

## 2 Henry IV

### 2.2

*Enter Prince Harry and Poins*

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

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

**PRINCE HARRY** Belike then my appetite was not princely got; for, by my 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—videlicet these, and those that were thy peach-coloured 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 thy low countries have made a shift to eat up thy holland. 10 15 20

**POINS** How ill it follows, after you have laboured so hard, you should talk so idly! Tell me, how many good young princes would do so, their fathers lying so sick as yours is? 25

**PRINCE HARRY** Shall I tell thee one thing, Poins?

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

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

**POINS** Go to, I stand the push of your one thing that you'll tell.

**PRINCE HARRY** Marry, I tell thee, it is not meet that I should be sad now my father is sick; albeit I could tell to thee, as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to 35

call my friend, I could be sad; and sad indeed too.

**POINS** Very hardly, upon such a subject.

**PRINCE HARRY** 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, 40 my heart bleeds inwardly that my 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 HARRY** What wouldst thou think of me if I should 45 weep?

**POINS** I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

**PRINCE HARRY** It would be every man's thought, and thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks. Never a man's thought in the world keeps the roadway better 50 than thine. Every man would think me an hypocrite indeed. And what accites your most worshipful thought to think so?

**POINS** Why, because you have been so lewd, and so much engrafted to Falstaff. 55

**PRINCE HARRY** And to thee.

**POINS** By this light, I am well spoke on; I can hear it with mine own ears. The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother, and that I am a proper fellow of my hands; and those two things I 60 confess I cannot help.

*Enter Bardolph [followed by] the Page*

By the mass, here comes Bardolph.

**PRINCE HARRY** And the boy that I gave Falstaff. A had him from me Christian, and look if the fat villain have not transformed him ape. 65

**BARDOLPH** God save your grace!

**PRINCE HARRY** 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 maidenly man at arms are you become! Is't 70 such a matter to get a pottle-pot's maidenhead?

**PAGE** A 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 ale-wife's red petticoat, and so peeped 75  
through.

**PRINCE HARRY** *(to Poins)* Has not the boy profited?

**BARDOLPH** *(to the Page)* Away, you whoreson upright  
rabbit, away!

**PAGE** Away, you rascally Althea's dream, away! 80

**PRINCE HARRY** Instruct us, boy; what dream, boy?

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

**PRINCE HARRY** *(giving him money)* A crown's-worth of good  
interpretation! There 'tis, boy. 85

**POINS** O, that this good blossom could be kept from  
cankers! *(Giving the Page money)* Well, there is sixpence  
to preserve thee.

**BARDOLPH** An you do not make him hanged among you,  
the gallows shall be wronged. 90

**PRINCE HARRY** 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** Delivered with good respect. And how doth the  
Martlemas your master? 95

**BARDOLPH** In bodily health, sir.  
*Prince Harry reads the letter*

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

**PRINCE HARRY** I do allow this wen to be as familiar with  
me as my dog; and he holds his place, for look you 100  
how he writes.

*[He gives Poins the letter]*

**POINS** `John Falstaff, knight'.±±Every man must know  
that, as oft as he has occasion to name himself; even  
like those that are kin to the King, for they never prick  
their finger but they say `There's some of the King's 105  
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 HARRY** Nay, they will be kin to us, or they will  
fetch it from Japhet. *(Taking the letter)* But the letter. 110  
`Sir John Falstaff, knight, to the son of the King nearest  
his father, Harry Prince of Wales, greeting.'

**POINS** Why, this is a certificate!

**PRINCE HARRY** Peace!±±`I will imitate the honourable  
Romans in brevity.' 115

**POINS** (*taking the letter*) Sure he means brevity in breath,  
short winded. (*Reads*) `I commend me to thee, I  
commend thee, and I leave thee. Be not too familiar  
with Poins, for he misuses thy favours so much that  
he swears thou art to marry his sister Nell. Repent at 120  
idle times as thou mayst. And so, farewell.  
Thine by yea and no±±which is as much as to  
say, as thou usest him±±Jack Falstaff with my  
familiar, John with my brothers and sisters,  
and Sir John with all Europe.' 125  
My lord, I'll steep this letter in sack and make him eat  
it.

**PRINCE HARRY** That's to make him eat twenty of his  
words. But do you use me thus, Ned? Must I marry  
your sister? 130

**POINS** God send the wench no worse fortune, but I never  
said so.

**PRINCE HARRY** Well, thus we play the fools with the time,  
and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock  
us. (*To Bardolph*) Is your master here in London? 135

**BARDOLPH** Yea, my lord.

**PRINCE HARRY** Where sups he? Doth the old boar feed in  
the old frank?

**BARDOLPH** At the old place, my lord, in Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HARRY** What company? 140

**PAGE** Ephesians, my lord, of the old church.

**PRINCE HARRY** Sup any women with him?

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

**PRINCE HARRY** What pagan may that be? 145

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

**PRINCE HARRY** Even such kin as the parish heifers are to  
the town bull. Shall we steal upon them, Ned, at  
supper? 150

**POINS** I am your shadow, my lord; I'll follow you.

**PRINCE HARRY** Sirrah, you, boy, and Bardolph, no word

to your master that I am yet come to town. (*Giving money*) There's for your silence.

**BARDOLPH** I have no tongue, sir. 155

**PAGE** And for mine, sir, I will govern it.

**PRINCE HARRY** Fare you well; go.

*Exeunt Bardolph and the Page*

This Doll Tearsheet should be some road.

**POINS** I warrant you, as common as the way between Saint Albans and London. 160

**PRINCE HARRY** How might we see Falstaff bestow himself tonight in his true colours, and not ourselves be seen?

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

**PRINCE HARRY** From a god to a bull±±a heavy declension±± 165  
it was Jove's case. 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*