

1 Henry VI

4.6

Alarum. Excursions, wherein Lord Talbot's son John is hemmed about by French soldiers and Talbot rescues him. [The English drive off the French]

TALBOT

Saint George and victory! Fight, soldiers, fight!
The Regent hath with Talbot broke his word,
And left us to the rage of France his sword.
Where is John Talbot? *(To John)* Pause and take thy
breath.
I gave thee life, and rescued thee from death. 5

JOHN

O twice my father, twice am I thy son:
The life thou gav'st me first was lost and done
Till with thy warlike sword, despite of fate,
To my determined time thou gav'st new date.

TALBOT

When from the Dauphin's crest thy sword struck fire 10
It warmed thy father's heart with proud desire
Of bold-faced victory. Then leaden age,
Quickened with youthful spleen and warlike rage,
Beat down Alenc on, Orle ans, Burgundy,
And from the pride of Gallia rescued thee. 15
The ireful Bastard Orle ans, that drew blood
From thee, my boy, and had the maidenhood
Of thy first fight, I soon encountere d,
And interchanging blows, I quickly shed
Some of his bastard blood, and in disgrace 20
Bespoke him thus: `Contaminated, base,
And misbegotten blood I spill of thine,
Mean and right poor, for that pure blood of mine
Which thou didst force from Talbot, my brave boy.'
Here, purposing the Bastard to destroy, 25
Came in strong rescue. Speak thy father's care:
Art thou not weary, John? How dost thou fare?
Wilt thou yet leave the battle, boy, and fly,
Now thou art sealed the son of chivalry?

Fly to revenge my death when I am dead; 30
The help of one stands me in little stead.
O, too much folly is it, well I wot,
To hazard all our lives in one small boat.
If I today die not with Frenchmen's rage,
Tomorrow I shall die with mickle age. 35
By me they nothing gain, and if I stay
'Tis but the short'ning of my life one day.
In thee thy mother dies, our household's name,
My death's revenge, thy youth, and England's fame.
All these and more we hazard by thy stay; 40
All these are saved if thou wilt fly away.

JOHN

The sword of OrleÂans hath not made me smart;
These words of yours draw life-blood from my heart.
On that advantage, bought with such a shame,
To save a paltry life and slay bright fame, 45
Before young Talbot from old Talbot fly
The coward horse that bears me fall and die;
And like me to the peasant boys of France,
To be shame's scorn and subject of mischance!
Surely, by all the glory you have won, 50
An if I fly I am not Talbot's son.
Then talk no more of flight; it is no boot.
If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot.

TALBOT

Then follow thou thy desp'rate sire of Crete,
Thou Icarus; thy life to me is sweet. 55
If thou wilt fight, fight by thy father's side,
And commendable proved, let's die in pride.

Exeunt