

Henry IV, Part 1 (Modern Library Classics)

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Henry IV sits on a usurped throne, his conscience and his nobles in revolt, while his son Hal is immersed in a self-indulgent life of revelry with the notorious Sir John Falstaff. Shakespeare explores questions of kingship and honor in this masterly mingling of history, comedy, and tragedy.

Under the editorial supervision of Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, two of today's most accomplished Shakespearean scholars, this Modern Library series incorporates definitive texts and authoritative notes from William Shakespeare: Complete Works. Each play includes an Introduction as well as an overview of Shakespeare's theatrical career; commentary on past and current productions based on interviews with leading directors, actors, and designers; scene-by-scene analysis; key facts about the work; a chronology of Shakespeare's life and times; and black-and-white illustrations.

Ideal for students, theater professionals, and general readers, these modern and accessible editions from the Royal Shakespeare Company set a new standard in Shakespearean literature for the twenty-first century.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564, and his birth is traditionally celebrated on April 23. The facts of his life, known from surviving documents, are sparse. He was one of eight children born to John Shakespeare, a merchant of some standing in his community. William probably went to the King's New School in Stratford, but he had no university education. In November 1582, at the age of eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior, who was pregnant with their first child, Susanna. She was born on May 26, 1583. Twins, a boy, Hamnet (who would die at age eleven), and a girl, Judith, were born in 1585. By 1592 Shakespeare had gone to London working as an actor and already known as a playwright. A rival dramatist, Robert Greene, referred to him as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers." Shakespeare became a principal shareholder and playwright of the successful acting troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later under James I, called the King's Men). In 1599 the Lord Chamberlain's Men built and occupied the Globe Theater in Southwark near the Thames River. Here many of Shakespeare's plays were performed by the most famous actors of his time, including Richard Burbage, Will Kempe, and Robert Armin. In addition to his 37 plays, Shakespeare had a hand in others, including Sir Thomas More and The Two Noble Kinsmen, and he wrote poems, including Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. His 154 sonnets were published, probably without his authorization, in 1609. In 1611 or 1612 he gave up his lodgings in London and devoted more and more time to retirement in Stratford, though he continued writing such plays as The Tempest and Henry VII until about 1613. He died on April 23 1616, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. No collected edition of his plays was published during his life-time, but in 1623 two members of his acting company, John Heminges and Henry Condell, put together the great collection now called the First Folio. Chapter 1

Act 1 Scene 1 running scene 1

Enter the King, Lord John of Lancaster, [the] Earl of Westmorland, with others

KING HENRY IV So shaken as we are, so wan with care,

Find we a time for frightened peace to part,
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 flow'rets with the arm'd hoofs
Of hostile paces. Those oppos'd 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-sheath'd knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ -
Whose soldier now, under whose bless'd cross
We are impress'd and engaged to fight -
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields

Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.

But this our purpose is a 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 Westmorland,

What yesternight our council did decree
In forwarding this dear expedience.

WESTMORLAND 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 the irregular and wild Glendower,

Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,

And 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 retold or spoken of.

KING HENRY IV It seems then that the tidings of this broil

Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

WESTMORLAND This matched with other like, my gracious lord.

Far more uneven and unwelcome news

Came from the north and thus it did report:

On Holy Rood day, the gallant Hotspur there,

Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,

That ever-valiant and approv^d 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 HENRY IV Here is a dear and 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

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?

WESTMORLAND In faith, it is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

KING HENRY IV Yea, there thou mak'st me sad and mak'st me sin

In envy that my Lord Northumberland

Should be the father of 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 called 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.

WESTMORLAND 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 HENRY IV 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, and 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 utter'd.

WESTMORLAND I will, my liege. Exeunt

Other Books

Henry V. EG, "The First Folio of 1623 is the definitive edition of Shakespeare's plays. It is more often than not the closest we can now get to what Shakespeare actually wrote. But the Folio's antiquated typography and cramped layout make it remote and inaccessible to modern eyes. The Shakespeare Folios on the other hand offer easy access directly to the First Folio by presenting the text in modern type but otherwise unchanged. All the First Folio's idiosyncrasies of layout and spelling, even its obvious errors, have been scrupulously left intact, but the text suddenly becomes as easily legible as the script of any modern play." "As an additional aid to understanding, readers will find, printed opposite each page of the Folio, the very same passage in a modern edition. So, whenever the Folio presents a problem, the reader can refer to this parallel text for a solution, either in the text itself or in the set of notes at the end of the book. These notes draw on the long tradition of Shakespearean scholarship and include full reference to surviving Quarto texts."--BOOK JACKET.

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