

## 2 Henry IV

### 4.2

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter Sir John Falstaff and Coleville*

**SIR JOHN** What's your name, sir, of what condition are you, and of what place, I pray?

**COLEVILLE** I am a knight, sir, and my name is Coleville of the Dale.

**SIR JOHN** Well then, Coleville is your name, a knight is 5  
your degree, and your place the Dale. Coleville shall be  
still your name, a traitor your degree, and the dungeon  
your place±±a place deep enough, so shall you be still  
Coleville of the Dale.

**COLEVILLE** Are not you Sir John Falstaff? 10

**SIR JOHN** As good a man as he, sir, whoe'er I am. Do ye  
yield, sir, or shall I sweat for you? If I do sweat, they  
are the drops of thy lovers, and they weep for thy  
death; therefore rouse up fear and trembling, and do  
observance to my mercy. 15

**COLEVILLE** *(kneeling)* I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and  
in that thought yield me.

**SIR JOHN** *(aside)* I have a whole school of tongues in this  
belly of mine, and not a tongue of them all speaks any  
other word but my name. An I had but a belly of any 20  
indifferency, I were simply the most active fellow in  
Europe. My womb, my womb, my womb undoes me.

*Enter Prince John, the Earl of Westmorland, Sir  
John Blunt, and other lords and soldiers*

Here comes our general.

**PRINCE JOHN**

The heat is past; follow no further now.

*A retreat is sounded*

Call in the powers, good cousin Westmorland. 25

*Exit Westmorland*

Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?

When everything is ended, then you come.

These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,

One time or other break some gallows' back.

**SIR JOHN** I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus. 30  
I never knew yet but rebuke and check was the reward  
of valour. Do you think me a swallow, an arrow, or a  
bullet? Have I in my poor and old motion the expedition  
of thought? I have speeded hither with the very  
extremest inch of possibility; I have foundered nine- 35  
score and odd posts; and here, travel-tainted as I am,  
have in my pure and immaculate valour taken Sir John  
Coleville of the Dale, a most furious knight and valorous  
enemy. But what of that? He saw me, and yielded, that  
I may justly say, with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, 40  
'I came, saw, and overcame.'

**PRINCE JOHN** It was more of his courtesy than your  
deserving.

**SIR JOHN** I know not. Here he is, and here I yield him;  
and I beseech your grace, let it be booked with the rest 45  
of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a  
particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the  
top on't, Coleville kissing my foot; to the which course  
if I be enforced, if you do not all show like gilt twopences  
to me, and I in the clear sky of fame o'ershine you as 50  
much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element,  
which show like pins' heads to her, believe not the  
word of the noble. Therefore let me have right, and let  
desert mount.

**PRINCE JOHN** Thine's too heavy to mount. 55

**SIR JOHN** Let it shine then.

**PRINCE JOHN** Thine's too thick to shine.

**SIR JOHN** Let it do something, my good lord, that may do  
me good, and call it what you will.

**PRINCE JOHN**  
Is thy name Coleville?

**COLEVILLE** It is, my lord. 60

**PRINCE JOHN**  
A famous rebel art thou, Coleville.

**SIR JOHN** And a famous true subject took him.

**COLEVILLE**  
I am, my lord, but as my betters are  
That led me hither. Had they been ruled by me,  
You should have won them dearer than you have. 65

**SIR JOHN**

I know not how $\pm\pm$ they sold themselves, but thou  
Like a kind fellow gav'st thyself away,  
And I thank thee for thee.

*Enter the Earl of Westmorland*

**PRINCE JOHN**

Have you left pursuit?

**WESTMORLAND**

Retreat is made, and execution stayed.

**PRINCE JOHN**

Send Coleville with his confederates

70

To York, to present execution.

Blunt, lead him hence, and see you guard him sure.

*Exit Blunt, with Coleville*

And now dispatch we toward the court, my lords.

I hear the King my father is sore sick.

*(To Westmorland)* Our news shall go before us to his  
majesty,

75

Which, cousin, you shall bear to comfort him;

And we with sober speed will follow you.

**SIR JOHN**

My lord, I beseech you give me leave to go

Through Gloucestershire, and when you come to court

Stand, my good lord, pray, in your good report.

80

**PRINCE JOHN**

Fare you well, Falstaff. I in my condition

Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

*Exeunt all but Sir John*

**SIR JOHN**

I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than  
your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-  
blooded boy doth not love me, nor a man cannot make  
him laugh. But that's no marvel; he drinks no wine.

85

There's never none of these demure boys come to any  
proof; for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and  
making many fish meals, that they fall into a kind of  
male green-sickness; and then when they marry, they  
get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards $\pm\pm$   
which some of us should be too, but for inflammation.

90

A good sherry-sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It  
ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish  
and dull and crudy vapours which environ it, makes

95

it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery,  
and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the  
voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent  
wit. The second property of your excellent sherry is the  
warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, 100  
left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of  
pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherry warms it,  
and makes it course from the inwards to the parts'  
extremes; it illuminateth the face, which, as a beacon,  
gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, 105  
to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty  
spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart; who,  
great and puffed up with his retinue, doth any deed of  
courage. And this valour comes of sherry. So that skill  
in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it 110  
a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a  
devil, till sack commences it and sets it in act and use.  
Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the  
cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father he hath,  
like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, 115  
and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good,  
and good store of fertile sherry, that he is become very  
hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first  
human principle I would teach them should be to  
forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to 120  
sack.

*Enter Bardolph*

How now, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

The army is discharged all and gone.

**SIR JOHN** Let them go. I'll through Gloucestershire, and  
there will I visit Master Robert Shallow, Esquire. I have 125  
him already tempering between my finger and my  
thumb, and shortly will I seal with him. Come, away!

*Exeunt*