

Henry V

3.6

Enter Captains Gower and Fluellen, meeting

GOWER How now, Captain Fluellen, come you from the bridge?

FLUELLEN I assure you there is very excellent services committed at the bridge.

GOWER Is the Duke of Exeter safe? 5

FLUELLEN The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon, and a man that I love and honour with my soul and my heart and my duty and my live and my living and my uttermost power. He is not, God be praised and blessed, any hurt in the world, but keeps the bridge most valiantly, with excellent discipline. 10
There is an ensign lieutenant there at the pridge, I think in my very conscience he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony, and he is a man of no estimation in the world, but I did see him do as gallant service. 15

GOWER What do you call him?

FLUELLEN He is called Ensign Pistol.

GOWER I know him not.

Enter Ensign Pistol

FLUELLEN Here is the man.

PISTOL

Captain, I thee beseech to do me favours. 20

The Duke of Exeter doth love thee well.

FLUELLEN Ay, I praise God, and I have merited some love at his hands.

PISTOL

Bardolph, a soldier firm and sound of heart,
Of buxom valour, hath by cruel fate 25
And giddy Fortune's furious fickle wheel,
That goddess blind that stands upon the rolling
restless stone±±

FLUELLEN By your patience, Ensign Pistol: Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind. And she is painted also 30
with a wheel, to signify to you±±which is the moral of

it±±that she is turning and inconstant and mutability
and variation. And her foot, look you, is fixed upon a
spherical stone, which rolls and rolls and rolls. In good
truth, the poet makes a most excellent description of 35
it; Fortune is an excellent moral.

PISTOL

Fortune is Bardolph's foe and frowns on him,
For he hath stol'n a pax, and hangeÁd must a be.

A damneÁd death±±

Let gallows gape for dog, let man go free, 40
And let not hemp his windpipe suffocate.

But Exeter hath given the doom of death
For pax of little price.

Therefore go speak, the Duke will hear thy voice,
And let not Bardolph's vital thread be cut 45

With edge of penny cord and vile reproach.

Speak, captain, for his life, and I will thee requite.

FLUELLEN Ensign Pistol, I do partly understand your
meaning.

PISTOL Why then rejoice therefor. 50

FLUELLEN Certainly, ensign, it is not a thing to rejoice at.

For if, look you, he were my brother, I would desire
the Duke to use his good pleasure, and put him to
executions. For discipline ought to be used.

PISTOL

Die and be damned! and *fico* for thy friendship. 55

FLUELLEN It is well.

PISTOL The fig of Spain.

FLUELLEN Very good.

PISTOL

I say the fig within thy bowels and thy dirty maw.

Exit

FLUELLEN Captain Gower, cannot you hear it lighten and 60
thunder?

GOWER Why, is this the ensign you told me of? I remember
him now. A bawd, a cutpurse.

FLUELLEN I'll assure you, a uttered as prave words at the
pridge as you shall see in a summer's day. But it is 65
very well. What he has spoke to me, that is well, I
warrant you, when time is serve.

GOWER Why 'tis a gull, a fool, a rogue, that now and then goes to the wars, to grace himself at his return into London under the form of a soldier. And such 70 fellows are perfect in the great commanders' names, and they will learn you by rote where services were done±±at such and such a sconce, at such a breach, at such a convoy, who came off bravely, who was shot, who disgraced, what terms the enemy stood on±±and 75 this they con perfectly in the phrase of war, which they trick up with new-tuned oaths. And what a beard of the General's cut and a horrid suit of the camp will do among foaming bottles and ale-washed wits is wonderful to be thought on. But you must learn to 80 know such slanders of the age, or else you may be marvellously mistook.

FLUELLEN I tell you what, Captain Gower, I do perceive he is not the man that he would gladly make show to the world he is. If I find a hole in his coat, I will tell 85 him my mind.

A drum is heard

Hark you, the King is coming, and I must speak with him from the pridge.

Enter King Harry and his poor soldiers, with drum and colours

God pless your majesty.

KING HARRY

How now, Fluellen, com'st thou from the bridge? 90

FLUELLEN Ay, so please your majesty. The Duke of Exeter has very gallantly maintained the pridge. The French is gone off, look you, and there is gallant and most prave passages. Marry, th'athversary was have possession of the pridge, but he is enforced to retire, and the 95 Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge. I can tell your majesty, the Duke is a prave man.

KING HARRY What men have you lost, Fluellen?

FLUELLEN The perdition of th'athversary hath been very great, reasonable great. Marry, for my part I think the Duke hath lost never a man, but one that is like to be executed for robbing a church, one Bardolph, if your majesty know the man. His face is all bubuncles and 100

whelks and knobs and flames o' fire, and his lips blows
at his nose, and it is like a coal of fire, sometimes blue 105
and sometimes red. But his nose is executed, and his
fire's out.

KING HARRY We would have all such offenders so cut off,
and we here give express charge that in our marches
through the country there be nothing compelled from 110
the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the
French upbraided or abused in disdainful language. For
when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler
gamester is the soonest winner.

Tucket. Enter Montjoy

MONTJOY You know me by my habit. 115

KING HARRY

Well then, I know thee. What shall I know of thee?

MONTJOY

My master's mind.

KING HARRY Unfold it.

MONTJOY

Thus says my King:

'Say thou to Harry of England, though we seemed
dead, we did but sleep. Advantage is a better soldier
than rashness. Tell him, we could have rebuked him 120
at Harfleur, but that we thought not good to bruise an
injury till it were full ripe. Now we speak upon our
cue, and our voice is imperial. England shall repent his
folly, see his weakness, and admire our sufferance. Bid
him therefore consider of his ransom, which must 125
proportion the losses we have borne, the subjects we
have lost, the disgrace we have digested±±which in
weight to re-answer, his pettiness would bow under.
For our losses, his exchequer is too poor; for th'effusion
of our blood, the muster of his kingdom too faint a 130
number; and for our disgrace, his own person kneeling
at our feet but a weak and worthless satisfaction. To
this add defiance, and tell him for conclusion he hath
betrayed his followers, whose condemnation is
pronounced.'

135

So far my King and master; so much my office.

KING HARRY

What is thy name? I know thy quality.

MONTJOY Montjoy.

KING HARRY

Thou dost thy office fairly. Turn thee back
And tell thy king I do not seek him now, 140
But could be willing to march on to Calais
Without impeachment, for to say the sooth±±
Though 'tis no wisdom to confess so much
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage±±
My people are with sickness much enfeebled, 145
My numbers lessened, and those few I have
Almost no better than so many French;
Who when they were in health±±I tell thee herald,
I thought upon one pair of English legs
Did march three Frenchmen. Yet forgive me, God, 150
That I do brag thus. This your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me. I must repent.
Go, therefore, tell thy master here I am;
My ransom is this frail and worthless trunk,
My army but a weak and sickly guard. 155
Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,
Though France himself and such another neighbour
Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Montjoy.
Go bid thy master well advise himself.
If we may pass, we will; if we be hindered, 160
We shall your tawny ground with your red blood
Discolour. And so, Montjoy, fare you well.
The sum of all our answer is but this:
We would not seek a battle as we are,
Nor as we are we say we will not shun it. 165
So tell your master.

MONTJOY

I shall deliver so. Thanks to your highness.

Exit

GLOUCESTER

I hope they will not come upon us now.

KING HARRY

We are in God's hand, brother, not in theirs.
March to the bridge. It now draws toward night. 170
Beyond the river we'll encamp ourselves,
And on tomorrow bid them march away.

Exeunt