

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF HENRY IV

[I. I.] *London. The Palace*

*KING HENRY with SIR WALTER BLUNT,
meeting WESTMORELAND and others*

King. So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in strands afar remote:
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood,
No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flowerets with the arméd hoofs
Of hostile paces: those opposéd eyes, 10
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery,
Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks,
March all one way, and be no more opposed
Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies....
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathéd knife,
No more shall cut his master...Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ, 20
Whose soldier now, under whose blesséd cross
We are impresséd and engaged to fight,
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were moulded in their mothers' womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blesséd feet

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4 THE FIRST PART OF 1.1.26

Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross....

But this our purpose now is twelve month old,
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go:

30 Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear
Of you, my gentle cousin Westmoreland,
What yesternight our council did decree
In forwarding this dear expedience.

Westmoreland. My liege, this haste was hot
in question,

And many limits of the charge set down
But yesternight, when all athwart there came
A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight

40 Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butcheréd,
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation,
By those Welshwomen done, as may not be
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

King. It seems then that the tidings of this broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

Westmoreland. This matched with other did, my
gracious lord,

50 For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the north, and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood day the gallant Hotspur there,
Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,
That ever-valiant and approvéd Scot,
At Holmedon met,
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour;
As by discharge of their artillery,

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1.1.58

KING HENRY IV

5

And shape of likelihood, the news was told;
 For he that brought them, in the very heat
 And pride of their contention did take horse, 60
 Uncertain of the issue any way.

King. Here is a dear, a true industrious friend,
 Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse,
 Stained with the variation of each soil
 Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours;
 And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.
 The Earl of Douglas is discomfited,
 Ten thousand bold Scots, two and twenty knights,
 Balked in their own blood did Sir Walter see
 On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners, Hotspur took 70
 Mordake Earl of Fife, and eldest son
 To beaten Douglas, and the Earl of Athol,
 Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith...
 And is not this an honourable spoil?
 A gallant prize? ha, cousin, is it not?

Westmoreland. In faith,
 It is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

King. Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st
 me sin

In envy, that my Lord Northumberland
 Should be the father to so blest a son... 80
 A son who is the theme of honour's tongue,
 Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
 Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride,
 Whilst I by looking on the praise of him
 See riot and dishonour stain the brow
 Of my young Harry....O that it could be proved
 That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
 In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
 And called mine Percy, his Plantagenet,
 Then would I have his Harry, and he mine: 90

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6 THE FIRST PART OF 1.1.91

But let him from my thoughts....What think you, coz,
Of this young Percy's pride? The prisoners,
Which he in this adventure hath surprised,
To his own use he keeps, and sends me word,
I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.

Westmoreland. This is his uncle's teaching, this
is Worcester,

Malevolent to you in all aspects,
Which makes him prune himself, and bristle up
The crest of youth against your dignity.

100 *King.* But I have sent for him to answer this;

And for this cause awhile we must neglect

Our holy purpose to Jerusalem....

Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we

Will hold at Windsor, so inform the lords:

But come yourself with speed to us again,

For more is to be said and to be done

Than out of anger can be utteréd.

Westmoreland. I will, my liege.

[*Exeunt*]

[1. 2.] *London. A room in the house of the*
PRINCE OF WALES

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF lies snoring upon a bench in a
corner. The *PRINCE OF WALES* enters and rouses him

Falstaff [*waking*]. Now, Hal, what time of day is
it, lad?

Prince. Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old
sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping
upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to de-
mand that truly which thou wouldest truly know. What
a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless
hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks
the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-

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1. 2. 10

KING HENRY IV

7

houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in 10
flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst
be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

Falstaff. Indeed, you come near me now, Hal, for
we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars,
and not by Phœbus, he, 'that wandering knight so
fair'.... And, I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king,
as God save thy grace—majesty I should say, for grace
thou wilt have none.

Prince. What, none?

Falstaff. No, by my troth, not so much as will serve 20
to be prologue to an egg and butter.

Prince. Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.

Falstaff. Marry then, sweet wag, when thou art king
let not us that are squires of the night's body be called
thieves of the day's beauty; let us be Diana's foresters,
gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, and let
men say we be men of good government, being governed
as the sea is by our noble and chaste mistress the moon,
under whose countenance we steal.

Prince. Thou sayest well, and it holds well too, for 30
the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and
flow like the sea, being governed as the sea is by the
moon—as for proof now, a purse of gold most reso-
lutely snatched on Monday night and most dissolutely
spent on Tuesday morning, got with swearing 'lay by'
and spent with crying 'bring in'—now in as low an ebb
as the foot of the ladder, and by and by in as high a flow
as the ridge of the gallows.

Falstaff. By the Lord, thou sayst true, lad, and is
not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench? 40

Prince. As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the
castle, and is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of
durance?

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8 THE FIRST PART OF 1.2.44

Falstaff. How now, how now, mad wag? what, in thy quips and thy quiddities? what a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

Prince. Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

Falstaff. Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning
50 many a time and oft.

Prince. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

Falstaff. No, I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

Prince. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch, and where it would not, I have used my credit.

Falstaff. Yea, and so used it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent—But, I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fubbed as it is
60 with the rusty curb of old father Antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

Prince. No, thou shalt.

Falstaff. Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge!

Prince. Thou judgest false already. I mean, thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves and so become a rare hangman.

Falstaff. Well, Hal, well—and in some sort it jumps with my humour, as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

70 *Prince.* For obtaining of suits?

Falstaff. Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe... 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear.

Prince. Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

Falstaff. Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

Prince. What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?

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1.2.78

KING HENRY IV

9

Falstaff. Thou hast the most unsavoury similes and art indeed the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince...But, Hal, I prithee, trouble me no 80 more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought: an old lord of the council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not, and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not, and yet he talked wisely and in the street too.

Prince. Thou didst well, for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it.

Falstaff. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint: thou hast done much harm 90 upon me, Hal—God forgive thee for it: before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked... I must give over this life, and I will give it over: by the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain. I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

Prince. Where shall we take a purse to-morrow, Jack?

Falstaff. 'Zounds, where thou wilt, lad, I'll make one, an I do not, call me villain and baffle me.

Prince. I see a good amendment of life in thee, 100 from praying to purse-taking.

Falstaff. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal, 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

POINS enters

Poins! Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. [*points*] O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried 'Stand' to a true man.

Prince. Good morrow, Ned.

Poins. Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur.

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10 THE FIRST PART OF 1.2.110

110 Remorse? What says Sir John Sack and Sugar? Jack, how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good Friday last, for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?

Prince. Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain, for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs: he will give the devil his due.

Poins. Then art thou damned for keeping thy word with the devil.

Prince. Else he had been damned for cozening the devil.

120 *Poins.* But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gad's Hill, there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses....I have vizards for you all, you have horses for yourselves, Gadshill lies to-night in Rochester, I have bespoke supper to-morrow night in Eastcheap: we may do it as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns; if you will not, tarry at home and be hanged.

Falstaff. Hear ye, Yedward, if I tarry at home and
130 go not, I'll hang you for going.

Poins. You will, chops?

Falstaff. Hal, wilt thou make one?

Prince. Who, I? rob? I a thief? not I, by my faith.

Falstaff. There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou dar'st not stand for ten shillings.

[*Poins makes signals behind Falstaff's back*]

Prince. Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

Falstaff. Why, that's well said.

Prince. Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.

140 *Falstaff.* By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.

Prince. I care not.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

1.2.143

KING HENRY IV

11

Poins. Sir John, I prithee, leave the prince and me alone, I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go.

Falstaff. Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion, and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move, and what he hears may be believed, that the true prince may (for recreation sake) prove a false thief, for the poor abuses of the time want countenance... 150
Farewell, you shall find me in Eastcheap.

Prince. Farewell, the latter spring! Farewell, All-hallown summer!

[*Falstaff goes*]

Poins. Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us to-morrow. I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto and Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid—yourself and I will not be there: and when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head off from my shoulders. 160

Prince. How shall we part with them in setting forth?

Poins. Why, we will set forth before or after them, and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail; and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves, which they shall have no sooner achieved but we'll set upon them.

Prince. Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment, to be ourselves.

Poins. Tut! our horses they shall not see, I'll tie them 170 in the wood; our vizards we will change after we leave them; and, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to immask our noted outward garments.

Prince. Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us.

Poins. Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the

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[More information](#)

12 THE FIRST PART OF 1.2.177

third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear
arms. The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible
lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at
180 supper, how thirty at least he fought with, what wards,
what blows, what extremities he endured, and in the
reproof of this lives the jest.

Prince. Well, I'll go with thee. Provide us all things
necessary, and meet me to-morrow night in Eastcheap,
there I'll sup...Farewell.

Poins. Farewell, my lord. [*Poins goes*]

Prince. I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
190 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted he may be more wond' red at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wished for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents:
200 So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promiséd,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will. [*he goes*]