

THE LIFE OF  
KING HENRY THE FIFTH

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*The Persons of the Play*

CHORUS

KING HARRY V of England

*His brothers* the Dukes of GLOUCESTER & of CLARENCE

*His uncle* the Duke of EXETER

The Duke of YORK

Lords SALISBURY, WESTMORLAND & WARWICK

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY

The Bishop of ELY

*The traitors*, Richard, Earl of CAMBRIDGE, Henry, Lord SCROPE of Masham and Sir Thomas Grey

PISTOL, NIM, & BARDOLPH, *former companions of Falstaff*

HOSTESS, *formerly Mistress Quickly, now Pistol's wife*

Captains GOWER, FLUELLEN, MACMORRIS, & JAMY

*respectively, an Englishman, a Welshman, an Irishman, & a Scot*

Sir Thomas ERPINGHAM

John BATES, Alexander COURT, and

Michael WILLIAMS, *English soldiers*

HERALD

KING CHARLES VI of France & ISABEL, his Queen.  
the DAUPHIN, *their son*, & CATHERINE, *their daughter*

ALICE, *an old gentlewoman*

The CONSTABLE of France, the Dukes of BOURBON, of ORLEANS &  
of BERRI, the Lords RAMBURES & GRANDPRE,  
*'French noblemen at Agincourt'*

The Duke of BURGUNDY

MONTJOY, the French Herald

The GOVERNOR of Harfleur

French AMBASSADORS to England

But till the King come forth, and not till then,  
Unto Southampton do we shift our scene.

*Exit*

## ACT II, SCENE I

*Enter Corporal Nim and Lieutenant Bardolph*

BARDOLPH Well met, Corporal Nim. 1  
NIM Good morrow, Lieutenant Bardolph.  
BARDOLPH What, are Ensign<sup>o</sup> Pistol and you friends yet? Ensign] F (Ancient)  
NIM For my part, I care not. I say little, but what time shall 5  
serve,<sup>o</sup> there shall be smiles – but that shall be as it may.<sup>o</sup>  
I dare not fight,<sup>o</sup> but I will wink<sup>o</sup> and hold out mine iron.<sup>o</sup>  
It is a simple one, but what though?<sup>o</sup> It will toast cheese,<sup>o</sup>  
and it will endure cold, as another man's sword will – and  
there's an end.  
BARDOLPH I will bestow a breakfast to male you friends, 10  
and we'll be all three sworn brothers<sup>o</sup> to France. Let't be  
so, good Corporal Nim.  
NIM Faith, I will live so long as I may, that's the certain of  
it, and when I cannot live any longer, I will do as I may.<sup>o</sup>  
That is my rest,<sup>o</sup> that is the rendezvous<sup>o</sup> of it. 15  
BARDOLPH It is certain, corporal, that he is married to Nell  
Quickly, and certainly she did you wrong, for you were  
troth-plight<sup>o</sup> to her.  
NIM I cannot tell. Things must be as they may. Men may 20  
sleep, and they may have their throats about them at that  
time, and some say knives have edges. It must be as it may.  
Patience be a tired mare, yet she will plod. There must be  
conclusions. Well, I cannot tell. mare] Q; name F

II, i This and 2.3 are often called Eastcheap scenes, from the location of the tavern in *1 Henry IV*; in fact both seem to be unlocalized street scenes.

s.d. Nim] Editors usually spell Nym, but F has both spellings, and the word *nim* (= thief, thieve), though now archaic, survived until early in the twentieth century. Nim is usually portrayed as shaggy-haired (in deference to Pistol's repeated descriptions of him as a hairy dog), and small (as he is called a lap-dog, l. 39, and possibly a *tick*, l. 28).

Lieutenant] At 3.2.2 Nim calls Bardolph *corporal*, the rank he held in *2 Henry IV*.

3 Ensign] According to the *OED*, F's *ancient* is 'a corruption of *ensign*, early forms of which, like *ensyne*, *enseyne*, were confused with *ancien*, *ancyen*, the contemporary forms of *ancient*, with which they thus became

formally identified from the 16th to the 18th c.'

4–5 **when time shall serve**] Though *OED* sanctions this use of *shall* in temporal clauses denoting a future contingency' (10c), it also remarks that 'where no ambiguity results ... the present tense is commonly used for the future, and ... the use of *shall*, when not required for clearness, is apt to sound pedantic'.

5 **that shall be as it may**] proverbial

6 **I dare not fight**] 'This is said with irony.

**wink**] close both eyes

7 **iron**] sword

**what though**] what of that

7–8 **toast cheese**] Compare *K. John*, 4.3.99, 'I'll so maul you and your toasting iron'. The modern equivalent would probably be 'toast marshmallows'.

11 **sworn brothers**] 'companions in arms who took an oath according

to the rules of chivalry to share each other's goods and bad fortunes' (*OED*).

14 **when ... may**] Proverbial: 'Men must do as they may (can), not as they would'.

**do as I may**] A modern stage tradition, that Nim stutters, has the merit of bringing out the absurdity of this line, the stutter on *do* giving the audience time to anticipate the obvious and logical conclusion *die*, which Nim then avoids.

15 **rest**] last resolve

**rendezvous**] a retreat, a refuge; a sense first recorded at *1 Henry IV*, 4.1.57.

18 **troth-plight**] betrothed (a more binding contract than the modern engagement)

*Enter Ensign Pistol<sup>o</sup> and Hostess Quickly*  
BARDOLPH Good morrow, Ensign Pistol.<sup>o</sup> [*To Nim*] Here 25  
comes Ensign Pistol and his wife. Good corporal, be  
patient here.  
NIM How now, mine host<sup>o</sup> Pistol?  
PISTOL  
Base tick,<sup>o</sup> call'st thou me host? Now by Gad's lugs<sup>o</sup> 27  
I swear I scorn the term. Nor shall Nell keep lodgers.  
HOSTESS No, by my troth, not long, for we cannot lodge 30  
and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen that live  
honestly<sup>o</sup> by the prick<sup>o</sup> of their needles, but it will be  
thought we keep a bawdy-house straight.  
*Nim draws his sword*  
Oh well-a-day. Lady!<sup>o</sup> If he be not hewn<sup>o</sup> now, we shall see 35  
wilful adultery<sup>o</sup> and murder committed.  
*Pistol draws his sword*  
BARDOLPH Good Lieutenant, good corporal, offer noth-  
ing here.  
NIM Pish.<sup>o</sup>  
PISTOL Pish for thee, Iceland dog.<sup>o</sup> Thou prick-eared cur 40  
of Iceland.  
HOSTESS Good Corporal Nim, show thy valour, and put  
up your sword.  
*They sheathe their swords*  
NIM Will you shog off?<sup>o</sup> I will have you *solus*.<sup>o</sup>  
PISTOL  
'*Solus*', egregious dog? O viper vile!  
The *solus* in thy most marvellous face, 45  
The *solus* in thy teeth, and in thy throat,  
And in thy hateful lungs, yea, in thy maw<sup>o</sup> pardie –  
And which is worse, within thy nasty mouth.  
I do retort the *solus* in thy bowels,  
For I can take, and Pistol's cock is up, 50  
And flashing fire will follow.

s.d. Pistol] The name probably alludes to Basilisco, a cowardly braggart in Kyd's *Solyman and Perseda* (1589–92); a basilisk was a great cannon. Contemporary pistols were notoriously inaccurate but very noisy. For Pistol in the theatre, see Introduction, pp. 64–5.  
24 **good morrow, Ensign Pistol**] In F, Bardolph sees Pistol coming, urges Nim to be patient, then addresses Pistol. In Q Bardolph sees Pistol, shouts a greeting to him, then while Pistol approaches, urges Nim to be patient; but Nim immediately greets Pistol in a provocative manner.  
27 **host**] Corporal Nim addresses his superior officer not as 'Ensign' (as

Bardolph has done twice in the immediately preceding speech) but as 'inn-keeper'. *Host* could also imply 'pimp'.

28 **tick**] Most editors have respelled *tike*, glossing 'small dog'.

**Gad's lugs**] God's ears

31 **honestly**] (a) decently (b) chastely

32 **prick**] unwittingly obscene

34 **Lady**] '(By Our) Lady', a mild oath  
**hewn**] cut down

35 **wilful adultery**] She probably means 'unwilling adultery' (rape) or 'intentional adultery' (on Nim's part). Editors assume she malapropos a neologism ('assaultury') – which seems uncommunicable.

s.d. Ensign] not in QF  
Hostess] not in F

24 Good morrow, Ensign Pistol.] Q (Goodmorrow ancient Pistoll); not in F

27 Nim] Q; not in F

28 tick] F (Tyke) Gad's lugs] Q; this hand F

29 term] F; title Q

31 gentlewoman] F; honest getlewome Q

s.d. Nim draws his sword] not in QF

34 Lady] F; Lord heeres Corporall Nims Q

s.d. Pistol draws his sword] not in QF

They sheathe their swords] not in QF

45 marvellous] F (meruailous)  
pardie] F (perdy)

38 **Pish**] a contemptuous exclamation used in vulgar contexts; probably accompanied by an insulting gesture

39 **Iceland dog**] lap-dog (with an implicit sexual sense).

43 **shog off**] go away, move along.

The word's first occurrence in this sense; it survives in Midland dialect, and was probably always a dialect usage.

**solus**] alone (theatre Latin)

44 **egregious**] an affected word, used only by Pistol, Paroles, and Posthumous when ranting.

47 **maw**] stomach