

Henry IV, Part One

The Short Story (abridged synopsis)

King Henry IV has two main problems as the play opens. First, the Welsh leader Owen Glendower has beaten one of the King's armies and captured its leader, Edmund Mortimer. Second, his son, Hal, is a ne'er-do-well keeping company with rogues such as Sir John Falstaff. The Percy family is less than happy when Henry refuses to ransom Mortimer from Glendower, and the heads of the family—Worcester, Northumberland, and Harry Percy (nicknamed "Hotspur")—decide that they will in turn not yield prisoners from a Scottish campaign to King Henry. They then set about inciting a rebellion in collusion with York, Douglas, Mortimer, and even Glendower. In the midst of this, young Hal, the Prince of Wales, is content in running with Falstaff and his lot, drinking, playing pranks, and thieving.

The rebels, led by the Percies, immediately run into difficulties. Hotspur proves quarrelsome, arguing with Glendower over the division of England once King Henry is defeated—and this before the battle has even begun. Northumberland takes ill and Glendower's force is seriously delayed. Added to these troubles, King Henry has finally struck a chord within his son, Hal. After a lengthy rebuke Hal determines to make amends with his father with a valiant display against the rebels. King Henry has also raised a considerable army to stop Hotspur and the rest.

In a parley preceding the battle Hal offers to settle matters in a one-on-one contest with Hotspur, winner takes all. Henry will even offer pardons to the entire rebel side if Hal and Hotspur meet. Worcester, Hotspur's representative, does not trust this offer and instead lies to Hotspur that King Henry is spoiling for a fight. In the ensuing battle the rebels are resoundingly defeated. Hal slays Hotspur, saving his father in the process, although Falstaff—who survives the battle by playing dead—attempts to steal the glory for Hotspur's death. Hal, unwilling at this point to press the issue, lets Falstaff have his moment. All seems well for the moment, but there are other rebels lurking in the background in *Henry IV, Part II*.

Dramatis Personae

King Henry IV

Henry (Hal) the Prince of Wales

Prince John of Lancaster

Earl of Westmoreland

Sir Walter Blunt

Both friends of the King

Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland

Harry Percy, Hotspur, his son

Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March

Archibald, Earl of Douglas

Owen Glendower

*Lady Percy, wife of Hotspur and
sister of Mortimer*

*Lady Mortimer, new wife of Edmund and
Owen Glendower's daughter*

Sir Richard Vernon

Scroop, Archbishop of York

Sir Michael, friend of the Archbishop

Sir John Falstaff, Poins, Bardolph,

Peto, Gadshill,

Companions to Hal

*Hostess Quickly of the Boar's Head,
Eastcheap*

Francis, a drawer

Lords, Officers, Attendants, Sheriff,

Chamberlain, Drawers, Carriers,

Rich Travelers

Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus,
Te Dominum confitemur.
Te aeternum Patrem,
Omnis terra veneratur.
Tibi omnes Angeli,
Tibi caeli et universae Potestates,
Tibi cherubim et Seraphim
Incessabili voce proclamant:
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra
Maiestatis gloriae tuae.

We Praise you, O God,
And acknowledge you as Lord.
You, the eternal Father,
Venerated by all the Earth.
To You all the angels,
The heavens, the universal powers,
The Cherubim, and the Seraphim
Cry unceasingly:

Holy,
Holy,
Holy,

Lord God of Hosts.
The Heavens and the Earth are full
Of the glory of your majesty.

**“ 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”
Henry IV, Act I, scene i**