

1 Henry IV

5.1

Enter King Henry, Prince Harry, Lord John of Lancaster, the Earl of Westmorland, Sir Walter Blunt, and Sir John Oldcastle

KING HENRY

How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon bulky hill! The day looks pale
At his distemp'rature.

PRINCE HARRY

The southern wind

Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,
And by his hollow whistling in the leaves 5
Foretells a tempest and a blust'ring day.

KING HENRY

Then with the losers let it sympathize,
For nothing can seem foul to those that win.

The trumpet sounds [a parley within]. Enter the Earl of Worcester [and Sir Richard Vernon]

How now, my lord of Worcester? 'Tis not well
That you and I should meet upon such terms 10
As now we meet. You have deceived our trust,
And made us doff our easy robes of peace
To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel.
This is not well, my lord, this is not well.
What say you to it? Will you again unknit 15
This churlish knot of all-abhorreÁd war,
And move in that obedient orb again
Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhaled meteor,
A prodigy of fear, and a portent 20
Of broacheÁd mischief to the unborn times?

WORCESTER

Hear me, my liege.

For mine own part, I could be well content
To entertain the lag-end of my life
With quiet hours; for I protest, 25
I have not sought the day of this dislike.

KING HENRY

You have not sought it? How comes it, then?

SIR JOHN Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.

PRINCE HARRY Peace, chewet, peace!

WORCESTER (*to the King*)

It pleased your majesty to turn your looks 30

Of favour from myself and all our house;

And yet I must remember you, my lord,

We were the first and dearest of your friends.

For you my staff of office did I break

In Richard's time, and posted day and night 35

To meet you on the way and kiss your hand

When yet you were in place and in account

Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.

It was myself, my brother, and his son

That brought you home, and boldly did outdare 40

The dangers of the time. You swore to us,

And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,

That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state,

Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right,

The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster. 45

To this we swore our aid, but in short space

It rained down fortune show'ring on your head,

And such a flood of greatness fell on you,

What with our help, what with the absent King,

What with the injuries of a wanton time, 50

The seeming sufferances that you had borne,

And the contrarious winds that held the King

So long in his unlucky Irish wars

That all in England did repute him dead;

And from this swarm of fair advantages 55

You took occasion to be quickly wooed

To gripe the general sway into your hand,

Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster,

And being fed by us, you used us so

As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird, 60

Useth the sparrow±±did oppress our nest,

Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk

That even our love durst not come near your sight

For fear of swallowing. But with nimble wing

We were enforced for safety' sake to fly 65

Out of your sight, and raise this present head,

Whereby we stand opposeÁd by such means
As you yourself have forged against yourself,
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth 70
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

KING HENRY

These things indeed you have articulate,
Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches,
To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye 75
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurly-burly innovation;
And never yet did insurrection want
Such water-colours to impaint his cause, 80
Nor moody beggars starving for a time
Of pell-mell havoc and confusion.

PRINCE HARRY

In both our armies there is many a soul
Shall pay full dearly for this encounter
If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew 85
The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world
In praise of Henry Percy. By my hopes,
This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant or more valiant-young, 90
More daring, or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.
For my part, I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry;
And so I hear he doth account me too. 95
Yet this, before my father's majesty:
I am content that he shall take the odds
Of his great name and estimation,
And will, to save the blood on either side,
Try fortune with him in a single fight. 100

KING HENRY

And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,
Albeit considerations infinite
Do make against it. No, good Worcester, no.

We love our people well; even those we love
That are misled upon your cousin's part; 105
And will they take the offer of our grace,
Both he and they and you, yea, every man
Shall be my friend again, and I'll be his.
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
What he will do. But if he will not yield, 110
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,
And they shall do their office. So be gone.
We will not now be troubled with reply.
We offer fair; take it advisedly.

Exeunt Worcester [and Vernon]

PRINCE HARRY

It will not be accepted, on my life. 115
The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

KING HENRY

Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge,
For on their answer will we set on them,
And God befriend us as our cause is just! 120

Exeunt all but Prince Harry and Oldcastle

SIR JOHN Hal, if thou see me down in the battle, and
bestride me, so. 'Tis a point of friendship.

PRINCE HARRY Nothing but a colossus can do thee that
friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.

SIR JOHN I would 'twere bed-time, Hal, and all well. 125

PRINCE HARRY Why, thou owest God a death.

Exit

SIR JOHN 'Tis not due yet. I would be loath to pay him
before his day. What need I be so forward with him
that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour
pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off 130
when I come on? How then? Can honour set to a leg?
No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound?
No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What
is honour? A word. What is in that word 'honour'?
What is that 'honour'? Air. A trim reckoning! Who 135
hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it?
No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to
the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why?

Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it.
Honour is a mere scutcheon. And so ends my catechism. 140
Exit