tis thine. Pistol, I will double-charge thee with dignities.

**BARDOLPH**

O joyful day! I would not take a knighthood for my fortune.

**PISTOL**

Henry the Fourth, or Fifth?

**SHALLOW**

Henry the Fourth.

**PISTOL**

Then screw your position! Sir John, your tender little lamb is now the king. Henry the Fifth's the man, and I speak the truth. When Pistol tells a lie, do this (*he makes an obscene gesture*) and tell me to go screw myself, like some crazy Spaniard.

**FALSTAFF**

What? Is the old King dead?

**PISTOL**

As a doornail: these things I say are true.

**FALSTAFF**

Get going, Bardolph! Saddle up my horse. Master Robert Shallow, pick whatever job you want in the whole country: it's yours. Pistol, I'll pile honors on you.

**BARDOLPH**

Oh happy day! I wouldn't even trade a knighthood for my new, good fortune.

**PISTOL**

What, I do bring good news!

**FALSTAFF**

115 Carry Master Silence to bed.—Master Shallow, my Lord Shallow, be what thou wilt. I am Fortune's steward. Get on thy boots. We'll ride all night.—O sweet Pistol!—Away, Bardolph!

*Exit BARDOLPH*

Come, Pistol, utter more to me, and withal devise something  
120 to do thyself good. Boot, boot, Master Shallow. I know the young King is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses. The laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are they that have been my friends, and woe to my Lord Chief Justice!

**PISTOL**

125 Let vultures vile seize on his lungs also!  
"Where is the life that late I led?" say they.  
Why, here it is. Welcome these pleasant days.

*Exeunt*

*Enter BEADES, dragging in MISTRESS QUICKLY and DOLL*

**PISTOL**

There you go! I brought good news!

**FALSTAFF**

Carry Master Silence to bed. Master Shallow—Lord Shallow—call yourself whatever you want. I'm in

charge of all the luck in the world! Get your boots on. We'll ride through the night. Oh sweet Pistol! Get going, Bardolph!

**BARDOLPH** exits.

Pistol, tell me more, and help me think of something good we can do for you. Boots, boots, Master Shallow! I know the young King is dying to see me. Let's just take anybody's horses; I rule the laws of England now! Blessed are those who have been my friends, and watch out, Lord Chief Justice!

**PISTOL**

May vultures eat out his lungs, too! You know the old saying, "What happened to the life I used to lead?" Well, they're here; welcome to these pleasant days.

*They exit.*

## Act 5 Scene 4

*BEADES enter, dragging DOLL TEARSHEET and MISTRESS*

## **TEARSHEET**

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, thou arrant knave. I would to God that I might die, that I might have thee hanged. Thou hast drawn my shoulder out of joint.

### **FIRST BEADLE**

The Constables have delivered her over to me, and she shall 5 have whipping cheer enough, I warrant her. There hath been a man or two lately killed about her.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie! Come on, I 'll tell thee what, thou damned tripe-visaged rascal: an the child I now go with do miscarry, thou wert better thou hadst struck thy mother, 10 thou paper-faced villain.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O the Lord, that Sir John were come! I would make this a bloody day to somebody. But I pray God the fruit of her womb might miscarry.

### **FIRST BEADLE**

If it do, you shall have a dozen of cushions again; you have 15 but eleven now. Come, I charge you both go with me, for the man is dead that you and Pistol beat amongst you.

## **QUICKLY.**

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, you horrible rogue! I wish to God I were dead, so I could have you hanged. You dislocated my shoulder!

### **FIRST BEADLE**

The street cops handed her over to me, and she'll be whipped through and through, I promise. She's been involved in a couple of murders.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Pig, Pig! You lie! Come on! I'll tell you what, you damned flabby-faced moron: if I have a miscarriage now, you'll wish you'd hit your own mother, you pasty-faced villain!

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh God, I wish Sir John would come! He'd make somebody bleed for this. I pray to God that she has a miscarriage!

### **FIRST BEADLE**

Well, if she does, you'll have twelve cushions on your couch again. You have only eleven now, since she's wearing one of them under her dress. I order both of you to come with me: the man that you two and Pistol beat up is dead.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

I'll tell you what, you thin man in a censer, I will have you  
as soundly swinged for this, you bluebottle rogue, you filthy  
famished correctioner. If you be not swinged, I'll forswear  
20 half-kirtles.

### **FIRST BEADLE**

Come, come, you she knight-errant, come.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O God, that right should thus overcome might! Well, of  
sufferance comes ease.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come, you rogue, come, bring me to a justice.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

25 Ay, come, you starved bloodhound.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Goodman Death, Goodman Bones!

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Thou atomy, thou!

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come, you thin thing, come, you rascal.

### **FIRST BEADLE**

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

I'll tell you what, you stick-figure; I'll have you beaten soundly  
for this. You blue-coated rogue, you filthy, starving  
correctioner! If you aren't walloped for this, I'll swear off skirts.

### **FIRST BEADLE**

Come on, come on, you little night sinner, come on.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Oh God! I can't believe that right is overcoming might! Well,  
challenges build character.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come on, you bastard, come on. Bring me to a judge.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Yeah, come on, you starved dog.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Master Death! Master Bones!

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

You skeleton, you!

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come on, you thin thing; come on, you lean deer!

### **FIRST BEADLE**

Very well.

*Exeunt*

*Enter two GROOMS, strewing rushes*

**FIRST GROOM**

More rushes, more rushes.

**SECOND GROOM**

The trumpets have sounded twice.

**FIRST GROOM**

'Twill be two o'clock ere they come from the coronation.

Dispatch, dispatch.

*Exeunt*

*Enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and PAGE*

**FALSTAFF**

5 Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow. I will make the King do you grace. I will leer upon him as he comes by, and do but mark the countenance that he will give me.

**PISTOL**

God bless thy lungs, good knight!

Very well.

*They exit.*

## Act 5 Scene 5

Two *GROOMS* enter, strewing rushes to cover the floors.

**FIRST GROOM**

More rushes; more rushes.

**SECOND GROOM**

The trumpets have blown twice.

**FIRST GROOM**

It'll be two o'clock before they arrive from the coronation.

Hurry, hurry.

*They exit.*

*FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and the PAGE enter.*

**FALSTAFF**

Stand here near me, Master Robert Shallow. I'll make the King do good things for you: I'll throw him a look as he passes by. Just watch the face he'll make at me.

**PISTOL**

God bless your lungs, good knight.

**FALSTAFF**

Come here, Pistol, stand behind me.—*(to SHALLOW)* O, if I  
10 had had time to have made new liveries, I would have  
bestowed the thousand pound I borrowed of you. But 'tis no  
matter. This poor show doth better. This doth infer the zeal  
I had to see him.

**SHALLOW**

It doth so.

**FALSTAFF**

15 It shows my earnestness of affection—

**SHALLOW**

It doth so.

**FALSTAFF**

My devotion—

**SHALLOW**

It doth, it doth, it doth.

**FALSTAFF**

As it were, to ride day and night, and not to deliberate, not  
20 to remember, not to have patience to shift me—

**SHALLOW**

It is best, certain.

**FALSTAFF**

Come here, Pistol. Stand behind me. *(to SHALLOW)* Oh, if I'd  
had time to make new clothes I would have spent the  
thousand pounds I borrowed from you. But it doesn't matter.  
These poor clothes are better; it shows how desperate I was to  
see him.

**SHALLOW**

It does indeed.

**FALSTAFF**

It shows how sincerely I love him—

**SHALLOW**

It does indeed.

**FALSTAFF**

My devotion—

**SHALLOW**

It does, it does, it does.

**FALSTAFF**

In a word, to ride all night; not to stop and think, not to dawdle,  
not to take the time to change my clothes—

**SHALLOW**

It is best, no doubt about it.

**FALSTAFF**

But to stand stained with travel and sweating with desire to see him, thinking of nothing else, putting all affairs else in oblivion, as if there were nothing else to be done but to see  
25 him.

**PISTOL**

'Tis semper idem, for obsque hoc nihil est;  
'tis all in every part.

**SHALLOW**

'Tis so indeed.

**PISTOL**

My knight, I will inflame thy noble liver, and make thee  
30 rage. Thy Doll and Helen of thy noble thoughts is in base  
durance and contagious prison, Haled thither by most  
mechanical and dirty hand. Rouse up revenge from ebon den  
with fell Alecto's snake, for Doll is in. Pistol speaks nought  
but truth.

**FALSTAFF**

35 I will deliver her.

*Shouts within, and the trumpets sound*

**PISTOL**

There roared the sea, and trumpet-clangor sounds.

**FALSTAFF**

Standing here filthy from traveling, and sweating with my  
desire to see him; thinking of nothing else, disregarding  
everything, as if the only thing in the world that mattered was  
seeing him.

**PISTOL**

That's how it is. Nothing else matters.  
*Semper idem. Obsque hoc nihil est .*

**SHALLOW**

That's exactly right.

**PISTOL**

Knight, I'll fire up your noble liver and make you enraged. Doll,  
the goddess of your thoughts, is imprisoned in a horrible jail,  
tossed there by a heartless and filthy hand. Stoke up dark  
revenge from your deepest belly and set loose the serpents of  
hell. Doll is in. Pistol speaks nothing but the truth.

**FALSTAFF**

I'll set her free.

*Shouts are heard offstage. Trumpets play.*

**PISTOL**

That was the roar of the sea. The clanging trumpet sounds!

*Enter PRINCE HENRY and his train, the Lord CHIEF JUSTICE among them*

**FALSTAFF**

God save thy Grace, King Hal, my royal Hal.

**PISTOL**

The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!

**FALSTAFF**

God save thee, my sweet boy!

**KING**

40 My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

(to FALSTAFF) Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis to speak?

**FALSTAFF**

My King, my Jove, I speak to thee, my heart!

**KING**

I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.  
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester.  
45 I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,  
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;  
But being awaked, I do despise my dream.  
Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace;

*PRINCE HENRY enters with a procession of attendants, including the CHIEF JUSTICE.*

**FALSTAFF**

God save your grace, King Hal! My royal Hal!

**PISTOL**

The heavens guard and protect you, you royal child of fame!

**FALSTAFF**

God save you, my sweet boy!

**PRINCE HENRY**

My Lord Chief Justice, go speak to that arrogant man.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

(to FALSTAFF) Have you lost your mind? Do you know what you're doing, talking like that?

**FALSTAFF**

My King! My God! I'm talking to you, my heart!

**KING**

I know you not, old man. Get down on your knees and pray, for white hair doesn't sit well on a fool and a clown. I have dreamed about such a man for a long time: a man so swollen with excess, so old and so obscene. But now that I have awokened, I despise that dream. Let your body lessen, and your manners increase; leave behind your overindulgence, and

Leave gormandizing. Know the grave doth gape  
50 For thee thrice wider than for other men.  
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest.  
Presume not that I am the thing I was,  
For God doth know—so shall the world perceive—  
That I have turned away my former self.  
55 So will I those that kept me company.  
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,  
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,  
The tutor and the feeder of my riots.  
Till then I banish thee, on pain of death,  
60 As I have done the rest of my misleaders,  
  
Not to come near our person by ten mile.  
For competence of life I will allow you,  
That lack of means enforce you not to evils.  
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,  
65 We will, according to your strengths and qualities,  
Give you advancement. (*to CHIEF JUSTICE*) Be it your charge,  
my lord,  
To see performed the tenor of my word.—  
Set on.

*Exeunt PRINCE HENRY, the CHIEF JUSTICE, and the attendants.*

FALSTAFF

know that the grave gapes three times as wide for you than  
any other man. Don't answer me with a foolish joke. Do not  
assume that I am what I was; for God knows, I have turned my  
back on my former self, and I will do the same to those who  
were my companions. When you hear that I am as I was, then  
come to me, and you will once again be what you were: the  
teacher and nurse to my wild, riotous ways.  
Until then, I banish you, on pain of death, as I have done to the  
other men who once misled me. Do not  
  
come within ten miles of me. I'll grant you a modest allowance  
to live on, so that poverty will not lead you into evil. When I  
hear that you have reformed your ways, I will promote you as  
you deserve. (*to CHIEF JUSTICE*) It's your job to see this order  
carried out. Let's go.

*PRINCE HENRY, the CHIEF JUSTICE, and the attendants exit.*

FALSTAFF

Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

### **SHALLOW**

70 Yea, marry, Sir John, which I beseech you to let me have home with me.

### **FALSTAFF**

That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not you grieve at this. I shall be sent for in private to him. Look you, he must seem thus to the world. Fear not your advancements. I will 75 be the man yet that shall make you great.

### **SHALLOW**

I cannot well perceive how, unless you should give me your doublet and stuff me out with straw. I beseech you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred of my thousand.

### **FALSTAFF**

Sir, I will be as good as my word. This that you heard was 80 but a color.

### **SHALLOW**

A color that I fear you will die in, Sir John.

### **FALSTAFF**

Fear no colors. Go with me to dinner.—Come, Lieutenant Pistol.—Come, Bardolph.—I shall be sent for soon at night.

*Enter the Lord CHIEF JUSTICE and Prince John of LANCASTER;*

Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.

### **SHALLOW**

Yes, indeed, Sir John. And I'd like to take it home with me.

### **FALSTAFF**

That can't happen, Master Shallow. Don't let this upset you; I'll get a private invitation to see him. Look, he has to appear this way to the world. Don't worry about your good fortunes: I'm still the man who will make you great.

### **SHALLOW**

I don't know how you're going to do that, unless you give me your jacket and fill me out with stuffing. Please, Sir John, let me have five hundred of my thousand.

### **FALSTAFF**

Sir, I'm as good as my word. What you heard here a minute ago was just a color; it was a pretense.

### **SHALLOW**

A color that I fear you'll be buried in, Sir John.

### **FALSTAFF**

Stop worrying about colors: come to lunch with me. Come, Lieutenant Pistol. Come, Bardolph. He'll call for me tonight.

*The Lord CHIEF JUSTICE, Prince John of LANCASTER, and*

*officers with them*

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet.

85 Take all his company along with him.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord, my lord—

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I cannot now speak. I will hear you soon.—

Take them away.

**PISTOL**

*Si fortuna me tormenta, spero me contenta.*

*Exeunt all but Prince John of LANCASTER and the CHIEF JUSTICE*

**LANCASTER**

90 I like this fair proceeding of the King's.  
He hath intent his wonted followers  
Shall all be very well provided for,  
But all are banished till their conversations  
Appear more wise and modest to the world.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

95 And so they are.

*officers enter.*

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

Go, take Sir John Falstaff away to jail, and take all his companions with him.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord, my lord—

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

I can't talk now. I'll listen to you later. Take them away.

**PISTOL**

*Si fortuna me tormenta, spero me contenta .*

*Everyone exits except John of LANCASTER and the CHIEF JUSTICE.*

**LANCASTER**

The King's fair dealings please me. He wants to ensure that his old companions are provided for, but he banishes them until they can behave more properly and presentably.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

That they are.

**LANCASTER**

The King hath called his parliament, my lord.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

He hath.

**LANCASTER**

I will lay odds that, ere this year expire,  
We bear our civil swords and native fire  
100 As far as France: I beard a bird so sing,  
Whose music, to my thinking, pleased the King.  
Come, will you hence?

*Exeunt*

*Enter the EPILOGUE.*

First my fear; then my curtsy, last my speech. My fear is your displeasure my curtsy my duty; and my speech, to beg your 105 pardons. If you look for a good speech now, you undo me, for what I have to say is of mine own making, and what indeed I should say will, I doubt, prove mine own marring. But to the purpose, and so to the venture. Be it known to you, as it is very well, I was lately here in the end of a displeasing 110 play to pray your patience for it and to promise you a better. I meant indeed to pay you with this, which, if like an ill venture it come unluckily home, I break, and you, my gentle creditors, lose. Here I promised you I would be, and here I

**LANCASTER**

The King's assembled his parliament, sir.

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

He has.

**LANCASTER**

I'll bet that, before the year ends, we'll launch an invasion of France. I heard a little bird singing about it, and I think the music pleased the King. Come, will you leave with me?

*They exit.*

*The EPILOGUE enters.*

First, I'll tell you what I'm afraid of. Then, I'll bow, and finally, I'll make a speech. I fear that this play displeased you; I bow to you out of duty; and finally, I make this speech to ask you for forgiveness. If you're expecting a good speech now, then I'm in trouble. For I wrote the words I'm about to say, and I'm sure that what I'm about to say will end up getting me in trouble. But I'll get to the point, and thus I'll get to the danger. You should know—as you seem to—that I recently came on this stage at the end of some other lousy play, to ask you to be patient and to promise you a better play the next time. I had intended to pay you back for that play with this one. If you

commit my body to your mercies. Bate me some, and I will  
115 pay you some, and, as most debtors do, promise you  
infinitely. And so I kneel down before you, but, indeed, to  
pray for the Queen.

If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you  
command me to use my legs? And yet that were but light  
120 payment, to dance out of your debt. But a good conscience  
will make any possible satisfaction, and so would I. All the  
gentlewomen here have forgiven me; if the gentlemen will  
not, then the gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen,  
which was never seen before in such an assembly.

125 One word more, I beseech you: if you be not too much  
cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the  
story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair  
Katherine of France, where, for anything I know, Falstaff  
shall die of a sweat, unless already he be killed with your  
130 hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not  
the man. My tongue is weary; when my legs are too, I will  
bid you good night.

didn't like this play, then—like a businessman who has  
gambled on a risky venture—I am bankrupt; and you, my sweet  
creditors, are out of luck. I promised you I would be here, and  
here I stand to submit myself to your mercy. Give me some  
mercy and I'll promise to pay you back again another time.  
That's how debtors do it: they always promise to repay.  
If my talking can't convince you to let me off the hook, then  
would you like me to dance? And yet, that would be a cheap  
payment, to dance myself out of debt. But a person with a  
good conscience will always seek to pay his debts, and I  
would do the same. All the women here have forgiven me: if  
the men won't, then the men don't agree with the women,  
which has never happened in a theater audience before.  
Just one more thing, if you don't mind. If fatty meat hasn't  
clogged you up yet, our playwright will continue the story with  
Sir John in it, and entertain you with the beautiful Princess  
Katharine of France. And speaking of France, as far as I know,  
Falstaff will die there of the sweating disease—unless, that is,  
he's already been killed by your low opinions of him. [Oldcastle](#)  
died a martyr, and this is not him. My mouth is tired; when my  
legs are, too, I'll say goodnight and take a bow.