

1 Henry IV

2.1

Enter a Carrier, with a lantern in his hand

FIRST CARRIER Heigh-ho! An't be not four by the day, I'll be hanged. Charles's Wain is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not packed. What, ostler!

OSTLER (*within*) Anon, anon!

FIRST CARRIER I prithee, Tom, beat cut's saddle, put a few 5
flocks in the point. Poor jade is wrung in the withers,
out of all cess.

Enter another Carrier

SECOND CARRIER Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots. This house is turned upside down since Robin 10
Ostler died.

FIRST CARRIER Poor fellow never joyed since the price of oats rose; it was the death of him.

SECOND CARRIER I think this be the most villainous house in all London road for fleas. I am stung like a tench. 15

FIRST CARRIER Like a tench? By the mass, there is ne'er a king christen could be better bit than I have been since the first cock.

SECOND CARRIER Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in your chimney, and your chamber- 20
lye breeds fleas like a loach.

FIRST CARRIER What, ostler! Come away, and be hanged, come away!

SECOND CARRIER I have a gammon of bacon and two races of ginger to be delivered as far as Charing Cross. 25

FIRST CARRIER God's body, the turkeys in my pannier are quite starved! What, ostler! A plague on thee, hast thou never an eye in thy head? Canst not hear? An 'twere not as good deed as drink to break the pate on thee, I am a very villain. Come, and be hanged! Hast 30
no faith in thee?

Enter Gadshill

GADSHILL Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

FIRST CARRIER I think it be two o'clock.

GADSHILL I prithee lend me thy lantern to see my gelding
in the stable. 35

FIRST CARRIER Nay, by God, soft. I know a trick worth
two of that, i'faith.

GADSHILL *(to Second Carrier)* I pray thee, lend me thine.

SECOND CARRIER Ay, when? Canst tell? `Lend me thy
lantern,' quoth a. Marry, I'll see thee hanged first. 40

GADSHILL Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come
to London?

SECOND CARRIER Time enough to go to bed with a candle,
I warrant thee.±±Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up
the gentlemen. They will along with company, for they 45
have great charge.

Exeunt Carriers

GADSHILL What ho, chamberlain!

Enter Chamberlain

CHAMBERLAIN `At hand' quoth Pickpurse.

GADSHILL That's even as fair as `ªAt handº quoth the
chamberlain', for thou variest no more from picking of 50
purses than giving direction doth from labouring: thou
layest the plot how.

CHAMBERLAIN Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It holds
current that I told you yesternight. There's a franklin
in the Weald of Kent hath brought three hundred 55
marks with him in gold. I heard him tell it to one of
his company last night at supper±±a kind of auditor,
one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows
what. They are up already, and call for eggs and butter;
they will away presently. 60

GADSHILL Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas's
clerks, I'll give thee this neck.

CHAMBERLAIN No, I'll none of it; I pray thee keep that
for the hangman, for I know thou worshippest Saint
Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may. 65

GADSHILL What talkest thou to me of the hangman? If I
hang, I'll make a fat pair of gallows, for if I hang, old
Sir John hangs with me, and thou knowest he's no
starveling. Tut, there are other Trojans that thou
dreamest not of, the which for sport' sake are content 70
to do the profession some grace, that would, if matters

should be looked into, for their own credit' sake make
all whole. I am joined with no foot-landrakers, no long-
staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio
purple-hued maltworms, but with nobility and tran- 75
quillity, burgomasters and great `oyez'-ers; such as can
hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and
speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray.
And yet, zounds, I lie, for they pray continually to their
saint the commonwealth; or rather, not pray to her, 80
but prey on her; for they ride up and down on her and
make her their boots.

CHAMBERLAIN What, the commonwealth their boots? Will
she hold out water in foul way?

GADSHILL She will, she will, justice hath liquored her. We 85
steal as in a castle, cocksure; we have the recipe of
fern-seed, we walk invisible.

CHAMBERLAIN Nay, by my faith, I think you are more
beholden to the night than to fern-seed for your walking
invisible. 90

GADSHILL Give me thy hand; thou shalt have a share in
our purchase, as I am a true man.

CHAMBERLAIN Nay, rather let me have it as you are a
false thief.

GADSHILL Go to, `*homo*' is a common name to all men. 95
Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable.
Farewell, you muddy knave.

Exeunt [severally]