

Henry V

4.1

*Enter King Harry and the Duke of Gloucester, then
the Duke of [Clarence]*

KING HARRY

Gloucester, 'tis true that we are in great danger;
The greater therefore should our courage be.
Good morrow, brother Clarence. God Almighty!
There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out±± 5
For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,
Which is both healthful and good husbandry.
Besides, they are our outward consciences,
And preachers to us all, admonishing
That we should dress us fairly for our end. 10
Thus may we gather honey from the weed
And make a moral of the devil himself.

Enter Sir Thomas Erpingham

Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham.
A good soft pillow for that good white head
Were better than a churlish turf of France. 15

ERPINGHAM

Not so, my liege. This lodging likes me better,
Since I may say, 'Now lie I like a king.'

KING HARRY

'Tis good for men to love their present pains
Upon example. So the spirit is eased,
And when the mind is quickened, out of doubt 20
The organs, though defunct and dead before,
Break up their drowsy grave and newly move
With casted slough and fresh legerity.
Lend me thy cloak, Sir Thomas.

He puts on Erpingham's cloak

Brothers

both,

Commend me to the princes in our camp. 25
Do my good morrow to them, and anon
Desire them all to my pavilion.

GLOUCESTER We shall, my liege.

ERPINGHAM Shall I attend your grace?

KING HARRY No, my good knight. 30
 Go with my brothers to my lords of England.
 I and my bosom must debate awhile,
 And then I would no other company.

ERPINGHAM
 The Lord in heaven bless thee, noble Harry.

KING HARRY
 God-a-mercy, old heart, thou speak'st cheerfully. 35
Exeunt all but King Harry
Enter Pistol [to him]

PISTOL *Qui vous laÁ?*

KING HARRY A friend.

PISTOL
 Discuss unto me: art thou officer,
 Or art thou base, common, and popular?

KING HARRY I am a gentleman of a company. 40

PISTOL Trail'st thou the puissant pike?

KING HARRY Even so. What are you?

PISTOL
 As good a gentleman as the Emperor.

KING HARRY Then you are a better than the King.

PISTOL
 The King's a bawcock and a heart-of-gold, 45
 A lad of life, an imp of fame,
 Of parents good, of fist most valiant.
 I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heartstring
 I love the lovely bully. What is thy name?

KING HARRY Harry *le roi*. 50

PISTOL
 Leroi? A Cornish name. Art thou of Cornish crew?

KING HARRY No, I am a Welshman.

PISTOL Know'st thou Fluellen?

KING HARRY Yes.

PISTOL
 Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate 55
 Upon Saint Davy's day.

KING HARRY Do not you wear your dagger in your cap
 that day, lest he knock that about yours.

PISTOL Art thou his friend?

KING HARRY And his kinsman too. 60

PISTOL The *fico* for thee then.

KING HARRY I thank you. God be with you.

PISTOL My name is Pistol called.

KING HARRY It sorts well with your fierceness.

Exit Pistol

Enter Captains Fluellen and Gower [severally]. King Harry stands apart

GOWER Captain Fluellen! 65

FLUELLEN So! In the name of Jesu Christ, speak fewer. It is the greatest admiration in the universal world, when the true and ancient prerogatives and laws of the wars is not kept. If you would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great, you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tiddle-taddle nor pibble-babble in Pompey's camp. I warrant you, you shall find the ceremonies of the wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it, and the sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise. 70 75

GOWER Why, the enemy is loud. You hear him all night.

FLUELLEN If the enemy is an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb, is it meet, think you, that we should also, look you, be an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb? In your own conscience now? 80

GOWER I will speak lower.

FLUELLEN I pray you and beseech you that you will.

Exeunt Fluellen and Gower

KING HARRY

Though it appear a little out of fashion,

There is much care and valour in this Welshman.

Enter three soldiers: John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams

COURT Brother John Bates, is not that the morning which breaks yonder? 85

BATES I think it be. But we have no great cause to desire the approach of day.

WILLIAMS We see yonder the beginning of the day, but I think we shall never see the end of it.±±Who goes there? 90

KING HARRY A friend.

WILLIAMS Under what captain serve you?

KING HARRY Under Sir Thomas Erpingham.

WILLIAMS A good old commander and a most kind gentle- 95
man. I pray you, what thinks he of our estate?

KING HARRY Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look
to be washed off the next tide.

BATES He hath not told his thought to the King?

KING HARRY No, nor it is not meet he should. For though 100
I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man, as I
am. The violet smells to him as it doth to me; the
element shows to him as it doth to me. All his senses
have but human conditions. His ceremonies laid by, in
his nakedness he appears but a man, and though his 105
affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when
they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore,
when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out
of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are. Yet, in
reason, no man should possess him with any 110
appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should
dishearten his army.

BATES He may show what outward courage he will, but
I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wish himself
in Thames up to the neck. And so I would he were, 115
and I by him, at all adventures, so we were quit here.

KING HARRY By my troth, I will speak my conscience of
the King. I think he would not wish himself anywhere
but where he is.

BATES Then I would he were here alone. So should he be 120
sure to be ransomed, and a many poor men's lives
saved.

KING HARRY I dare say you love him not so ill to wish
him here alone, howsoever you speak this to feel other
men's minds. Methinks I could not die anywhere so 125
contented as in the King's company, his cause being
just and his quarrel honourable.

WILLIAMS That's more than we know.

BATES Ay, or more than we should seek after. For we
know enough if we know we are the King's subjects. 130
If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes
the crime of it out of us.

WILLIAMS But if the cause be not good, the King himself
hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs
and arms and heads chopped off in a battle shall join 135
together at the latter day, and cry all, `We died at such
a place'±±some swearing, some crying for a surgeon,
some upon their wives left poor behind them, some
upon the debts they owe, some upon their children
rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die 140
in a battle, for how can they charitably dispose of
anything, when blood is their argument? Now, if these
men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the
King that led them to it±±who to disobey were against
all proportion of subjection. 145

KING HARRY So, if a son that is by his father sent about
merchandise do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the
imputation of his wickedness, by your rule, should be
imposed upon his father, that sent him. Or if a servant,
under his master's command transporting a sum of 150
money, be assailed by robbers, and die in many
irreconciled iniquities, you may call the business of the
master the author of the servant's damnation. But this
is not so. The King is not bound to answer the particular
endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the 155
master of his servant, for they purpose not their deaths
when they propose their services. Besides, there is no
king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the
arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all unspotted
soldiers. Some, peradventure, have on them the guilt 160
of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of
beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury;
some, making the wars their bulwark, that have before
gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and
robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law and 165
outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip
men, they have no wings to fly from God. War is his
beadle. War is his vengeance. So that here men are
punished for before-breach of the King's laws, in now
the King's quarrel. Where they feared the death, they 170
have borne life away; and where they would be safe,
they perish. Then if they die unprovided, no more is

the King guilty of their damnation than he was before
guilty of those impieties for the which they are now
visited. Every subject's duty is the King's, but every 175
subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier
in the wars do as every sick man in his bed: wash
every mote out of his conscience. And dying so, death
is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was
blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained.180
And in him that escapes, it were not sin to think that,
making God so free an offer, he let him outlive that
day to see his greatness and to teach others how they
should prepare.

[BATES] 'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon 185
his own head. The King is not to answer it. I do not
desire he should answer for me, and yet I determine to
fight lustily for him.

KING HARRY I myself heard the King say he would not be
ransomed. 190

WILLIAMS Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully, but
when our throats are cut he may be ransomed, and
we ne'er the wiser.

KING HARRY If I live to see it, I will never trust his word
after. 195

WILLIAMS You pay him then! That's a perilous shot out
of an elder-gun, that a poor and a private displeasure
can do against a monarch. You may as well go about
to turn the sun to ice with fanning in his face with a
peacock's feather. You'll never trust his word after! 200
Come, 'tis a foolish saying.

KING HARRY Your reproof is something too round. I should
be angry with you, if the time were convenient.

WILLIAMS Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live.

KING HARRY I embrace it. 205

WILLIAMS How shall I know thee again?

KING HARRY Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear
it in my bonnet. Then if ever thou darest acknowledge
it, I will make it my quarrel.

WILLIAMS Here's my glove. Give me another of thine. 210

KING HARRY There.

They exchange gloves

WILLIAMS This will I also wear in my cap. If ever thou
come to me and say, after tomorrow, 'This is my glove',
by this hand I will take thee a box on the ear.

KING HARRY If ever I live to see it, I will challenge it. 215

WILLIAMS Thou darest as well be hanged.

KING HARRY Well, I will do it, though I take thee in the
King's company.

WILLIAMS Keep thy word. Fare thee well.

BATES Be friends, you English fools, be friends. We have 220
French quarrels enough, if you could tell how to reckon.

KING HARRY Indeed, the French may lay twenty French
crowns to one they will beat us, for they bear them on
their shoulders. But it is no English treason to cut
French crowns, and tomorrow the King himself will be 225
a clipper.

Exeunt soldiers

Upon the King.

'Let us our lives, our souls, our debts, our care-full
wives,

Our children, and our sins, lay on the King.'

We must bear all. O hard condition, 230

Twin-born with greatness: subject to the breath

Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel

But his own wringing. What infinite heartsease

Must kings neglect that private men enjoy?

And what have kings that privates have not too, 235

Save ceremony, save general ceremony?

And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?

What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more

Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?

What are thy rents? What are thy comings-in? 240

O ceremony, show me but thy worth.

What is thy soul of adoration?

Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,

Creating awe and fear in other men?

Wherein thou art less happy, being feared, 245

Than they in fearing.

What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,

But poisoned flattery? O be sick, great greatness,

And bid thy ceremony give thee cure.

Think'st thou the fiery fever will go out 250
 With titles blown from adulation?
 Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
 Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
 Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream
 That play'st so subtly with a king's repose; 255
 I am a king that find thee, and I know
 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
 The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
 The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
 The farceÀd title running fore the king, 260
 The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
 That beats upon the high shore of this world±±
 No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
 Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
 Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave 265
 Who with a body filled and vacant mind
 Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread;
 Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
 But like a lackey from the rise to set
 Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night 270
 Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn
 Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,
 And follows so the ever-running year
 With profitable labour to his grave.
 And but for ceremony such a wretch, 275
 Winding up days with toil and nights with sleep,
 Had the forehand and vantage of a king.
 The slave, a member of the country's peace,
 Enjoys it, but in gross brain little wots
 What watch the King keeps to maintain the peace, 280
 Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

Enter Sir Thomas Erpingham

ERPINGHAM

My lord, your nobles, jealous of your absence,
 Seek through your camp to find you.

KING HARRY

Good old knight,

Collect them all together at my tent.
 I'll be before thee.

ERPINGHAM

I shall do't, my lord.

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Exit

KING HARRY

O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts.
Possess them not with fear. Take from them now
The sense of reck'ning, ere th'opposeÁd numbers
Pluck their hearts from them. Not today, O Lord,
O not today, think not upon the fault 290
My father made in compassing the crown.
I Richard's body have interreÁd new,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forceÁd drops of blood.
Five hundred poor have I in yearly pay 295
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up
Toward heaven to pardon blood. And I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do,
Though all that I can do is nothing worth, 300
Since that my penitence comes after ill,
Imploring pardon.

Enter the Duke of Gloucester

GLOUCESTER

My liege.

KING HARRY My brother Gloucester's voice? Ay.

I know thy errand, I will go with thee.

The day, my friends, and all things stay for me. 305

Exeunt