

## 2 Henry IV

### 1.1

*Enter Lord Bardolph at one door. [He crosses the stage to another door]*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Who keeps the gate here, ho?

*Enter Porter [above]*

Where is the

Earl?

**PORTER**

What shall I say you are?

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Tell thou the Earl

That the Lord Bardolph doth attend him here.

**PORTER**

His lordship is walked forth into the orchard.

Please it your honour knock but at the gate,

5

And he himself will answer.

*Enter the Earl Northumberland [at the other door],  
as sick, with a crutch and coif*

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Here comes the Earl.

*[Exit Porter]*

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

What news, Lord Bardolph? Every minute now

Should be the father of some stratagem.

The times are wild; contention, like a horse

Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,

10

And bears down all before him.

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Noble Earl,

I bring you certain news from Shrewsbury.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Good, an God will.

**LORD BARDOLPH**

As good as heart can wish.

The King is almost wounded to the death;

And, in the fortune of my lord your son,

15

Prince Harry slain outright; and both the Blunts

Killed by the hand of Douglas; young Prince John

And Westmorland and Stafford fled the field;

And Harry Monmouth's brawn, the hulk Sir John,

Is prisoner to your son. O, such a day,	20
So fought, so followed, and so fairly won,	
Came not till now to dignify the times	
Since Caesar's fortunes!	
<b>NORTHUMBERLAND</b> How is this derived?	
Saw you the field? Came you from Shrewsbury?	
<b>LORD BARDOLPH</b>	
I spake with one, my lord, that came from thence,	25
A gentleman well bred and of good name,	
That freely rendered me these news for true.	
<i>Enter Travers</i>	
<b>NORTHUMBERLAND</b>	
Here comes my servant Travers, who I sent	
On Tuesday last to listen after news.	
<b>LORD BARDOLPH</b>	
My lord, I overrode him on the way,	30
And he is furnished with no certainties	
More than he haply may retail from me.	
<b>NORTHUMBERLAND</b>	
Now, Travers, what good tidings comes with you?	
<b>TRAVERS</b>	
My lord, Lord Bardolph turned me back	
With joyful tidings, and being better horsed	35
Outrode me. After him came spurring hard	
A gentleman almost forspent with speed,	
That stopped by me to breathe his bloodied horse.	
He asked the way to Chester, and of him	
I did demand what news from Shrewsbury.	40
He told me that rebellion had ill luck,	
And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.	
With that he gave his able horse the head,	
And, bending forward, struck his armeÁd heels	
Against the panting sides of his poor jade	45
Up to the rowel-head; and starting so,	
He seemed in running to devour the way,	
Staying no longer question.	
<b>NORTHUMBERLAND</b> Ha? Again:	
Said he young Harry Percy's spur was cold?	
Of Hotspur, `Coldspur'? that rebellion	50
Had met ill luck?	

**LORD BARDOLPH** My lord, I'll tell you what:  
If my young lord your son have not the day,  
Upon mine honour, for a silken point  
I'll give my barony. Never talk of it.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why should the gentleman that rode by Travers  
Give then such instances of loss?

55

**LORD BARDOLPH** Who, he?  
He was some hilding fellow that had stol'n  
The horse he rode on, and, upon my life,  
Spoke at a venture.

*Enter Morton*

Look, here comes more news.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title leaf, 60  
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.  
So looks the strand whereon the imperious flood  
Hath left a witnessed usurpation.  
Say, Morton, didst thou come from Shrewsbury?

**MORTON**

I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord, 65  
Where hateful death put on his ugliest mask  
To fright our party.

**NORTHUMBERLAND** How doth my son and brother?

Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.  
Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless, 70  
So dull, so dead in look, so woebegone,  
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,  
And would have told him half his Troy was burnt;  
But Priam found the fire ere he his tongue,  
And I my Percy's death ere thou report'st it. 75  
This thou wouldst say: `Your son did thus and thus,  
Your brother thus; so fought the noble Douglas',  
Stopping my greedy ear with their bold deeds;  
But in the end, to stop my ear indeed,  
Thou hast a sigh to blow away this praise, 80  
Ending with `Brother, son, and all are dead.'

**MORTON**

Douglas is living, and your brother yet;

But for my lord your son±±

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why, he is dead.

See what a ready tongue suspicion hath!

He that but fears the thing he would not know 85

Hath by instinct knowledge from others' eyes

That what he feared is chanced. Yet speak, Morton.

Tell thou an earl his divination lies,

And I will take it as a sweet disgrace,

And make thee rich for doing me such wrong. 90

**MORTON**

You are too great to be by me gainsaid,

Your spirit is too true, your fears too certain.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yet for all this, say not that Percy's dead.

I see a strange confession in thine eye±±

Thou shak'st thy head, and hold'st it fear or sin 95

To speak a truth. If he be slain, say so.

The tongue offends not that reports his death;

And he doth sin that doth belie the dead,

Not he which says the dead is not alive.

Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news 100

Hath but a losing office, and his tongue

Sounds ever after as a sullen bell

Remembered knolling a departing friend.

**LORD BARDOLPH**

I cannot think, my lord, your son is dead.

**MORTON** (*to Northumberland*)

I am sorry I should force you to believe 105

That which I would to God I had not seen;

But these mine eyes saw him in bloody state,

Rend'ring faint quittance, wearied and out-breathed,

To Harry Monmouth, whose swift wrath beat down

The never-daunted Percy to the earth, 110

From whence with life he never more sprung up.

In few, his death, whose spirit lent a fire

Even to the dullest peasant in his camp,

Being bruited once, took fire and heat away

From the best-tempered courage in his troops; 115

For from his metal was his party steeled,

Which once in him abated, all the rest

Turned on themselves, like dull and heavy lead;  
 And, as the thing that's heavy in itself  
 Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed, 120  
 So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,  
 Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear  
 That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim  
 Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,  
 Fly from the field. Then was that noble Worcester 125  
 Too soon ta'en prisoner; and that furious Scot  
 The bloody Douglas, whose well-labouring sword  
 Had three times slain th'appearance of the King,  
 Gan vail his stomach, and did grace the shame  
 Of those that turned their backs, and in his flight, 130  
 Stumbling in fear, was took. The sum of all  
 Is that the King hath won, and hath sent out  
 A speedy power to encounter you, my lord,  
 Under the conduct of young Lancaster  
 And Westmorland. This is the news at full. 135

#### NORTHUMBERLAND

For this I shall have time enough to mourn.  
 In poison there is physic; and these news,  
 Having been well, that would have made me sick,  
 Being sick, have in some measure made me well;  
 And, as the wretch whose fever-weakened joints, 140  
 Like strengthless hinges, buckle under life,  
 Impatient of his fit, breaks like a fire  
 Out of his keeper's arms, even so my limbs,  
 Weakened with grief, being now enraged with grief,  
 Are thrice themselves.

*[He casts away his crutch]*

Hence therefore, thou

nice crutch! 145

A scaly gauntlet now with joints of steel  
 Must glove this hand.

*[He snatches off his coif]*

And hence, thou sickly coif!

Thou art a guard too wanton for the head  
 Which princes fleshed with conquest aim to hit.  
 Now bind my brows with iron, and approach 150  
 The ragged'st hour that time and spite dare bring

To frown upon th'enraged Northumberland!  
Let heaven kiss earth! Now let not nature's hand  
Keep the wild flood confined! Let order die!  
And let this world no longer be a stage 155  
To feed contention in a ling'ring act;  
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain  
Reign in all bosoms, that each heart being set  
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,  
And darkness be the burier of the dead! 160

**LORD BARDOLPH**

Sweet Earl, divorce not wisdom from your honour.

**MORTON**

The lives of all your loving complices  
Lean on your health, the which, if you give o'er  
To stormy passion, must perforce decay.  
You cast th'event of war, my noble lord, 165  
And summed the account of chance, before you said  
'Let us make head'. It was your presumise  
That in the dole of blows your son might drop.  
You knew he walked o'er perils on an edge,  
More likely to fall in than to get o'er. 170  
You were advised his flesh was capable  
Of wounds and scars, and that his forward spirit  
Would lift him where most trade of danger ranged.  
Yet did you say, 'Go forth'; and none of this,  
Though strongly apprehended, could restrain 175  
The stiff-borne action. What hath then befall'n?  
Or what doth this bold enterprise bring forth,  
More than that being which was like to be?

**LORD BARDOLPH**

We all that are engageÁd to this loss  
Knew that we ventured on such dangerous seas 180  
That if we wrought out life was ten to one;  
And yet we ventured for the gain proposed,  
Choked the respect of likely peril feared;  
And since we are o'erset, venture again.  
Come, we will all put forth body and goods. 185

**MORTON**

'Tis more than time; and, my most noble lord,  
I hear for certain, and dare speak the truth,

The gentle Archbishop of York is up  
With well-appointed powers. He is a man  
Who with a double surety binds his followers. 190  
My lord, your son had only but the corpse,  
But shadows and the shows of men, to fight;  
For that same word `rebellion' did divide  
The action of their bodies from their souls,  
And they did fight with queasiness, constrained, 195  
As men drink potions, that their weapons only  
Seemed on our side; but, for their spirits and souls,  
This word `rebellion', it had froze them up,  
As fish are in a pond. But now the Bishop  
Turns insurrection to religion. 200  
Supposed sincere and holy in his thoughts,  
He's followed both with body and with mind,  
And doth enlarge his rising with the blood  
Of fair King Richard, scraped from Pomfret stones;  
Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause; 205  
Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land  
Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke;  
And more and less do flock to follow him.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

I knew of this before, but, to speak truth,  
This present grief had wiped it from my mind. 210  
Go in with me, and counsel every man  
The aptest way for safety and revenge.  
Get posts and letters, and make friends with speed.  
Never so few, and never yet more need.

*Exeunt*