

1 Henry IV

3.2

Enter King Henry, Prince Harry, and lords

KING HENRY

Lords, give us leave±±the Prince of Wales and I
Must have some private conference±±but be near at
hand,

For we shall presently have need of you.

Exeunt Lords

I know not whether God will have it so
For some displeasing service I have done, 5
That in his secret doom out of my blood
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me,
But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that thou art only marked
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven 10
To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art matched withal and grafted to, 15
Accompany the greatness of thy blood,
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

PRINCE HARRY

So please your majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless I can purge 20
Myself of many I am charged withal;
Yet such extenuation let me beg
As, in reproof of many tales devised±±
Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear
By smiling pickthanks and base newsmongers±± 25
I may, for some things true wherein my youth
Hath faulty wandered and irregular,
Find pardon on my true submission.

KING HENRY

God pardon thee! Yet let me wonder, Harry,
At thy affections, which do hold a wing 30

Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
 Thy place in Council thou hast rudely lost±±
 Which by thy younger brother is supplied±±
 And art almost an alien to the hearts
 Of all the court and princes of my blood. 35
 The hope and expectation of thy time
 Is ruined, and the soul of every man
 Prophetically do forethink thy fall.
 Had I so lavish of my presence been,
 So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men, 40
 So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
 Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
 Had still kept loyal to possession,
 And left me in reputeless banishment,
 A fellow of no mark nor likelihood. 45
 By being seldom seen, I could not stir
 But, like a comet, I was wondered at,
 That men would tell their children `This is he.'
 Others would say `Where, which is Bolingbroke?'
 And then I stole all courtesy from heaven, 50
 And dressed myself in such humility
 That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
 Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
 Even in the presence of the crowneÁd King.
 Thus did I keep my person fresh and new, 55
 My presence like a robe pontifical±±
 Ne'er seen but wondered at±±and so my state,
 Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast,
 And won by rareness such solemnity.
 The skipping King, he ambled up and down 60
 With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
 Soon kindled and soon burnt, carded his state,
 Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
 Had his great name profaneÁd with their scorns,
 And gave his countenance, against his name, 65
 To laugh at gibing boys, and stand the push
 Of every beardless vain comparative;
 Grew a companion to the common streets,
 Enfeoffed himself to popularity,
 That, being daily swallowed by men's eyes, 70

They surfeited with honey, and began
 To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
 More than a little is by much too much.
 So when he had occasion to be seen,
 He was but as the cuckoo is in June, 75
 Heard, not regarded, seen but with such eyes
 As, sick and blunted with community,
 Afford no extraordinary gaze
 Such as is bent on sun-like majesty
 When it shines seldom in admiring eyes, 80
 But rather drowsed and hung their eyelids down,
 Slept in his face, and rendered such aspect
 As cloudy men use to their adversaries,
 Being with his presence glutted, gorged, and full.
 And in that very line, Harry, standest thou; 85
 For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
 With vile participation. Not an eye
 But is a-weary of thy common sight,
 Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more,
 Which now doth that I would not have it do±± 90
 Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

He weeps

PRINCE HARRY

I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord,
 Be more myself.

KING HENRY

For all the world,
 As thou art to this hour was Richard then,
 When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh, 95
 And even as I was then is Percy now.
 Now by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,
 He hath more worthy interest to the state
 Than thou, the shadow of succession;
 For, of no right, nor colour like to right, 100
 He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,
 Turns head against the lion's armeÁd jaws,
 And, being no more in debt to years than thou,
 Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
 To bloody battles, and to bruising arms. 105
 What never-dying honour hath he got
 Against renowneÁd Douglas!±±whose high deeds,

Whose hot incursions and great name in arms,
Holds from all soldiers chief majority
And military title capital 110
Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ.
Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swaddling-clothes,
This infant warrior, in his enterprises
Discomfited great Douglas; ta'en him once;
EnlargeÁd him; and made a friend of him 115
To fill the mouth of deep defiance up,
And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,
The Archbishop's grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,
Capitulate against us, and are up. 120
But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?
Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
Which art my near'st and dearest enemy?±±
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
Base inclination, and the start of spleen, 125
To fight against me under Percy's pay,
To dog his heels, and curtsy at his frowns,
To show how much thou art degenerate.

PRINCE HARRY

Do not think so; you shall not find it so.
And God forgive them that so much have swayed 130
Your majesty's good thoughts away from me.
I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
And in the closing of some glorious day
Be bold to tell you that I am your son;
When I will wear a garment all of blood, 135
And stain my favours in a bloody mask,
Which, washed away, shall scour my shame with it.
And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
That this same child of honour and renown,
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praiseÁd knight, 140
And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
For every honour sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my head
My shames redoubled; for the time will come
That I shall make this northern youth exchange 145
His glorious deeds for my indignities.

Percy is but my factor, good my lord,
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;
And I will call him to so strict account
That he shall render every glory up, 150
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
This, in the name of God, I promise here,
The which if he be pleased I shall perform,
I do beseech your majesty may salve 155
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance;
If not, the end of life cancels all bonds,
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

KING HENRY

A hundred thousand rebels die in this. 160
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.

Enter Sir Walter Blunt

How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of speed.

BLUNT

So hath the business that I come to speak of.
Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
That Douglas and the English rebels met 165
The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury.
A mighty and a fearful head they are,
If promises be kept on every hand,
As ever offered foul play in a state.

KING HENRY

The Earl of Westmorland set forth today, 170
With him my son Lord John of Lancaster,
For this advertisement is five days old.
On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set forward.
On Thursday we ourselves will march.
Our meeting is Bridgnorth, and, Harry, you 175
Shall march through Gloucestershire, by which
account,
Our business value'd, some twelve days hence
Our general forces at Bridgnorth shall meet.
Our hands are full of business; let's away.
Advantage feeds him fat while men delay. 180

Exeunt