

Henry V

3.7

Enter the Constable, Lord Rambures, the Dukes of Orleâans and [Bourbon], with others

CONSTABLE Tut, I have the best armour of the world.
Would it were day.

ORLEÂANS You have an excellent armour. But let my horse have his due.

CONSTABLE It is the best horse of Europe. 5

ORLEÂANS Will it never be morning?

[BOURBON] My lord of Orleâans and my Lord High Constable, you talk of horse and armour?

ORLEÂANS You are as well provided of both as any prince in the world. 10

[BOURBON] What a long night is this! I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ah ha! He bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hares±±*le cheval volant*, the Pegasus, *qui a les narines de feu*! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk; he trots 15 the air, the earth sings when he touches it, the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

ORLEÂANS He's of the colour of the nutmeg.

[BOURBON] And of the heat of the ginger. It is a beast for 20 Perseus. He is pure air and fire, and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him. He is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts.

CONSTABLE Indeed, my lord, it is a most absolute and 25 excellent horse.

[BOURBON] It is the prince of palfreys. His neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage.

ORLEÂANS No more, cousin. 30

[BOURBON] Nay, the man hath no wit, that cannot from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb vary deserved praise on my palfrey. It is a theme as fluent as the sea. Turn the sands into eloquent tongues, and

my horse is argument for them all. 'Tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on, and for the world, familiar to us and unknown, to lay apart their particular functions, and wonder at him. I once writ a sonnet in his praise, and began thus: `Wonder of nature!±±' 35 40

ORLEÂANS I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress.

[BOURBON] Then did they imitate that which I composed to my courser, for my horse is my mistress.

ORLEÂANS Your mistress bears well.

[BOURBON] Me well, which is the prescribed praise and 45 perfection of a good and particular mistress.

CONSTABLE Nay, for methought yesterday your mistress shrewdly shook your back.

[BOURBON] So perhaps did yours.

CONSTABLE Mine was not bridled. 50

[BOURBON] O then belike she was old and gentle, and you rode like a kern of Ireland, your French hose off, and in your strait strossers.

CONSTABLE You have good judgement in horsemanship.

[BOURBON] Be warned by me then: they that ride so, and 55 ride not warily, fall into foul bogs. I had rather have my horse to my mistress.

CONSTABLE I had as lief have my mistress a jade.

[BOURBON] I tell thee, Constable, my mistress wears his own hair. 60

CONSTABLE I could make as true a boast as that, if I had a sow to my mistress.

[BOURBON] `*Le chien est retourneÂ aÁ son propre vomissement, et la truie laveÂe au boubier.*' Thou makest use of anything. 65

CONSTABLE Yet do I not use my horse for my mistress, or any such proverb so little kin to the purpose.

RAMBURES My Lord Constable, the armour that I saw in your tent tonight, are those stars or suns upon it?

CONSTABLE Stars, my lord. 70

[BOURBON] Some of them will fall tomorrow, I hope.

CONSTABLE And yet my sky shall not want.

[BOURBON] That may be, for you bear a many superfluously, and 'twere more honour some were away.

CONSTABLE Even as your horse bears your praises, who 75
would trot as well were some of your brags dismounted.

[BOURBON] Would I were able to load him with his desert!
Will it never be day? I will trot tomorrow a mile, and
my way shall be paved with English faces.

CONSTABLE I will not say so, for fear I should be faced out 80
of my way. But I would it were morning, for I would
fain be about the ears of the English.

RAMBURES Who will go to hazard with me for twenty
prisoners?

CONSTABLE You must first go yourself to hazard, ere you 85
have them.

[BOURBON] 'Tis midnight. I'll go arm myself.

Exit

ORLEÂANS The Duke of Bourbon longs for morning.

RAMBURES He longs to eat the English.

CONSTABLE I think he will eat all he kills. 90

ORLEÂANS By the white hand of my lady, he's a gallant
prince.

CONSTABLE Swear by her foot, that she may tread out the
oath.

ORLEÂANS He is simply the most active gentleman of France. 95

CONSTABLE Doing is activity, and he will still be doing.

ORLEÂANS He never did harm that I heard of.

CONSTABLE Nor will do none tomorrow. He will keep that
good name still.

ORLEÂANS I know him to be valiant. 100

CONSTABLE I was told that by one that knows him better
than you.

ORLEÂANS What's he?

CONSTABLE Marry, he told me so himself, and he said he
cared not who knew it. 105

ORLEÂANS He needs not; it is no hidden virtue in him.

CONSTABLE By my faith, sir, but it is. Never anybody saw
it but his lackey. 'Tis a hooded valour, and when it
appears it will bate.

ORLEÂANS 'Ill will never said well.' 110

CONSTABLE I will cap that proverb with 'There is flattery
in friendship.'

ORLEÂANS And I will take up that with 'Give the devil his

due.'

CONSTABLE Well placed! There stands your friend for the 115
devil. Have at the very eye of that proverb with `A pox
of the devil!'

ORLEÂANS You are the better at proverbs by how much `a
fool's bolt is soon shot'.

CONSTABLE You have shot over. 120

ORLEÂANS 'Tis not the first time you were overshoot.

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER My Lord High Constable, the English lie within
fifteen hundred paces of your tents.

CONSTABLE Who hath measured the ground?

MESSENGER The Lord GrandpreÂ. 125

CONSTABLE A valiant and most expert gentleman.

[Exit Messenger]

Would it were day! Alas, poor Harry of England. He
longs not for the dawning as we do.

ORLEÂANS What a wretched and peevish fellow is this King
of England, to mope with his fat-brained followers so 130
far out of his knowledge.

CONSTABLE If the English had any apprehension, they
would run away.

ORLEÂANS That they lack±±for if their heads had any
intellectual armour, they could never wear such heavy 135
headpieces.

RAMBURES That island of England breeds very valiant
creatures. Their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage.

ORLEÂANS Foolish curs, that run winking into the mouth
of a Russian bear, and have their heads crushed like 140
rotten apples. You may as well say, `That's a valiant
flea that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion.'

CONSTABLE Just, just. And the men do sympathize with
the mastiffs in robustious and rough coming on, leaving
their wits with their wives. And then, give them great 145
meals of beef, and iron and steel, they will eat like
wolves and fight like devils.

ORLEÂANS Ay, but these English are shrewdly out of beef.

CONSTABLE Then shall we find tomorrow they have only
stomachs to eat, and none to fight. Now is it time to 150
arm. Come, shall we about it?

ORLEANS

It is now two o'clock. But let me see±±by ten
We shall have each a hundred Englishmen.

Exeunt