King Henry IV has two main problems as the 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 miscreant keeping company with rogues such as 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 Henry Percy, who is nicknamed “Hotspur”—decide that they will in turn not yield prisoners from a Scottish campaign to King Henry. Then they set about stirring up 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 Percys 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 take all; Henry will even offer pardons to everyone else on the 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 the Fourth*
*Henry, Prince of Wales, called Prince Hal*
*Prince John of Lancaster*
*Earl of Westmoreland*
*Sir Walter Blunt*
*Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester*
*Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland*
*Henry Percy, called Hotspur*
*Edmund Mortimer*
*Richard Scroop*
*Archibald, Earl of Douglas*
*Owen Glendower*
*Sir Richard Vernon*
*Sir John Falstaff*
*Sir Michael*
*Poins*
*Gadshill*
*Peto*
*Bardolph*
*Lady Percy, wife of Hotspur*
*Lady Mortimer*
*Mistress Quickly*
*Lords, Officers, Sheriff, Vintner*
*Chamberlain, Drawers, Carriers, Travelers and Attendants*