

## 2 Henry IV

### 5.1

*Enter Shallow, [Silence,] Sir John Falstaff,  
Bardolph, and the Page*

**SHALLOW** (to Sir John ) By cock and pie, you shall not  
away tonight.±±What, Davy, I say!

**SIR JOHN** You must excuse me, Master Robert Shallow.

**SHALLOW** I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused;  
excuses shall not be admitted; there is no excuse shall  
serve; you shall not be excused.±±Why, Davy!

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*Enter Davy*

**DAVY** Here, sir.

**SHALLOW** Davy, Davy, Davy; let me see, Davy; let me  
see. William Cook±±bid him come hither.±±Sir John,  
you shall not be excused.

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**DAVY** Marry, sir, thus: those precepts cannot be served.  
And again, sir: shall we sow the headland with wheat?

**SHALLOW** With red wheat, Davy. But for William Cook;  
are there no young pigeons?

**DAVY** Yes, sir. Here is now the smith's note for shoeing 15  
and plough-irons.

**SHALLOW** Let it be cast and paid. Sir John, you shall not  
be excused.

**DAVY** Sir, a new link to the bucket must needs be had;  
and, sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages,  
about the sack he lost at Hinkley Fair?

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**SHALLOW** A shall answer it. Some pigeons, Davy, a couple  
of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty  
little tiny kickshaws, tell William Cook.

**DAVY** Doth the man of war stay all night, sir? 25

**SHALLOW** Yea, Davy. I will use him well; a friend i'th'  
court is better than a penny in purse. Use his men well,  
Davy, for they are arrant knaves, and will backbite.

**DAVY** No worse than they are back-bitten, sir, for they  
have marvellous foul linen.

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**SHALLOW** Well conceited, Davy. About thy business, Davy.

**DAVY** I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of  
Wo'ncot against Clement Perks o'th' Hill.

**SHALLOW** There is many complaints, Davy, against that  
Visor. That Visor is an arrant knave, on my knowledge. 35

**DAVY** I grant your worship that he is a knave, sir; but  
yet God forbid, sir, but a knave should have some  
countenance at his friend's request. An honest man,  
sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. I  
have served your worship truly, sir, this eight years. 40  
An I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a  
knave against an honest man, I have little credit with  
your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir;  
therefore I beseech you let him be countenanced.

**SHALLOW** Go to; I say he shall have no wrong. Look 45  
about, Davy.

*[Exit Davy]*

Where are you, Sir John? Come, off with your boots.±±  
Give me your hand, Master Bardolph.

**BARDOLPH** I am glad to see your worship.

**SHALLOW** I thank thee with all my heart, kind Master 50  
Bardolph. *[To the Page]* And welcome, my tall fellow.±±  
Come, Sir John.

**SIR JOHN** I'll follow you, good Master Robert Shallow.

*Exit Shallow [with Silence]*

Bardolph, look to our horses.

*Exit Bardolph [with the Page]*

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four 55  
dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master  
Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable  
coherence of his men's spirits and his. They, by  
observing him, do bear themselves like foolish justices;  
he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice- 60  
like servingman. Their spirits are so married in  
conjunction, with the participation of society, that they  
flock together in consent like so many wild geese. If I  
had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humour his men  
with the imputation of being near their master; if to 65  
his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no  
man could better command his servants. It is certain  
that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught  
as men take diseases, one of another; therefore let men  
take heed of their company. I will devise matter enough 70

out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions±±which is four terms, or two actions±±and a shall laugh without intervallums. O, it is much that a lie with a slight oath, and a jest with a sad brow, will do with a fellow that 75 never had the ache in his shoulders! O, you shall see him laugh till his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up!

**SHALLOW** (*within*) Sir John!

**SIR JOHN** I come, Master Shallow; I come, Master Shallow.  
*Exit*