



Henry IV, Part I

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