

1 Henry IV

1.3

Enter the King, the Earls of Northumberland and Worcester, Hotspur, Sir Walter Blunt, with other [lords]

KING HENRY *(to Hotspur, Northumberland, and Worcester)*

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

WORCESTER

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

NORTHUMBERLAND *(to the King)* My lord±±

KING HENRY

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

Exit Worcester

You were about to speak.

NORTHUMBERLAND Yea, my good lord.

Those prisoners in your highness' name demanded,
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied
As was delivered to your majesty, 25
Who either through envy or misprision
Was guilty of this fault, and not my son.

HOTSPUR *(to the King)*

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

Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

BLUNT *(to the King)*

The circumstance considered, good my lord,
Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said 70
To such a person, and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
May reasonably die, and never rise
To do him wrong or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now. 75

KING HENRY

Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law the foolish Mortimer,
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betrayed 80
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damned Glyndwŷr
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home? 85
Shall we buy treason, and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?
No, on the barren mountains let him starve;
For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost 90
To ransom home revolted Mortimer

HOTSPUR Revolted Mortimer?

He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war. To prove that true
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds, 95
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glyndwŷr. 100
Three times they breathed, and three times did they
drink,

Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood,
Who, then affrighted with their bloody looks,

Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank, 105
Bloodstained with these valiant combatants.
Never did bare and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds,
Nor never could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly. 110
Then let not him be slandered with revolt.

KING HENRY

Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost belie him.
He never did encounter with Glyndwŷr. I tell thee,
He durst as well have met the devil alone
As Owain Glyndwŷr for an enemy. 115
Art thou not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth
Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer.
Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me
As will displease you. ±± My lord Northumberland, 120
We license your departure with your son.
(*To Hotspur*) Send us your prisoners, or you'll hear of it.
Exeunt all but Hotspur and Northumberland

HOTSPUR

An if the devil come and roar for them
I will not send them. I will after straight
And tell him so, for I will ease my heart, 125
Although it be with hazard of my head.

NORTHUMBERLAND

What, drunk with choler? Stay and pause awhile.
Enter the Earl of Worcester
Here comes your uncle.

HOTSPUR

Speak of Mortimer?
Zounds, I will speak of him, and let my soul
Want mercy if I do not join with him. 130
In his behalf I'll empty all these veins,
And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust,
But I will lift the downfall Mortimer
As high in the air as this unthankful King,
As this ingrate and cankered Bolingbroke. 135

NORTHUMBERLAND (*to Worcester*)

Brother, the King hath made your nephew mad.

WORCESTER

Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

HOTSPUR

He will forsooth have all my prisoners;
And when I urged the ransom once again
Of my wife's brother, then his cheek looked pale, 140
And on my face he turned an eye of death,
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.

WORCESTER

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

NORTHUMBERLAND

He was; I heard the proclamation. 145
And then it was when the unhappy King,
Whose wrongs in us God pardon, did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition,
From whence he, intercepted, did return
To be deposed, and shortly murder'd. 150

WORCESTER

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

HOTSPUR

But soft, I pray you; did King Richard then
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
Heir to the crown?

NORTHUMBERLAND He did; myself did hear it. 155

HOTSPUR

Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin King
That wished him on the barren mountains starve.
But shall it be that you that set the crown
Upon the head of this forgetful man,
And for his sake wear the detested blot 160
Of murderous subornation, shall it be
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents or base second means,
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman, rather?
O, pardon me that I descend so low 165
To show the line and the predicament
Wherein you range under this subtle King!
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,

But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

WORCESTER *(to Northumberland)*

He apprehends a world of figures here,
But not the form of what he should attend.

(To Hotspur) Good cousin, give me audience for a while,
And list to me. 210

HOTSPUR

I cry you mercy.

WORCESTER Those same noble Scots
That are your prisoners±±

HOTSPUR I'll keep them all.

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

WORCESTER You start away, 215
And lend no ear unto my purposes.
Those prisoners you shall keep.

HOTSPUR Nay, I will; that's flat.

He said he would not ransom Mortimer,
Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer;
But I will find him when he lies asleep, 220
And in his ear I'll hollo 'Mortimer!'
Nay, I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but 'Mortimer', and give it him
To keep his anger still in motion.

WORCESTER Hear you, cousin, a word. 225

HOTSPUR

All studies here I solemnly defy,
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke.
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales±±
But that I think his father loves him not
And would be glad he met with some mischance±± 230
I would have him poisoned with a pot of ale.

WORCESTER

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

NORTHUMBERLAND *(to Hotspur)*

Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood, 235
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!

HOTSPUR

Why, look you, I am whipped and scourged with rods,
Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear
Of this vile politician Bolingbroke.

In Richard's time±±what d'ye call the place? 240

A plague upon't, it is in Gloucestershire.

'Twas where the madcap Duke his uncle kept±±

His uncle York±±where I first bowed my knee

Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke.

'Sblood, when you and he came back from

Ravenspurgh. 245

NORTHUMBERLAND

At Berkeley castle.

HOTSPUR You say true.

Why, what a candy deal of courtesy

This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!

`Look when his infant fortune came to age',

And `gentle Harry Percy', and `kind cousin'. 250

O, the devil take such cozeners!±±God forgive me.

Good uncle, tell your tale; I have done.

WORCESTER

Nay, if you have not, to't again.

We'll stay your leisure.

HOTSPUR I have done, i'faith.

WORCESTER

Then once more to your Scottish prisoners. 255

Deliver them up without their ransom straight;

And make the Douglas' son your only mean

For powers in Scotland, which, for divers reasons

Which I shall send you written, be assured

Will easily be granted. (*To Northumberland*) You, my

lord, 260

Your son in Scotland being thus employed,

Shall secretly into the bosom creep

Of that same noble prelate well-beloved,

The Archbishop.

HOTSPUR Of York, is't not?

WORCESTER True, who bears hard

His brother's death at Bristol, the Lord Scrope. 265

I speak not this in estimation,

As what I think might be, but what I know
Is ruminated, plotted, and set down,
And only stays but to behold the face
Of that occasion that shall bring it on. 270

HOTSPUR

I smell it; upon my life, it will do well!

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

HOTSPUR

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

WORCESTER

And so they shall.

275

HOTSPUR

In faith, it is exceedingly well aimed.

WORCESTER

And 'tis no little reason bids us speed
To save our heads by raising of a head;
For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
The King will always think him in our debt, 280
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied
Till he hath found a time to pay us home.
And see already how he doth begin
To make us strangers to his looks of love.

HOTSPUR

He does, he does. We'll be revenged on him. 285

WORCESTER

Cousin, farewell. No further go in this
Than I by letters shall direct your course.
When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,
I'll steal to Glyndwŷr and Lord Mortimer,
Where you and Douglas and our powers at once, 290
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet,
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

NORTHUMBERLAND

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

HOTSPUR (to Worcester)

Uncle, adieu. O, let the hours be short 295

Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport!

Exeunt [Worcester at one door, Northumberland]

and Hotspur at another door]