

# 1 Henry IV

## 2.4

*Enter Hotspur, reading a letter*

**HOTSPUR**     `But for mine own part, my lord, I could be well  
contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your  
house.'±±He could be contented; why is he not then?  
In respect of the love he bears our house! He shows in  
this he loves his own barn better than he loves our     5  
house. Let me see some more.±±`The purpose you  
undertake is dangerous'±±Why, that's certain: 'tis  
dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell  
you, my lord fool, out of this nettle danger we pluck  
this flower safety.±±`The purpose you undertake is     10  
dangerous, the friends you have named uncertain, the  
time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for  
the counterpoise of so great an opposition.'±±Say you  
so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow,  
cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this!     15  
By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid,  
our friends true and constant; a good plot, good friends,  
and full of expectation; an excellent plot, very good  
friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! Why, my  
lord of York commends the plot and the general course     20  
of the action. Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I  
could brain him with his lady's fan! Is there not my  
father, my uncle, and myself? Lord Edmund Mortimer,  
my lord of York, and Owain Glyndwŷr? Is there not  
besides the Douglas? Have I not all their letters, to     25  
meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month? And  
are they not some of them set forward already? What  
a pagan rascal is this, an infidel! Ha, you shall see  
now, in very sincerity of fear and cold heart will he to  
the King, and lay open all our proceedings! O, I could     30  
divide myself and go to buffets for moving such a dish  
of skim-milk with so honourable an action! Hang him!  
Let him tell the King we are prepared; I will set forward  
tonight.

*Enter Lady Percy*

How now, Kate? I must leave you within these two 35  
hours.

**LADY PERCY**

O my good lord, why are you thus alone?  
For what offence have I this fortnight been  
A banished woman from my Harry's bed?  
Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee 40  
Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?  
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,  
And start so often when thou sitt'st alone?  
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,  
And given my treasures and my rights of thee 45  
To thick-eyed musing and curst melancholy?  
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watched,  
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,  
Speak terms of maneÁge to thy bounding steed,  
Cry `Courage! To the field!' And thou hast talked 50  
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,  
Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,  
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,  
Of prisoners ransomed, and of soldiers slain,  
And all the currents of a heady fight. 55  
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,  
And thus hath so bestirred thee in thy sleep,  
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow  
Like bubbles in a late-disturbeÁd stream;  
And in thy face strange motions have appeared, 60  
Such as we see when men restrain their breath  
On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are  
these?  
Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,  
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

**HOTSPUR**

What ho!

*Enter Servant*

Is Gilliams with the packet gone? 65

**SERVANT**

He is, my lord, an hour ago.

**HOTSPUR**

Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

**SERVANT**

One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

**HOTSPUR**

What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

**SERVANT**

It is, my lord.

**HOTSPUR** That roan shall be my throne. 70

Well, I will back him straight.±±O, *Esperance!*±±

Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

**LADY PERCY**

But hear you, my lord.

**HOTSPUR** What sayst thou, my lady?

**LADY PERCY**

What is it carries you away?

**HOTSPUR** Why, my horse,

My love, my horse.

**LADY PERCY** Out, you mad-headed ape! 75

A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen

As you are tossed with.

In faith, I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.

I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir

About his title, and hath sent for you 80

To line his enterprise; but if you go±±

**HOTSPUR**

So far afoot? I shall be weary, love.

**LADY PERCY**

Come, come, you paraquito, answer me

Directly to this question that I ask.

In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry, 85

An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

**HOTSPUR**

Away, away, you trifler! Love? I love thee not,

I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world

To play with maumets and to tilt with lips.

We must have bloody noses and cracked crowns, 90

And pass them current, too. God's me, my horse!±±

What sayst thou, Kate? What wouldst thou have  
with me?

**LADY PERCY**

Do you not love me? Do you not indeed?

Well, do not, then, for since you love me not

I will not love myself. Do you not love me?	95
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.	
<b>HOTSPUR</b> Come, wilt thou see me ride?	
And when I am a-horseback, I will swear	
I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate.	
I must not have you henceforth question me	100
Whither I go, nor reason whereabout.	
Whither I must, I must; and, to conclude,	
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.	
I know you wise, but yet no farther wise	
Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,	105
But yet a woman; and for secrecy	
No lady closer, for I well believe	
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know.	
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.	
<b>LADY PERCY</b> How, so far?	110
<b>HOTSPUR</b>	
Not an inch further. But hark you, Kate,	
Whither I go, thither shall you go too.	
Today will I set forth, tomorrow you.	
Will this content you, Kate?	
<b>LADY PERCY</b>	It must, of force.
<i>Exeunt</i>	