

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
WILLIAM HAZLITT**



KING HENRY IV

William Shakespeare and William Hazlitt

King Henry IV

**With the Analysis of King Henry the Fourth's
Character**

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SCENE.—England.

ACT I.

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SCENE I.

London. A Room in the Palace.

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[Enter the King Henry, Westmoreland, Sir Walter Blunt, and others.]

KING.

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frightened 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 armed hoofs
Of hostile paces: those opposed eyes,
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-sheathed knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ—
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross

We are impressed and engaged to fight—
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross.
But this our purpose now is twelvemonth old,
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go:
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.

WEST.

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

KING.

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

WEST.

This, match'd with other, did, my gracious lord;

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 approved Scot,
At Holmedon met;
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour,
As by discharge of their artillery,
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,
Uncertain of the issue any way.

KING.

Here is a dear and true-industrious friend,
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse,
Stain'd 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,
Balk'd in their own blood, did Sir Walter see
On Holmedon's plains: of prisoners, Hotspur took
Mordake the Earl of Fife and eldest son
To beaten Douglas; and the Earls of Athol,
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith.
And is not this an honourable spoil,
A gallant prize? ha, cousin, is it not?

WEST.

Faith, 'tis a conquest for a prince to boast of.

KING.

Yea, there thou makest me sad, and makest me sin

In envy that my Lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son,—
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 call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine:
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.

WEST.

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.

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 uttered.

WEST.

I will, my liege.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.
**The same. An Apartment of Prince
Henry's.**

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[Enter Prince Henry and Falstaff.]

FAL.

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 demand that truly which thou wouldst 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 the blessed Sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

FAL. Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the Moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus,—he, that wandering knight so fair. And I pr'ythee, sweet wag, when thou art king,—as, God save thy Grace—Majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none,—

PRINCE.

What, none?

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

PRINCE.

Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.

FAL. 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 say'st well, and it holds well too; for 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 resolutely snatch'd on Monday night, and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing Lay by, and spent with crying Bring in; now ill 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.

FAL. By the Lord, thou say'st true, lad. And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

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

FAL. 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?

FAL.

Well, thou hast call'd her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

PRINCE.

Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

FAL.

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.

FAL. Yea, and so used it, that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir-apparent—But I pr'ythee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fobb'd as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

PRINCE.

No; thou shalt.

FAL.

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.

FAL. Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it jumps with my humour; as well as waiting in the Court, I can tell you.

PRINCE.

For obtaining of suits?

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

PRINCE.

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

FAL.

Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

PRINCE.

What say'st thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?

FAL. Thou hast the most unsavoury similes, and art, indeed, the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince,—But, Hal, I pr'ythee trouble me no 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 mark'd him not; and yet he talk'd very wisely,—but I regarded him not; and yet he talk'd wisely, and in the street too.

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

FAL. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art, indeed, able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm 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 damn'd for never a king's son in Christendom.

PRINCE.

Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?

FAL. 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,—from praying to purse-taking.

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

[Enter Pointz.]

—Pointz!—Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. 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.

POINTZ. Good morrow, sweet Hal.—What says Monsieur 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.

POINTZ.

Then art thou damn'd for keeping thy word with the

Devil.

PRINCE.

Else he had been damn'd for cozening the Devil.

POINTZ. But, my lads, my lads, tomorrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gadshill! there are pilgrims gong to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses: I have visards for you all; you have horses for yourselves: Gadshill lies tonight in Rochester: I have bespoke supper tomorrow 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 hang'd.

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

POINTZ.

You will, chops?

FAL.

Hal, wilt thou make one?

PRINCE.

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

FAL. There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou camest not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings.

PRINCE.

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

FAL.

Why, that's well said.

PRINCE.

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

FAL.

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

PRINCE.

I care not.

POINTZ.

Sir John, I pr'ythee, leave the Prince and me alone: I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure, that he shall go.

FAL. 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. Farewell; you shall find me in Eastcheap.

PRINCE.

Farewell, thou latter Spring! farewell, All-hallown Summer!

[Exit Falstaff.]

POINTZ. Now, my good sweet honey-lord, ride with us tomorrow: 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.

PRINCE.

But how shall we part with them in setting forth?

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

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

PRINCE.

But I doubt they will be too hard for us.

POINTZ. Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turn'd back; and for the 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 supper: how thirty, at least, he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest.

PRINCE. Well, I'll go with thee: provide us all things necessary and meet me tonight in Eastcheap; there I'll sup. Farewell.

POINTZ.

Farewell, my lord.

[Exit.]

PRINCE.

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyok'd humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the Sun,
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 wonder'd 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 wish'd-for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
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, glittering 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.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.
The Same. A Room in the Palace.

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[Enter King Henry, Northumberland, Worcester,
Hotspur, Sir Walter
Blunt, and others.]

KING.

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,
And you have found me; for, accordingly,
You tread upon my patience: but be sure
I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition,
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,
And therefore lost that title of respect
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

WOR.

Our House, my sovereign liege, little deserves
The scourge of greatness to be used on it;
And that same greatness too which our own hands
Have help to make so portly.

NORTH.

My good lord,—

KING.

Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye:
O, sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,

And majesty might never yet endure
The moody frontier of a servant brow.
You have good leave to leave us: when we need
Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

[Exit Worcester.]

[To Northumberland.]

You were about to speak.

NORTH.

Yea, my good lord.

Those prisoners in your Highness' name demanded,
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied
As is deliver'd to your Majesty:
Either envy, therefore, or misprision
Is guilty of this fault, and not my son.

HOT.

My liege, I did deny no prisoners.

But, I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home:
He was perfumed like a milliner;
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took't away again;
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff: and still he smiled and talk'd;
And, as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,

He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; amongst the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
Out of my grief and my impatience
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what,—
He should, or he should not; for't made me mad
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds,—God save the mark!—
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on Earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous salt-petre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly; and, but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answered indirectly, as I said;
And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high Majesty.

BLUNT.

The circumstance consider'd, good my lord,
Whatever Harry Percy then had said
To such a person, and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest re-told,

May reasonably die, and never rise
To do him wrong, or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

KING.

Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception,
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer;
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damn'd Glendower,
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?
Shall we buy treason? and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves?
No, on the barren mountains let him starve;
For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

HOT.

Revolted Mortimer!
He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war: to prove that true
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took,
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breathed, and three times did they
drink,

Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.
Never did base and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;
Nor never could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly:
Then let not him be slander'd with revolt.

KING.

Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost belie him;
He never did encounter with Glendower:
I tell thee,
He durst as well have met the Devil alone
As Owen Glendower for an enemy.
Art not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth
Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer:
Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me
As will displease you.—My Lord Northumberland,
We license your departure with your son.—
Send us your prisoners, or you'll hear of it.

[Exeunt King Henry, Blunt, and train.]

HOT.

An if the Devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them: I will after straight,
And tell him so; for I will else my heart,
Although it be with hazard of my head.

NORTH.

What, drunk with choler? stay, and pause awhile:
Here comes your uncle.

[Re-enter Worcester.]

HOT.

Speak of Mortimer!

Zounds, I will speak of him; and let my soul
Want mercy, if I do not join with him:
Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins,
And shed my dear blood drop by drop i' the dust,
But I will lift the down-trod Mortimer
As high i' the air as this unthankful King,
As this ingrate and canker'd Bolingbroke.

NORTH.

[To Worcester.]

Brother, the King hath made your nephew mad.

WOR.

Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

HOT.

He will, forsooth, have all my prisoners;
And when I urged the ransom once again
Of my wife's brother, then his cheek look'd pale,
And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.

WOR.

I cannot blame him: was not he proclaim'd
By Richard that dead is the next of blood?

NORTH.

He was; I heard the proclamation:
And then it was when the unhappy King—
Whose wrongs in us God pardon!—did set forth
Upon his Irish expedition;
From whence he intercepted did return
To be deposed, and shortly murdered.

WOR.

And for whose death we in the world's wide mouth
Live scandalized and foully spoken of.

HOT.

But, soft! I pray you; did King Richard then
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
Heir to the crown?

NORTH.

He did; myself did hear it.

HOT.

Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin King,
That wish'd him on the barren mountains starve.
But shall it be, that you, that set the crown
Upon the head of this forgetful man,
And for his sake wear the detested blot
Of murderous subornation,—shall it be,
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents, or base second means,
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?—
O, pardon me, that I descend so low,
To show the line and the predicament
Wherein you range under this subtle King;—
Shall it, for shame, be spoken in these days,

Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
That men of your nobility and power
Did gage them both in an unjust behalf,—
As both of you, God pardon it! have done,—
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
And plant this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke?
And shall it, in more shame, be further spoken,
That you are fool'd, discarded, and shook off
By him for whom these shames ye underwent?
No! yet time serves, wherein you may redeem
Your banish'd honours, and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again;
Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt
Of this proud King, who studies day and night
To answer all the debt he owes to you
Even with the bloody payment of your deaths:
Therefore, I say,—

WOR.

Peace, cousin, say no more:
And now I will unclasp a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontent
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous;
As full of peril and adventurous spirit
As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

HOT.

If we fall in, good night, or sink or swim!
Send danger from the east unto the west,
So honour cross it from the north to south,
And let them grapple. O, the blood more stirs
To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

NORTH.

Imagination of some great exploit
Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

HOT.

By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced Moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities:
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

WOR.

He apprehends a world of figures here,
But not the form of what he should attend.—
Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

HOT.

I cry you mercy.

WOR.

Those same noble Scots
That are your prisoners,—

HOT.

I'll keep them all;
By God, he shall not have a Scot of them;
No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not:
I'll keep them, by this hand.

WOR.

You start away,