

1 Henry VI

2.1

*Enter [on the walls] a French Sergeant of a band,
with two Sentinels*

SERGEANT

Sirs, take your places and be vigilant.
If any noise or soldier you perceive
Near to the walls, by some apparent sign
Let us have knowledge at the court of guard.

[A SENTINEL]

Sergeant, you shall.
Exit Sergeant

Thus are poor servitors,

5

When others sleep upon their quiet beds,
Constrained to watch in darkness, rain, and cold.
*Enter Lord Talbot, the Dukes of Bedford and
Burgundy, and soldiers with scaling ladders, their
drums beating a dead march*

TALBOT

Lord regent, and redoubted Burgundy±±
By whose approach the regions of Artois,
Wallon, and Picardy are friends to us±± 10
This happy night the Frenchmen are secure,
Having all day caroused and banqueted.
Embrace we then this opportunity,
As fitting best to quittance their deceit,
Contrived by art and baleful sorcery. 15

BEDFORD

Coward of France! How much he wrongs his fame,
Despairing of his own arms' fortitude,
To join with witches and the help of hell.

BURGUNDY

Traitors have never other company.
But what's that 'Pucelle' whom they term so pure? 20

TALBOT

A maid, they say.

BEDFORD

A maid? And be so martial?

BURGUNDY

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long.
If underneath the standard of the French
She carry armour as she hath begun±±

TALBOT

Well, let them practise and converse with spirits. 25
God is our fortress, in whose conquering name
Let us resolve to scale their flinty bulwarks.

BEDFORD

Ascend, brave Talbot. We will follow thee.

TALBOT

Not all together. Better far, I guess,
That we do make our entrance several ways±± 30
That, if it chance the one of us do fail,
The other yet may rise against their force.

BEDFORD

Agreed. I'll to yon corner.

BURGUNDY

And I to this.

*[Exeunt severally Bedford and Burgundy with
some soldiers]*

TALBOT

And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave.
Now, Salisbury, for thee, and for the right 35
Of English Henry, shall this night appear
How much in duty I am bound to both.

[Talbot and his soldiers] scale the walls

[SENTINELS]

Arm! Arm! The enemy doth make assault!

ENGLISH SOLDIERS Saint George! A Talbot!

Exeunt above

*[Alarum.] The French [soldiers] leap o'er the walls
in their shirts [and exeunt]. Enter several ways the
Bastard of Orleans, the Duke of Alençon, and René
Duke of Anjou, half ready and half unready*

ALENÇON

How now, my lords? What, all unready so? 40

BASTARD

Unready? Ay, and glad we scaped so well.

RENÉ

'Twas time, I trow, to wake and leave our beds,
Hearing alarums at our chamber doors.

ALENÇON

Of all exploits since first I followed arms
Ne'er heard I of a warlike enterprise 45
More venturous or desperate than this.

BASTARD

I think this Talbot be a fiend of hell.

RENEÂ

If not of hell, the heavens sure favour him.

ALENCËON

Here cometh Charles. I marvel how he sped.

Enter Charles the Dauphin and Joan la Pucelle

BASTARD

Tut, holy Joan was his defensive guard. 50

CHARLES (to Joan)

Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?
Didst thou at first, to flatter us withal,
Make us partakers of a little gain
That now our loss might be ten times so much?

JOAN

Wherefore is Charles impatient with his friend? 55
At all times will you have my power alike?
Sleeping or waking must I still prevail,
Or will you blame and lay the fault on me?±±
Improvident soldiers, had your watch been good,
This sudden mischief never could have fall'n. 60

CHARLES

Duke of AlencËon, this was your default,
That, being captain of the watch tonight,
Did look no better to that weighty charge.

ALENCËON

Had all your quarters been as safely kept
As that whereof I had the government, 65
We had not been thus shamefully surprised.

BASTARD

Mine was secure.

RENEÂ And so was mine, my lord.

CHARLES

And for myself, most part of all this night
Within her quarter and mine own precinct
I was employed in passing to and fro 70
About relieving of the sentinels.
Then how or which way should they first break in?

JOAN

Question, my lords, no further of the case,
How or which way. 'Tis sure they found some place
But weakly guarded, where the breach was made.
And now there rests no other shift but this±±
To gather our soldiers, scattered and dispersed,
And lay new platforms to endamage them.

75

Alarum. Enter an English Soldier

ENGLISH SOLDIER A Talbot! A Talbot!

The French fly, leaving their clothes behind

ENGLISH SOLDIER

I'll be so bold to take what they have left. 80
The cry of `Talbot' serves me for a sword,
For I have loaden me with many spoils,
Using no other weapon but his name.

Exit with spoils