

PLUMP JACK



AN OPERA IN TWO ACTS

by

GORDON GETTY

LIBRETTO

PLUMP JACK

AN OPERA IN TWO ACTS

LIBRETTO

Adapted from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*,
Parts One and Two, and *Henry V*

by

GORDON GETTY

Copyright: RORK MUSIC 1985,

Revised September 21, 2002

CAST OF CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

(Roles listed together are sung by the same performer.)

Hostess (Nell Quickly)	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>
Boy, Clarence	<i>Soprano</i>
Fang, Davy	<i>Bass</i>
Snare, Shallow.....	<i>Tenor</i>
Falstaff.....	<i>Baritone</i>
Chief Justice	<i>Baritone</i>
Bardolph.....	<i>Baritone</i>
Hal (Henry V)	<i>Tenor</i>
Henry IV.....	<i>Bass</i>
Pistol.....	<i>Baritone</i>
Warwick.....	<i>Baritone</i>
Chorus	

CAST OF CHARACTERS (BREAKDOWN BY SCENE)

ACT I

<i>SCENE 1</i>	<i>SCENE 2</i>	<i>SCENE 3</i>	<i>SCENE 4</i>	<i>SCENE 5</i>
<i>THE WARRANT</i>	<i>HAL'S MEMORY</i>	<i>GAD'S HILL</i>	<i>CLARENCE</i>	<i>BOAR'S HEAD INN</i>
Hostess	Hal (Henry V)	Boy	Henry IV	Hal (Henry V)
Fang	Henry IV	Hal (Henry V)	Chief Justice	Boy
Boy		Falstaff	Clarence	Falstaff
Snare		Pistol		Hostess
Falstaff		Bardolph		Pistol
Chief Justice		1 st Traveler		Bardolph
Bardolph		2 nd Traveler		
Hal (Henry V)				
Constables				
Crowd				

ACT II

<i>SCENE 6</i>	<i>SCENE 7</i>	<i>SCENE 8</i>	<i>SCENE 9</i>	<i>SCENE 10</i>
<i>SHALLOW'S ORCHARD</i>	<i>JERUSALEM</i>	<i>DAVY'S LEDGER</i>	<i>PISTOL'S NEWS</i>	<i>BANISHMENT</i>
Falstaff	Henry IV	Shallow	Falstaff	Boy
Shallow	Chief Justice	Davy	Shallow	Hostess
Bardolph	Clarence	Falstaff	Bardolph	Bardolph
Boy	Warwick	Bardolph	Boy	Falstaff
	Hal (Henry V)	Boy	Davy	Pistol
	Attendants	Servants	Pistol	Shallow
		Clerk		Clarence
		Handyman		Warwick
		Cook		Chief Justice
				Hal (Henry V)
				Crowd

CAST OF CHARACTERS (BREAKDOWN BY SCENE) (cont.)

ACT II (cont.)

SCENE 11

MUSE OF FIRE

Pistol

Boy

Hostess

Bardolph

Shallow

Davy

Hal (Henry V)

SCENE 12

OFF TO WAR

Pistol

Hostess

Bardolph

Boy

Shallow

Davy

Hal (Henry V)

Chief Justice

Officers

Prelates

Soldiers

Bagpipers

Dancer

Crowd

SOME IDEAS ON CASTING AND INTERPRETATION

As to vocal casting, only Falstaff, Pistol and Hal/Henry V need voices of operatic heft. Even Falstaff can make do with less if other qualities balance the scale. A musical comedy sound will do just as well for Hostess, Shallow and the rest. Miking can fix any projection problems.

It may be practical to double some roles, especially in a professional performance. For example, a single tenor-and-baritone comedy team ought to play Fang and Snare, then the two travelers, then the two captains, then Shallow and Davy and finally the two captains again. Both should be expert tumblers, or should drop the pratfalls written for them. It is also possible to adopt Peter Sellars' idea of doubling Falstaff and Henry IV. In any case it may be practical for the singer of Falstaff's or Pistol's role to sing Henry IV's lines in the "Hal's Memory" scene.

American and British accents are both fine in all roles. Cockney is acceptable only for Hostess, Fang, Snare, Bardolph, the two travelers, the two grooms and unidentified crowd voices. The others either have important speeches in blank verse, which very much want the Queen's English, or, like Falstaff and Boy, are anyhow a cut above the ineptness and ignorance that stage tradition connects with cockney.

Some characters speak and never sing, some sing and never speak, and some do both. *Plump Jack* treats song as the native language of melodrama and feeling, and speech as that of wit and reason. Thus the court scenes are generally spoken and the common life scenes sung. After all, the three great plays from which we draw our text focus much on the theme of impulse against responsibility. Song and speech help mark the difference between them in *Plump Jack*.

Hostess, for example, is all temperament and tenderness. She is not stupid, but calculation is impossible for her. Thus she lives in the singing world only, the world of feeling, and sings even when the rest speak. Meanwhile the Chief Justice, though fully as warm and human, is a man who has devoted his life to public order. He stands for principle, forethought and common sense. We can no more imagine him or Warwick bustling into song, in the context of *Plump Jack*, than we can imagine Hostess speaking. They inhabit different realms.

Most of the lines we give Hostess at the end of the Boar's Head Inn scene belong properly to Shakespeare's Doll Tearsheet. By combining the roles we invent an enduring romance for Falstaff, which doesn't exist in the plays.

Hostess' cockney, by the way, would be a problem for most American interpreters if she were required to speak. The fact that she isn't removes the problem. She can sing in American or any English dialect with good effect. The music overlays the accents and irons out the differences among them.

Shallow is only a few years older than Falstaff, but as frail as Sir John is robust. Though alert and in perfect health, he is a mere wisp of a man that we might expect the winds to blow away. The more he convinces us of feeble old age, the more surprising and funnier his skips and acrobatics will be. Shallow shows us much of the dotard and pantaloon. But above all he is the

soul of merry England. He is effusive, repetitious, liberal, and almost invincibly cheerful. The loss of his thousand pounds finally subdues him a bit. But even then he manages some puns whose timing, if nothing else, does him credit. Like Hostess, he lives only in the world of feeling and song.

Pistol, like Hostess or Shallow, might be described as a caricature with a soul. He never simply stands and speaks. Rather he strikes heroic poses and glowers and declaims. The *miles gloriosus* is one of Falstaff's many personae, but it is Pistol's only one. Pistol can laugh merrily enough at Falstaff's jokes, along with the other Falstaffians. But whenever he has the floor, he is in character. Then he must never smile. His marital scowl softens to tenderness only when he bids farewell to Hostess at the end. Though he has a few spoken lines early on, he has little to do with realism and belongs firmly to the singing world. Whoever plays him cannot overact enough.

Shakespeare's Davy is a genial bumpkin. *Plump Jack* turns him into a sort of rural Malvolio, a petulant and baleful presence who brooks no interference with the way he runs Shallow's household, least of all from Shallow. By giving him lines of Shakespeare's Master Silence in the scene where Pistol brings news of Henry IV's death we make him a secret tippler, much more agreeable drunk than sober. Davy mostly speaks when sober and sings when drunk.

Bardolph and Boy are not caricatures in anything like the same degree, and they move easily between the singing and speaking worlds. Bardolph is for the most part useful and inconspicuous, rather than a figure of fun. Falstaff is far too shrewd to trust his affairs entirely to zanies. One Pistol is enough.

Falstaff and Hal likewise are at home in the worlds of impulse and reason alike, even though they take the main roles in the struggle between them. In the end Shakespeare endorses both worlds, and so should we. We are meant to love Falstaff, and yet to support every word of Hal's renunciation of him. Whether we humanly can do both these things has been much debated, but there is no doubt Shakespeare intended us to. It may be relevant that the defeat of the Armada was of very recent memory when the three plays were written, and that English audiences might have been willing then to give old friends' feelings a low priority against soundness of the state.

And soundness of the state is the real issue in Falstaff's banishment, rather than any hollow "confirmation conversion" of Hal to establishment mores. Shakespeare takes pains to reassure us of this. Hal's wooing of Catherine in Henry V, long after the banishment, will be set in unbuttoned prose, full of humor and self-deprecation. Hal has not lost the common touch. He is never a prig, but rather always a king who does his duty to old friends and strangers evenhandedly.

We should say more. For Shakespeare's audience Henry V was one of the greatest Englishmen in history, and the three plays are built around this perception. Never mind that some historians today take a dimmer view of him. What matters is that the plays and *Plump Jack* can't work if Hal loses our respect at any point, particularly in the banishment scene. He will lose it if he pulls his punches there, and he will lose it if he hits low. He must pour on the

cold fury, as much as he can muster. He must not seem to shrink from the task, or much worse yet, to play cat and mouse. He must chill Falstaff to the bone without the least indication that he either enjoys the business or is squeamish about it. He must convince all within earshot that no man was ever less a wimp, nor yet less a sadist. In particular, he must not smile. He must leave the crowd desperately glad they are not Falstaff, and convinced that they have a great and fair king. No doubt the scene plays easier, in an antiheroic age, if Hal is shown as a demagogue whose latent mean streak has been brought out by power. But it cheats Shakespeare and it cheats the audience in the end.

There is no room for meanness anywhere in the three plays, and least of all in the character of Prince Hal. The plays show us a dangerous but utterly wholesome world. It is a world where civil and foreign war and an unstable dynasty make life and fortune precarious, but where malaise does not exist. There is cold-blooded and hypocritical statecraft, for example Prince John's fine-printing trickery at Gaultree. But John arrests the rebel leaders only, and honors his word to their disbanded armies. There is no cruelty and no evil on any page of the three plays. If we allow Hal the least relish in his ascendancy or in his repudiation of his old friend, we make him not merely the worst villain of his age but the only one. And Shakespeare, beyond doubt, has meant him to be understood as its greatest hero. These are some of the implications we should bear in mind if we are tempted to portray Hal less sympathetically than Falstaff in the banishment scene.

And making Hal sympathetic there may not be as tall an order as some think. Many of us remember what it is to bawl out a child or subordinate, and to be bawled out in turn. We know the difference between doing it with maximum voltage on one hand, and with cowardice on the other. These things differ not in degree, but in kind. We will know the difference when Hal finds he must put the fear of God into the fat knight.

But *Plump Jack* is Falstaff's story even more than Hal's, and the name role asks for an exceptional actor and singer. We meet him as the picaresque virtuoso, effortlessly slipping out of Hostess' net, cadging another ten pounds from her for good measure, playing the crowd at will, and greeting the Crown Prince as a bosom friend. Next we see him at Gad's Hill in an opposite light. This time he is the butt of the joke, outwitted and apoplectic, yet if anything even funnier. We found him first at his most masterful; here he is at his most appealing. Falstaff in adversity is irresistible. His outbursts are as true as they are preposterous. We know just how he feels. He is Everyman magnified by comic genius, and we will forgive him much for the way he made us laugh at Gad's Hill.

Falstaff shows us many other faces as we go along, inventing a new one for every occasion. The real Falstaff is not one of them, but rather all of them put together. He cannot stop acting, even in his soliloquies. He is a man too ebullient, too full of life to suspend the game. Only at one moment does he speak entirely without craft. This happens when he rises from his banishment and remarks vaguely, "Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound." But he is back in character directly after.

None of this artifice makes him less touching or less human, and indeed there is much of the overgrown child in him. He is never honest, but never cold and never bored. He thinks and

feels as only Shakespeare can make characters think and feel, and for this alone he transcends the race of picaresques. He makes us laugh, but beyond that, he makes us smile. Shakespeare convinces us that we can no more afford a world without clowns than a world without heroes.

“The King hath killed his heart,” says Hostess, and whoever plays Falstaff should take care to show us he had a heart to kill. It would be a serious mistake to make him less touching in order to help justify his banishment. Regardless how warmly Falstaff is played, the justification is more than ample. Any audience, past or present, will have seen that the Gad’s Hill escapade alone warrants Falstaff a prison term if not a hanging. And few will feel that his swindling of innocents such as Hostess and Shallow ought to go unpunished. We cannot excuse Falstaff. Rather we love and forgive him, subject to his payment of the penalty he owes. Shakespeare and Hal let him off with a tonguelashing, albeit a tonguelashing for the ages, and the mild banishment “not to come near our person by ten mile.” When we ourselves are judged, may we escape as lightly.

ACT I

Scene 1 *The Warrant*

A street or square in London, about noon. A sign in the foreground shows a boar's head. A few drunks sleep in doorways. A fruit vendor dozes at his stand. After a few seconds of this tableau, Hostess, Boy, Fang and six to ten Constables rush in. These men are zealous but brainless, Elizabethan Keystone Kops.

HOSTESS : Master Fang, have you entered the action?

FANG : Hostess Nell Quickly, it is entered. Here is the warrant.

HOSTESS : Where's your yeoman? Is it a lusty yeoman? Will he stand fast?

FANG : *(To an officer)* Sirrah, where's Snare?

Snare runs in, trips, and crashes through the fruit stand. Sleepers are jarred awake. Deadpan and lightning quick, Snare and the constables clean up the mess. Boy's attitude is puckish, playful.

BOY, HOSTESS, : O, Lord, ay, Master Snare!
CHORUS

FANG : Snare, we must arrest Sir John Falstaff.

Alarm among Snare and Constables.

SNARE : Missus Quickly, it may cost us all our lives, for he will stab!

BOY, HOSTESS, : *(Boy in mock terror, the others in earnest.)* Alas the day!
CHORUS

FANG : *(Steps forward, hunching into a wrestling stance.)* If I can close with him, I care not for his thrust!

HOSTESS : *(Joins Fang.)* Nor I neither! I'll be at your elbow!

SNARE, FANG : *(Snare joins them, showing his uppercut.)* If I fist him but once, if he come but within my vice!

Snare and Fang grapple with imaginary Falstaffs. The other constables join in. Boy does the same, but in jest.

BOY, CHORUS : Good Master Fang, hold him sure, good Master Snare, let him not escape!

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 1

The imaginary Falstaffs are polished off. Hostess snatches the warrant from Fang and holds it up for all to see.

BOY, HOSTESS, : Let him be brought to justice!
SNARE, FANG,
CHORUS

HOSTESS : *(Holding the warrant under the constables' noses by turn, as if any of them could read.)* A hundred marks he owes me, a hundred marks! And I have borne, and borne, and borne, and been fubbed off, and fubbed off, and fubbed off, from that day to this, that it is a shame to be thought on! *(Pointing with the warrant. All look. Consternation.)* Yonder he comes, and that arrant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph, with him, and his swaggering henchmen. Do your offices, do your offices, *(The constables form a double line, half kneeling in front and half standing behind. All hold up their truncheons in front of them.)* Master Fang and Master Snare, do me, do me do me, do me your offices!

Enter Falstaff, Bardolph and two or three retainers. Falstaff is jovial and unworried, taking no apparent notice of the constables.

FALSTAFF : How now, Nell? Whose mare's dead? What's the matter?

FANG : Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Hostess Quickly.

FALSTAFF : Draw, Bardolph, hearties! *(They fight.)* Cut me off the villains' heads!

FALSTAFF : Throw the jade in the channel!

SNARE, FANG, : Help!
CHORUS

HOSTESS : Throw me in the channel! I'll throw thee in the channel!

SNARE, FANG, : Help! A rescue, a rescue, a rescue! a rescue! a rescue!
CHORUS

Enter the Chief Justice and his men. In contrast to Fang's bunch, these are able officers. He is a stern but kindly man with a twinkle in his eye. The combatants freeze. Hostess and Boy kneel.

SNARE, FANG, : My Lord Chief Justice!
CHORUS

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 1

While order is being restored, a crowd gathers. A spotlight finds HAL joining it. Those about him start to kneel or curtsy, but he stops this with a gesture and taps his lips for secrecy. We see at once that he is on easy terms with all of them.

BOY : *(Aside to Hostess. Chiding, not menacing.)* This is the lord that committed the Prince for boxing his ear.

CH. JUSTICE : How now, Sir John? What, are you brawling here? You should have been well on your way to York, in the King's wars.

(To the constables.) Stand from him fellows. Wherefore hang upon him?

The constables scurry away from Falstaff. As Falstaff is about to begin, Hostess runs in front of him.

CH. JUSTICE : Sir John, explain.

HOSTESS : O my most worshipful lord, I am Hostess Nell Quickly, and he is arrested at my suit. He hath eaten me out of house and home. He hath put all my substance into that fat belly of his, and will not pay back a groat! *(Crowd laughter again.)*

CH. JUSTICE : How comes this, Sir John? Again? *(Hal and the crowd react with sotto voce mirth.)* Mend, mend, Sir John. Have you not misled the youthful Prince? And will you now enforce this poor woman to so rough a course to come into her own? Have you forgotten your years?

FALSTAFF : My Lord Chief Justice, this is a poor mad soul, *(Hostess is miffed)* and she says up and down the town that her eldest son is like you.

Hal and the crowd crack up. Hostess is fit to be tied.

FALSTAFF : Touching my age, I was born about three o'clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly. *(Crowd mirth again.)* The truth is, I am only old in judgment and understanding, and he that will caper with me for a thousand marks, *(slyly, out of the side of his mouth)* let him lend me the money, and have at him! *(Falstaff grabs a pikestaff from Snare, blocks imaginary blows with it, and then shoves with his foot. The crowd cracks up.)* For the box of the ear that the Prince gave you, I have checked him for it, and the young lion repents, marry, *(lugubriously, with a broad wink at Hal)* not in sackcloth but in sack.

BOY, HOSTESS, : *(The constables devoutly, the rest in fun.)* Mm
HAL, OTHERS

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 1

Hal and the crowd roar with laughter. The audience should sense that neither Hal nor the Chief Justice bears a grudge over the earboxing incident, and that the Chief Justice tolerates Falstaff's impertinence with good grace.

FALSTAFF : But, my lord, I say the widow shall have justice. Good Mistress Quickly, what is the gross sum that I owe thee?

HOSTESS : *(Reproachful)* Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. *(Innocent, otherworldly, lost in memory)* Thou didst swear to me, upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin Chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing man of Windsor. *(Falstaff claps his hand to his head in mock pain, to the delight of Hal and the crowd.)* Thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me the lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it?

Falstaff shrugs his shoulders, palms up in a "What's wrong with that?" gesture. Again the crowd roars with laughter.

HOSTESS : Did not good wife Keech the butcher's wife come in then, and call me Gossip* Quickly? Coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar, telling us she had a good dish of prawns, whereby thou didst desire to eat some, whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? *(This time Falstaff claps hands to stomach, eyes bulging in mock nausea. Hal and the crowd roar again.)* And didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs, desire me to be no more so familiar with such poor people, saying that ere long they should call me madam?

This time the laughter is faint and uncomfortable. Hostess' homely tale has begun to touch the crowd. Some wipe their eyes.

HOSTESS : And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book oath. Deny it if thou canst.

Dead silence. The crowd doesn't know whether to laugh or weep.

CH. JUSTICE : *(Quietly)* Sir John, pay her the debt.

FALSTAFF : *(Feigning indignation, as if no other thought than to pay her had ever entered his mind.)* My lord, as I am a gentleman, I shall.

* "Gossip" meant something like "neighbor", but the modern meaning is funnier here.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 1

The crowd roars approval. Someone cries “Hurrah Sir John!” Falstaff has them solidly on his side again.

HOSTESS : So you said before.

FALSTAFF : *(Still indignant)* As I am gentleman, every penny. *(His mood brightens.)* I shall receive money o’ Thursday. Thou shall have a cap tomorrow. Come, no more words of it.

HOSTESS : *(Distraught)* By this heavenly ground I tread on, you’ll put me off again? I’ll never see a farthing back. I must pawn all my plate and the tapestries of my dining chambers!

She weeps. Falstaff takes her in his arms.

FALSTAFF : Glasses, Nell, glasses is the only drinking. And for thy walls, a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the prodigal, is worth a thousand of these bed-hangings and these fly-bitten tapestries. Lend me ten pound until Thursday. Come, an ’twere not for thy humors, there’s not a better wench in England. Come, wash thy face and withdraw the action. Tear up the warrant, and lend me ten pound.

HOSTESS : Faith, Sir John, let it be but twenty nobles. In faith, I am loath to pawn my plate, so God save me, la!

FALSTAFF : *(Feigning exasperation)* Let it alone. I’ll make other shift. You’ll be a fool still.

Falstaff stalks away a few steps. Hostess dries her tears, reflects, and decides. She walks to the dumbfounded Fang, takes the warrant from him, and tears it in pieces.)

HOSTESS : Well, you shall have it, though I pawn my gown.

Hostess and Falstaff embrace. The Chief Justice smiles in good-natured amusement; he has seen it all before. Exit all but Hostess, Falstaff, Bardolph and the retainers.

BOY, HAL,
BARDOLPH
OTHERS : Bravo, John!

HOSTESS : I hope you’ll come to dinner tomorrow night. You’ll pay me all together?

FALSTAFF : Will I live? *(Exeunt Hostess and Boy.)* Go with her, boys, hook on, hook on.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 1

Exeunt Bardolph and retainers.

- HAL : *Coming forward.* Well played, Sir John Barebone!
- FALSTAFF : Hal, good morrow!
- HAL : How long is it ago, lean Jack, since thou saw'st thine own knee?
- FALSTAFF : My own knee? When I was about thy years, Harry, I was not an eagle's talon in the waist. I could have crept into any alderman's thumb ring. A plague of sighing and grief; it blows a man up like a bladder. Hal, there's villainous news about; I must to the wars. If our armies join on a hot day, and I brandish anything but a bottle, I would I might never spit white again. *(Enter Boy.)* Boy, come join us, lad.
- BOY : Brave tidings, your worship! Tomorrow morning, by four o'clock early at Gad's Hill, there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses. You and your men may rob them as secure as sleep.
- FALSTAFF : Hal, wilt thou join us?
- HAL : Who, I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith.
- FALSTAFF : There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, Hal, nor thou cam'st not of the blood royal, if thou dare'st not stand.
- BOY : Sir John, I prithee leave us alone: I'll convince him.
- FALSTAFF : Well, Boy, God give thee the spirit of persuasion, and him the ears of profiting. Farewell, you shall find me in Eastcheap.
- HAL : Farewell, the latter spring!

Exit Falstaff.

- BOY : Now, my good lord, ride with us tomorrow, I have a jest to play. Falstaff, Bardolph and Pistol will rob the travelers; you will manage to be out of sight when they do. And when they have the booty, if you do not rob them, cut this head from off my shoulders. They will not know who you are; I have a cloak of Kendal green to mask you. The reward for our trouble will be the uproarious lies Sir John will tell us at supper, how thirty at least he fought with, and in the reproof of this lies the jest.
- HAL : Well, then I'll go with thee. Farewell.
- BOY : Farewell, my lord.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 2

Scene 2 *Hal's Memory*

Exeunt Boy. The stage darkens. Spotlight on Hal. We hear a hubbub of male voices from the dark, beginning a second or two before the music.

HENRY IV : Lords, give us leave. The Prince of Wales and I
Must have some private conference.

The hubbub dies down to silence. Another spotlight finds Henry IV standing behind and above Hal, still part of Hal's memory.

HENRY IV : Harry, son,
Thou know'st that Percy and Northumberland,
Douglas, and the Archbishop's Grace of York
Rise to make head against us in the north
And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
But why tell this to thee? For all the world,
As thou art to this hour was Richard once,
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh.
The skipping King, he ambled up and down,
Mingled his royalty with capering fools,
And grew companion to the common streets.
And in that very line, Harry, standest thou,
For thou hast lost thy privilege. Not an eye
But is a-weary of thy common sight
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more,
Which now doth what I would not have it do,
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

Henry IV is moved to tears. Spotlight on Henry IV fades out slowly. Spotlight on Hal up.

HAL : So please your majesty, I would I could
Quit all offences I am charged withal,
But some are true. May these wherein my youth
Hath faulty wandered and irregular,
Find pardon in my true submission.
I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious lord,
Be more myself, and will redeem myself.
This in the name of God I promise here.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 3

Scene 3 *Gad's Hill*

Spotlight on Hal out. Total darkness. We are at Gad's Hill. A horse neighs.

BOY : Come, shelter, your highness! I have removed Falstaff's horse, and he frets like gummed velvet.

HAL : *(Offstage.)* Stand close, Boy!

FALSTAFF : Boy! Boy and be hanged! Boy!

HAL : Peace, ye fat-kidneyed rascal! What a brawling dost thou keep.

FALSTAFF : Where's Boy, Hal?

HAL : He's walked up to the top of the hill; I'll go fetch him.

Exeunt Hal and Boy. Enter Falstaff with a lantern.

FALSTAFF : Hal! I am accursed to rob in that thief's company; the rascal hath removed my horse and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot further afoot, I shall break my wind. Well I doubt not to die a fair death for all this, if I scape hanging for killing that rogue. I have forsworn his company hourly these two and twenty years, and yet I am bewitched with the rogue. If the rascal hath not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged. Boy! Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me, and the stonyhearted rascals know it well enough. A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true to one another. Whew! A plague upon you all, give me my horse, you rogues, give me my horse, and be hanged!

Enter Hal and Boy.

HAL : Peace, ye fat guts, lie down, lay thine ear close to the ground, and list if thou canst hear the tread of travelers.

FALSTAFF : *(Falstaff complies effortfully.)* Hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent garters! If I be taken, I'll peach for this, and if I have no ballads made on you all, and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison!

Enter Pistol.

PISTOL : Stand!

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 3

FALSTAFF : *(Aside, struggling to his feet.)* So I do, against my will. Pistol, what news? *(Raising his lantern so that Pistol can recognize them.)*

PISTOL : O valiant knight,
Bardolph and I stand guard athwart the road,
As dread as Mars, as fierce as Cerberus,
And ready for great deeds.

Enter Hal, Boy, and Bardolph.

BOY : *(Spoken. Rapid fire, keeping his voice down.)* On with your masks, there's money of the King's coming down the hill.

BARDOLPH : 'Tis going to the King's exchequer.

FALSTAFF : Bardolph, ye lie, ye rogue. 'Tis going to the King's Tavern.

HAL : You three front them there in the narrow lane. I'll close from behind. Boy, guard the horses.

FALSTAFF : Now, Masters, every man to his business.

Exeunt Falstaff, Pistol and Bardolph.

HAL : Boy, where's my disguise?

BOY : Here, my lord, hard by.

Exeunt Hal and Boy.

1ST TRAV. : *(Offstage)* Come, neighbor. The boy shall lead our horses down the hill. *(Enter the two travelers.)* We'll walk afoot awhile, and rest our legs.

Falstaff, Pistol and Bardolph rush in and set upon the travelers.

FAL., PIST.,
BARD. : Stand!

2ND TRAV. : Jesus bless us!

FALSTAFF : Strike! Down with them! Cut the villains' throats! Ah, caterpillars, bacon-fed knaves, they hate us youth. Down with them, fleece them!

In the scuffle, the travelers tumble offstage. Falstaff, Pistol and Bardolph follow them.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 3

1ST TRAV. : (Offstage) O! We are undone, both we and ours forever!

FALSTAFF : (Offstage) What, ye fat chuffs! Young men must live. We'll teach ye, faith!

Enter Hal and Boy with lanterns from the opposite side of the stage. As they speak, Hal puts on his disguise.

HAL : The thieves have bound the true men; now might I rob the thieves. It would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest forever. Stand close, I hear them coming.

Exeunt.

FALSTAFF : Come my masters, let us share, then to horse before day. If the Prince be not an arrant coward. There's no equity stirring; there's no more valour in that Hal than in a wild duck.

Enter Hal, disguised. He disguises his voice.

HAL : Your money! Villains!

They fight. Pistol and Bardolph run away. After a blow or two, Falstaff runs also, leaving the booty behind. Hal collects it while Boy cuts the bonds of the travelers.

HAL : Got with much ease. (He tosses the money to the travelers.)

2ND TRAV. : Thank you, sir.

1ST TRAV. : God bless your gracious worship.

Exeunt the two travelers. Hal and Boy reel with hilarity as Hal takes off his disguise.

HAL : Now merrily to horse.
The thieves are scattered and possessed with fear
So strongly that they dare not meet each other; (out of breath with laughter)
Each takes his fellow for an officer.
Away, good Boy. Falstaff sweats to death,
And lards the lean earth as he walks along.
Were't not for laughing, I should pity him.

BOY : How the fat knight roared!

Exeunt. Blackness again. We hear Falstaff roaring in the distance then receding hoofbeats.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 4

Scene 4 *Clarence*

HENRY IV : My Lord Chief Justice,
If God shall please to give successful end to this
debate that bleedeth at our doors,
We will our youth lead on to higher fields,
And draw no swords but in the Holy Land.
Only we want a little personal strength,
And pause us, till these rebels, now afoot,
Come underneath the yoke of government.

CH. JUSTICE : Both which we doubt not but your majesty shall soon enjoy.

The king clasps his old friend's hand.

HENRY IV : Thomas, my son of Clarence, come to my side.

CLARENCE : What would my lord and father?

HENRY IV : Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.
How chance thou are not with the prince thy brother?
He loves thee, and thou dost neglect him, Thomas.
Thou hast a better place in his affections than all thy brothers.
Cherish it, my boy.
He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for meeting charity.
Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint, as humorous as winter
And as sudden.
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working.
Learn this, Thomas,
And thou shalt be a shelter to thy friends,
A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in.

Father and son embrace.

CLARENCE : I shall observe him with all care and love.

HENRY IV : Why art thou not at Windsor with him, Thomas?

CLARENCE : He is not there today he dines in London.

HENRY IV : And how accompanied? Canst thou tell that?

CLARENCE : With Falstaff and his other followers.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 4

HENRY IV : Most subject is the richest soil to weeds,
And he, the noble image of my youth, is overspread with them.
The blood weeps from my heart when I conceive
the rotten times that you
Will look upon when I am sleeping with my ancestors,
For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,
O, my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,
Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants.

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

Scene 5 *Boar's Head Inn*

We are at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap. It is crowded with revelers. Hal is at a table upstage, sprawled out at his ease. Hostess and Boy wait on him. Enter Falstaff, Bardolph and Pistol, bedraggled, through a door at one side.

- HAL : *(Nonchalant)* Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been?
- BOY, HOSTESS,
CHORUS : Hello, Sir John!
- FALSTAFF : A plague of all cowards, I say! Give me a cup of sack, Boy.
- HOSTESS, HAL,
CHORUS : Run, lad. *(Boy rushes to comply.)*
- FALSTAFF : You, Prince of Wales! Are you not a coward? You are straight enough in the shoulders; you care not who sees your back.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
CHORUS : Brave words! Sir John, the prince will pull your beard off!
- FALSTAFF : There lives not three good men unchanged in England, and one of them is fat, and grows old.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
HAL, CHORUS : How poignant! How piteous!
- FALSTAFF : Boy, give me a cup of sack. I am a rogue if I drunk today.
- HAL : O villain! Thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkenest last.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
CHORUS : God's truth, Sir John, you've drained your cup.
- FALSTAFF : All's one for that. A plague of all cowards, still say I. There be three of us, men worthy the name, who have taken a thousand pound this morning.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
HAL, CHORUS : Where is it, Sir John, where is it?
- FALSTAFF : Where is it? Stolen from us it is; a hundred on poor three of us.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
HAL, CHORUS : What a hundred, man?

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

- BOY : *(Aside to Hal)* Let him alone; we shall have more anon.
- HOSTESS,
CHORUS : Hear him, hear him!
- HAL : Speak, Pistol. How was it?
- PISTOL : *(Rises)* We gallant three set forth upon some dozen.
- FALSTAFF : Pistol, you rogue, there were thirty at least or else I am a peppercorn!
- HAL : Bardolph, what then?
- BOY, HOSTESS,
CHORUS : What then?
- BARDOLPH : *(Rises)* We bound them, and then as we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us. *(Slamming the table.)*
- FALSTAFF : Sixty or seventy!
- PISTOL : And then came more of them.
- BOY, HOSTESS,
HAL, CHORUS : What! Fought you with them all?
- FALSTAFF : If I fought not with a hundred of them, a hundred misbegotten rogues in Kendal green, I am a bunch of radish; I am a rogue if I were not at half sword with them two hours together. I have escaped by a miracle. Thou knowest my swordplay, Hal. They drove at me, and I parried their points thus! I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose, my buckler cut through and through, my sword hacked like a handsaw. *(Unseen by Falstaff, Hal begins to put on the green disguise he wore at Gad's Hill.)* And then came fifty more of them, and fifty more, and fifty more of these misbegotten rogues in Kendal . . .
- Falstaff turns to see Hal, now standing behind him in his disguise and twirling Falstaff's plumed hat on his swordpoint. Falstaff is dumbstruck.*
- HAL : *(In the same disguised voice he used at Gad's Hill.)* Two hundred fifty, then was it, Jack?
- Suddenly his face brightens.*
- FALSTAFF : By the Lord, I knew ye as well as He that made ye. *(General laughter.)* Was it for me to kill the true prince? Thou know'st I am

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true prince; instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct.

BOY, HOSTESS, : On instinct.
HAL, OTHERS

HAL : Bravo, Jack! *(Cheers and laughter.)*

FALSTAFF : By the Lord, lad, I am glad I spared your life. *(More laughter.)*
Hostess, clap shut the doors.

HAL : Boy, have a look outside.

BOY : I will, my lord.

Exeunt Boy. Hostess shuts doors.

FALSTAFF : *(To all present.)* Gallants, lads, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you.

HOSTESS, : Cheer!
CHORUS

BARDOLPH, : Hem, boys!
CHORUS

HAL, PISTOL, : Long life!
CHORUS

FALSTAFF : Boys, we are off to the wars tomorrow. We'll through Gloucestershire, and there will we visit Master Robert Shallow.

Laughter, winks, and nudges among the men, who know all about Falstaff's designs on Shallow.

HOSTESS, : Esquire.
OTHERS

FALSTAFF : *(Rubs the imaginary wax between his fingers.)* I have him tempering between my finger and my thumb, and shortly will I seal with him. *(Presses his thumb down as if sealing. More merriment and back slapping.)* Hal, thou must to court. Thou wilt be horribly chid tomorrow when thou come'st to thy father. Let us practice an answer.

HAL : What? Shall we be merry?

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

HAL,
FALSTAFF,
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL

: Shall we have a play, *extempore*?

HOSTESS,
OTHERS

: *extempore*?

HAL

: Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

The Falstaffians and company leap into action, clearing the table and setting a stool on it. They move the other benches and stools away, leaving one as a step. Then they help Falstaff up, and retire to the stools and benches.

FALSTAFF

: (*Mulling it over.*) Shall I? Content. This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

Raucous laughter by the Falstaffians and company.

HOSTESS

: (*Runs forward, clapping.*) O Jesu! This is excellent sport, in faith!

FALSTAFF

: For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen, for tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

Hostess acts out the tristful queen as the "lords" escort her lugubriously back to her seat.

FALSTAFF

: There is a thing, Harry, that thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears, not in pleasure, but in passion, not in words only, but in grief also. (*In mock piety*) And yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

HAL

: (*In the same vein*) What manner of man, and it like your majesty?

HOST.,
FALSTAFF,
BARD., PISTOL,
CHORUS

: Mm.

FALSTAFF

: A goodly portly man, in faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; (*With a few stately dance steps to show his noble carriage. Suppressed laughter from the*

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

others.) And, as I think, his age some fifty, or by our Lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me: his name is Falstaff. If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me, for Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then peremptorily, I speak it: there is virtue in that Falstaff. Him keep with; the rest banish. (*Laughter.*) And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

HAL : Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

FALSTAFF : Depose me? If thou doth it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter's hare.

Applauding, and cheering, the Falstaffians and company help their master down. Hal springs up in his place. Cries of: "Bravo, Sir John," and "your turn, your Highness!"

HAL : Swearst thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace. There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man. A tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humors, that bolting hutch of beastliness, (*Suppressed laughter.*) that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? (*Raucous laughter.*) Wherein is he good but to taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat and cleanly but to carve a capon and eat it? Wherein cunning, but in craft? Wherein crafty but in villainy? Wherein villainous, but in all things? Wherein worthy but in nothing? (*Cheers, applause.*)

FALSTAFF : I would your grace would take me with you. Whom means your grace?

HAL : That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF : My lord, the man I know.

HAL : I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF : That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it. But that he is, saving your reverence, a (*Mouths the word "whoremaster" silently. Hostess cries "Stop your ears," as the*

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

Falstaffians and crowd clap hands to ears. Laughter.) that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! *(A man cries, "Go it, Sir John!" (Crowd laughter.)* If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned. If to be fat is to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord, banish Pistol, banish Bardolph, banish Boy, banish Nell, but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff; and therefore more valiant being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish Plump Jack, and banish all the world!

HAL : I do, I will.

The Falstaffians and company cheer and applaud as Hal jumps down from the table.

HOSTESS : Who knocks so loud at door?

FALSTAFF : Look to the door there, lads.

Bardolph and Pistol rush to open the door. Boy enters.

HAL : Boy, what news? *(Boy kneels to Hal, then rises.)*

BOY : The king your father is at Westminster, and there are twenty weak and weary posts come from the north, *(This alarms the Falstaffians but not Falstaff)* and as I came along, I met and overtook a dozen captains, *(More alarm)* bareheaded, sweating, knocking at the taverns, *(Daggers drawn, Pistol and Bardolph scramble to guard the door.)* mustering levies, haling up deserters, and asking every one for Sir John Falstaff.

Pistol and Bardolph shake their knives over their heads.

HAL : By heaven, Boy, I feel me much to blame so idly to profane the precious time. Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night. *(Exeunt Hal.)*

FALSTAFF : More knocking? What now, Bardolph? *(Exeunt Bardolph.)*

BARDOLPH : *(Entering)* You must away to court, sir, presently. A dozen captains stay at door for you.

FIRST VOICE : *(Offstage)* Sir John Falstaff!

SECOND VOICE : *(Offstage)* We'll bear no shirkers and malingerers!

FALSTAFF : *(Speaking to Hostess)* You see, my good wench, how men of merit

PLUMP JACK—ACT I, SCENE 5

are sought after. The underserver may sleep when the man of action is called on. *(Sings)* To arms, lads. Tell them I come.

Pistol and Bardolph each take a helmet, cuirass and sword from a cupboard upstage, then exeunt with Boy and all others except Falstaff and Hostess.

FALSTAFF : Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we must hence and leave it unpicked.

HOSTESS : Well, sweet Jack, have a care of thyself. Ah, rogue, in faith, I love thee. By my troth, I kiss thee with a most constant heart. *(She kisses him.)*

FALSTAFF : Ah, Nell, thou dost give me but flattering kisses. Thou'lt forget me when I am gone.

HOSTESS : By the mass, thou'lt set me a-weeping *(She weeps silently.)* if thou say'st so. Prove that I ever dress myself handsome till thy return.

FALSTAFF : I am old, Nell, I am old.

HOSTESS : I love thee better than I love e'er a scurvy young boy of them all. But when wilt thou leave fighting o' days, and drinking o' nights, and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?

FALSTAFF : Peace, good Nell, do not speak like a death's head. Do not bid me remember mine end.

HOSTESS : Well, fare thee well. I have known thee these twenty-nine years, come peascod time, but an honest and truer-hearted man . . . *(She weeps. Falstaff takes her in his arms.)*

FIRST VOICE : *(Offstage)* Sir John Falstaff!

SECOND VOICE : *(Offstage)* Sir John, come forth at once!

FALSTAFF : Will you brawl? Will you riot at an honest widow's hostel? Let Scots and Welsh beware Jack Falstaff comes. *(Spoken softly and in earnest)* Sweet Nell, wish me Godspeed. London farewell, and welcome Gloucestershire!

Falstaff puts on his cuirass, hoists his sword belt over his shoulder, puts on his helmet, and strides to the door. At his most imperious, he throws wide the door and stares down the captains. He then turns to Hostess, with a deep and courtly bow. Exeunt Falstaff.

ACT II

Scene 6 *Shallow's Orchard*

We are in Shallow's orchard bordering a forest. Enter Falstaff, Bardolph, Boy and Shallow. The first three are still in armor. Shallow dodders along with a walking stick, showing them around.

- FALSTAFF : I am glad to see you, by my troth, Master Shallow.
- SHALLOW : *(In an old man's reedy treble)* O, Sir John, do you remember since we lay all night in the windmill in Saint George's Field?*
- FALSTAFF : No more of that, good Master Shallow, no more of that.
- SHALLOW : Ha! 'twas a merry night! And is Jane Nightwork alive?
- FALSTAFF : She lives, Master Shallow.
- SHALLOW : *(Ruefully)* She never would away with me.
- FALSTAFF : Never, never, she would always say she could not abide Master Shallow.
- SHALLOW : *(Rueful again)* By the Mass, I could anger her to the heart. *(Lurches forward as if to grab Jane's ample flesh)* She was then a bona-roba!† *(Falstaff and the others boggle. Suddenly apprehensive)* Doth she hold her own well?
- FALSTAFF : Old, old, Master Shallow.
- SHALLOW : Nay, she must be old, she cannot choose but be old, certain she's old, and had Robin Nightwork by Old Nightwork before I came to Clement's Inn.‡
- FALSTAFF : That's fifty-five year ago.
- SHALLOW : *(To Boy)* Ha, little soldier, that thou had'st seen that that this knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John, said I well?
- FALSTAFF : We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.

* A well-known London bawdy house in Shakespeare's day.

† "Hot stuff."

‡ A law school in London.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 6

SHALLOW : That we have, that we have, that we have, in faith, Sir John, we have. (*Strikes a drinking pose*) Our watchword was 'Hem, boys!* Come, let's to dinner; come, let's to dinner. Jesus! The days that we have seen! Come, come!

Shallow hobbles toward the exit. Bardolph and Boy go with him. Exeunt all but Falstaff. Falstaff waves after them.

FALSTAFF : Fare you well, gentle gentlemen. As I return, I will fetch off† this justice. I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow. (*Sanctimoniously*) Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth, and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street, and every third word a lie. I do remember him at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring. When he was naked he was for all the world like a forked radish with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife. He came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the over-scutched hussies that he heard the carman whistle,‡ and swore they were his fancies or his good-nights. And now this Vice's Dagger becomes a squire, and now has he lands and beefs. Well, I'll be acquainted with him as I return, and it shall go hard, but I'll make him a philosopher's two stones° to me. (*Lightly, jauntily*) If the young dace°° be a bait for the old pike, (*piously*) I see no reason (*in the drone of a cleric*) in the law of nature, (*back in character*) but I may snap at him. Let time shape, and there an end.

* "Down the hatch."

† "Swindle."

‡ The two main tunes of 'The Carman's Whistle' are quoted here.

° Sources of wealth.

°° Kind of fish.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 7

Scene 7 *Jerusalem*

The presence chamber with Henry IV, Chief Justice, Clarence and attendants. The first two are studying documents in silence. Clarence is kneeling at a prie-dieu.

CLARENCE, CHORUS : *(Chorus is offstage.)* Veni, Sancte Spiritus, Veni Redemptor Mundi, Veni, veni, veni Sancte Spiritus.

Enter Warwick.

CHORUS : *(Offstage)* Kyrie eleison, Christe, eleison, Kyrie eleison. Veni Sancte Spiritus.

HENRY IV : Who's there? The Duke of Warwick?

WARWICK : Health to my sovereign, and new happiness
Added to that that I am to deliver!
Mowbray, the Bishop Scroop, Hastings and all
Are brought to the correction of your law.
There is not now a rebel's sword unsheathed,
But Peace puts out her olive everywhere.

The Chief Justice, having scanned the packet, hands it to Henry IV.

HENRY IV : O Warwick, Warwick, thou'rt a summer bird
Which ever in the haunch of winter sings
The lifting up of day.

Peals of church bells are heard. Enter a messenger. He hands the Chief Justice another packet, then exits.

CLARENCE : Look, here's more news.

At the King's gesture, a servant closes the window. Chief Justice reads the contents.

CH. JUSTICE : From enemies heaven keep your majesty,
And when they stand against you, may they fall,
As those this packet tells you of. The Earl
Northumberland, and the Lord Fawconbridge,
With a great power of English and of Scots,
Are by your son Prince Harry overthrown.
To tell you how this action hath been borne,
He will himself arrive within the night.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 7

*He hands Henry IV the packet. All rejoice.
The King suddenly collapses. All rush to him.*

- HENRY IV : And wherefore should these good news make me sick?
I should rejoice now at this happy news,
And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy.
O me! Come near me. Now I am much ill.
- CLARENCE : Comfort, your majesty!
- CH. JUSTICE : Be patient, prince, for you do know these fits
Are with his highness very ordinary.
Stand from him. Give him air. He'll straight be well.
- CHORUS : *(Offstage)* Veni, Sancte Spiritus, Veni, Redemptor Mundi, Veni
veni, Sante Spiritus. Kyrie eleison, Criste eleison, Kyrie eleison.
- CH. JUSTICE : He'll straight be well.
- CLARENCE : No, no, he cannot long hold out these pangs.
The river hath thrice flowed, no ebb between,
Just as the old folk tell us that it did
When our great grandsire, Edward sicked and died.
- CH. JUSTICE : Speak lower, prince, for now the king recovers.
- HENRY IV : I pray you, take me up, and bear me hence
Into some other chamber. Softly, pray.
- WARWICK : *(To Clarence and Chief Justice)* Lords, with your leave, I must
inform the Council.
- Exeunt Warwick. The stage darkens except in the area of
Henry IV and those near him. The retainers come
forward; all bear him to a side of the stage. The light
tracks, so that the throne is no longer visible.*
- CLARENCE : His eye is hollow, and he changes much.
- They lay him on a couch. Another spotlight finds Hal, in
a jaunty mood, entering the opposite end of the stage.*
- CH. JUSTICE : Less noise, less noise.
- HAL : Who saw the Duke of Clarence?
- CLARENCE : *(Crosses to Hal)* I am here, brother, full of heaviness.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 7

HAL : *(Puts his arm around his younger brother to jolly him up.)* How now! Rain within doors, and none abroad?
How doth the King?

CLARENCE : Exceedingly ill.

Clarence turns so that Hal can see his tears. This hits Hal like a shot. Clarence leads him to the king and Chief Justice. The second spotlight tracks, and merges with the first.

HAL : Heard he the good news yet?
Tell it him!

CH. JUSTICE : Not so much noise, my lords. Sweet prince, speak low.
The king your father is disposed to sleep.

CLARENCE : Will't please your grace to go along with us?

HAL : No, I will sit and watch here by the king.

Exeunt all but Hal and Henry IV.

HENRY IV : *(Waking)* Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed, and hear, I think, the very latest counsel that ever I shall breathe. *(Hal kneels at the bedside.)* God knows, my son, by what bypaths and indirect crooked ways I met the crown, and I myself know well how troublesome it sat upon my head. To thee it shall descend with better quiet, better opinion, better confirmation, for all the soil of its achievement goes with me into the earth. More would I, but my lungs are wasted so that strength of speech is utterly denied me. How I came by the crown, O God forgive,
And grant it may with thee in true peace live.

Father and son embrace. Enter Clarence.

HENRY IV : Look, look, here comes my Thomas. Welcome son!

CLARENCE : Health, peace and happiness to my royal father!

HENRY IV : Thou brings't me happiness and peace, son Thomas.
But health, alack, *(serene philosophical, humorous)* with youthful wings is flown
From this bare withered trunk. Upon thy sight
My worldly business makes a period.
Where is my Lord Chief Justice?

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 7

HAL : *(Calling)* My Lord Chief Justice!

Enter Chief Justice. The circle of light widens to reveal a simple bed chamber.

CHORUS : *(Offstage)* In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Commendum spiritum meum. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in secula seculorum.

HENRY IV : Doth any name particular belong
Unto this lodging?

Slowly the walls of the bedchamber dissolve to reveal the hill of Jerusalem under the stars.

CH. JUSTICE : 'Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord.

HENRY IV : Praise be to God! Even here my life must end.
It hath been prophesied to me many years,
I should not die but in Jerusalem,
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land.
God led us to this chamber; here I'll lie.
In this Jerusalem shall Harry die.

CHORUS : *(Offstage, continuing)* Salvanos, Domine, vigilantes, custodi nos dormientes.

The king dies. The Chief Justice kneels before Hal, removes a chain with a large medallion from his shoulders and presents it. Hal puts it back over the old man's shoulders and helps him to his feet. The brothers embrace.

CHORUS : *(Offstage, continuing)* Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace; Qui a viderunt aculime i salutare tuum; Requiescat.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 8

Scene 8 *Davy's Ledger*

We are in Shallow's house. It is daylight outside. We see a table upstage, and a chair and reading desk downstage. Shallow, in a merry mood, is looking for something. Drawers and cupboards have been opened and articles dumped on the floor.

SHALLOW : *(Under his breath)* Ta-ta Tee-dee Tee dee. *(Calling into a wing)* Davy! Where in the world is the silver?

DAVY : *(Offstage)* In a moment, Sir! *(Shallow resumes his search, whistling at concert pitch.)*

SHALLOW : Davy! Where's the service? Food must be served for our guests.

DAVY : *(Offstage)* In a moment, Sir.

SHALLOW : *(Calling in the opposite direction)* By cock and pie Sir John, you shall not away without dinner tonight!

FALSTAFF : *(Offstage)* Pray you excuse me, Master Robert Shallow. I must a dozen mile tonight.

SHALLOW : I will not excuse you, you will not be excused, excuses shall not be admitted, there is no excuse shall serve, you shall not be excused!

Shallow muscles a chest in front a high cupboard, perhaps balancing a chair or stool or both on it, and pauses to judge distances to the closed top doors.

SHALLOW : Tee-dee Hm-hm Hm-hm. What Davy, I say! Nothing is where I can find it.

DAVY : *(Still offstage)* In a moment sir.

SHALLOW : *(Shallow begins his climb.)* Tee-da-la tee-da-la tee-da la. Sir John, you must dine. You will not be excused!

Shallow reaches the doors and tugs them. They stick. He yanks harder. As the doors fly open, Shallow loses his balance. Pillows, feathers and papers tumble out. The latter drift down slowly. Shallow's fall is as comical and convoluted as resources and tumbling skills allow. Enter Davy with from four to eight Servants plus a clerk with a ledger. All are deadpan and super-efficient. Davy claps his hands. Two servants gently deposit

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 8

Shallow in a chair, then carry it and him to the desk. Meanwhile others open the chest and start laying the table from it. The clerk puts the ledger on the desk before Shallow. Davy opens it and points.

DAVY : *(Speaking)* Your worship, if I may draw your attention to these entries. Marry, sir, such extravagance cannot be borne.

SHALLOW : *(Studying the ledger)* Davy, Davy, let me see, Davy. *(We see that Shallow is equally unfazed by his fall and Davy's snit, and is as merry as ever.)* Hi-dee-da hm-hm-hm.

DAVY : *(Davy turns another page and taps the ledger for emphasis.)* And again, sir, shall we sow the headland with wheat?

SHALLOW : With red wheat, Davy. And William cook, bid him come hither. Sir John!

Davy gestures, and a servant runs off for the cook. Shallow whistling.

DAVY : And when, sir, shall we settle the smith's note for shoeing and plow-irons?

SHALLOW : Let it be cast and paid. *(Davy points and the clerk writes.)* Sir John, you shall not be excused!

The cook runs in.

SHALLOW : Ah, William, some pigeons tonight, William, and a couple of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty tiny little kickshaws. *(Conducts an imaginary orchestra to the theme.)* And ready the broth at once. *(The cook bustles off.)* Where are you, Sir John?

At Davy's gesture, a handyman runs in and holds up a bucket by its broken chain.

DAVY : And here, sir, a new link to the bucket must be had.

SHALLOW : Look to it, Davy. Sir John, you must dine.

Again Davy gestures. The handyman runs off with the bucket. The clerk writes, then exits with the ledger. Enter Falstaff, Bardolph and Boy. The men are still in their cuirasses. Shallow rises to greet them.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 8

SHALLOW : Come, Sir John, come all, come to dinner. Spread, Davy, spread. (*Davy and the servants begin putting food on the table.*) Come, Master Bardolph, and (*patting Boy on the head*) welcome to you my tall fellow. Off with your boots, Sir John!

DAVY : (*Indicating Falstaff*) Doth the man of war stay all night, sir?

SHALLOW : Yea, Davy. I will use him well. (*Shallow taps his foot to the tune, with a finger alongside the nose and a wink towards Falstaff.*) A friend in the court is better than a penny in purse.

Falstaff is meant to hear this, and does. He taps his lips for mock secrecy. Bardolph lifts a thumb-to-forefinger "It's in the bag" gesture.

ALLOW : (*Indicating Bardolph*) Use his man well, Davy, for he's an arrant knave and will backbite.

DAVY : No worse than he is backbitten, sir, for he has marvelous foul linen.

SHALLOW : Well conceited Davy. (*Applauds*) About thy business, Davy.

DAVY : First, sir, I beseech you to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes of the Inn.

SHALLOW : There are many complaints, Davy, against that Visor. That Visor is an arrant knave, upon my knowledge.

DAVY : I grant your worship that he is a knave, sir, but a knave should have some countenance at a friend's request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. If I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but very little credit with your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir. Therefore, beseech you, let him be countenanced. (*Stamps his foot.*)

SHALLOW : (*Amused*) Go to, I say he shall have no wrong. Look about, Davy. (*Exeunt Davy.*) Come, Sir John, come to dinner. You shall not be excused.

FALSTAFF : I'll follow you, good Master Shallow.

Shallow, Bardolph and Boy go to the table and sit. The broth and wine arrive and are served. Falstaff remains in the chair.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 8

FALSTAFF : If I were sawed into quantities I would make four dozen of such bearded hermit staves as Master Shallow. I will devise enough matter out of him to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions. O, I will see him laugh 'til his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up!

SHALLOW : Sir John!

FALSTAFF : *(Suppressing laughter)* I come, Master Shallow, I come, Master Shallow.

Falstaff rises and walks toward the table. All raise their glasses to him. He pauses, arms outspread to acknowledge their greeting. Unseen, Davy takes a nip from the wine flask.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 9

Scene 9 *Pistol's News*

Lights up on Shallow's house as before. It is night. Falstaff, Shallow, Bardolph and Boy are at table. The men have all drunk heavily. Boy is asleep in his chair. Davy and some servants keep the men's glasses filled with wine, and Davy helps himself to some whenever the rest are not looking. He is thoroughly plastered, and untypically benign.

FALSTAFF : 'Fore God, Master Shallow, you have here a goodly dwelling and a rich.

Boy wakes up. Coos of appreciation from Boy and Bardolph. Falstaff makes a you-know-what-I-mean gesture to Bardolph. (Laughter.)

BARDOLPH : God's truth, Sir John!

BOY : *(To Shallow)* Health to your worship!

SHALLOW : Barren, barren, barren. Beggars all, beggars all, Sir John. By the Mass, I have drunk too much already!

BOY : Good Cheer!

FALSTAFF : No, no!

BARDOLPH : Not a bit!

SHALLOW : Give Master Bardolph some wine, Davy!

BOY : A song, your worship!

BARDOLPH : That's the spirit!

Davy pours for all, and sneaks some more himself. Shallow rises to sing and gestures to musicians, who move forward. Boy drifts off again.

FALSTAFF : Lets have a song, Master Shallow!

DAVY : *(Preempting Shallow as he is about to begin)* Do nothing but drink, and make good cheer,
And praise God for the merry year,

FALSTAFF : Go to it, Davy!

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 9

BARDOLPH : Hurrah, Davy!

DAVY : When flesh is cheap, and females dear,

Falstaff does a double take.

DAVY : And lusty lads roam here and there so merrily,

ALL THE MEN : And ever among so merrily.

Laughter and roars of approval. The musicians retire to the background.

FALSTAFF : There's a merry heart!

BARDOLPH : Good Master Davy, I'll give you a health for that anon.

SHALLOW : Health, Sir John! What you want in meat, we'll have in drink; *(Murmurs of appreciation from Falstaff and Bardolph.)* the heart's all. Be merry, Masters, and *(to Boy, who is still asleep)* merry dreams, my little soldier there. Pour, Davy, pour.

Davy does so as the musicians come forward. Falstaff rises to toast Shallow. Again, Davy jumps in first.

DAVY : Be merry, be merry, my wife has all,
For women are shrews, both short and tall. 'Tis merry,

ALL THE MEN : 'tis merry in hall, when beards wag all, wag all
And welcome merry Shrove-tide.

ALL THE MEN : *(Continuing)* Be merry, be merry. *(Shouts of approval.)*

FALSTAFF : *(Aside to Shallow)* I did not think Master Davy had been a man of this mettle.

DAVY : Who, I? I have been merry twice and once ere now. *(With a few dance steps.)*

BARDOLPH : *(Rising)* Health and long life to you, Master Davy.

SHALLOW : Health to you, Master Bardolph. *(To Boy)* Health to my little tiny thief, and to all the cabileros about London.

Again Falstaff rises and the musicians come forward. Davy pours, and nips some. Falstaff, shallow and Bardolph are about to join in a toast. But by now they have learned that Davy is sure to come first, so they defer graciously.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 9

DAVY : Fill the cup.

ALL THE MEN : *(As Davy fills the men's glasses.)* Fill the cup, and let it come. I'll pledge you a mile ...

DAVY : ... to the bottom.

They hold out their glasses bottoms up, thrusting with each chord. Meanwhile Davy, behind them, drains the pitcher. At the third chord he too holds it out bottoms up. Shallow and Davy fall like trees, dead drunk. Servants rush in, prop Shallow back in his chair, and carry Davy out. Another servant enters and speaks inaudibly to Bardolph while Falstaff sits.

BARDOLPH : *(To Falstaff)* Your worship, here's Pistol come from the court with news.

FALSTAFF : From the court? Let him come in. *(Enter Pistol.)* How now, Pistol!

PISTOL : Sweet knight, thou art now one of the greatest men in this realm!

Pistol rushes to Falstaff and kneels. Knowing Pistol, Falstaff takes this tongue-in cheek.

PISTOL : Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend, and helter-skelter have I rode to thee, and tidings do I bring, and lucky joys, and golden times and happy news of price.

FALSTAFF : *(Dryly, with a wink to Bardolph.)* I pray thee now, deliver them like a man of this world.

PISTOL : A foutre* for the world and worldlings base!
I speak of Africa and golden joys.

FALSTAFF : *(In the same fustian vein, with sweeping gesture and rolling eyes.)*

BARDOLPH : Bravo, Pistol!

FALSTAFF : O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news? *(Bardolph shakes with laughter. Pistol glares at him.)*
Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.
Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons?
And shall good news be baffled?
Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.

* Fig. "Pistol raises his thumbs between his fingers."

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 9

The picture of wounded dignity, Pistol mites his head to the floor. Falstaff, unable to pry his news out of him, throws up his hands in good-natured surrender. Bardolph is convulsed. All this is enough to bring Shallow half-awake.

SHALLOW : *(To Pistol drowsily)* Honest gentleman, I know not your breeding. *(Yawns or belches.)* I am, Sir, under the king, in some authority.

PISTOL : *(Rising)* Under which king, Besonian? Speak, or die! *(Puts hand to sword hilt)*

SHALLOW : *(Amused, plays along as if in a knock-knock joke.)* Under King Harry.

PISTOL : Harry the Fourth, or Fifth?

All eyes pop open. Even Boy is instantly awake. All hold their breaths.

SHALLOW : Harry the Fourth.

PISTOL : A foutre for thine office! Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is king.

FALSTAFF : *(Rising)* What. Is the old king dead?

PISTOL : As nail in door. The things I speak are just.

Shallow, Bardolph and Boy jump to their feet.

FALSTAFF : Away, Bardolph! Saddle my horse. *(Exeunt Bardolph.)* Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine. Master Shallow, Lord Shallow, be as thou wilt; I am fortune's steward. Get on thy boots, we'll ride all night. Boy, to horse! *(Exit Boy.)* I know the young king is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses; the laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are they that have been my friends, and woe to my Lord Chief Justice!

Pistol, with a toothy grin, draws a forefinger slowly across his throat. Lights out.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 10

Scene 10 *Banishment*

Westminster, near the Abbey. A threatening storm.

CHORUS : *(Offstage from the Abbey)* Judica me Deus et discerne causam
meam de gente non sancta. Ab homine iniquo et doloso eripe me A
viro iniquo eripies me.

*Crowd noise begins to be heard offstage. Enter Boy,
Bardolph and Hostess spreading rushes*

HOSTESS : More rushes, more rushes!

BOY : The trumpets have sounded twice.

Lightning (close) as offstage crowd noise continues.

BARDOLPH : *(Grudgingly, in Cockney)* 'Twill be two o'clock ere they come
from the coronation.

BOY : Dispatch, dispatch.

*The offstage crowd noise grows. The crowd starts
pouring in. Hostess, Falstaff, Pistol, and Shallow are
among them. The crowd, having been talking aloud, now
mimes conversation.*

FALSTAFF : Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow, I will make the King do
you grace: I will leer upon him as he comes by; and do but mark
(mugging) the countenance that he will give me.

PISTOL : God bless thy lungs, good knight.

FALSTAFF : Come here, Pistol, stand behind me. O, Master Shallow, if I had
had time to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the
thousand pound I borrowed of you. *(Innocently, but with a broad
wink visible only to Pistol and Bardolph. They break up.)* But 'tis
no matter, this poor show doth better, this doth infer the zeal I had
to see him.

SHALLOW : It doth so.

FALSTAFF : It shows my earnestness of affection,

SHALLOW : It doth so.

FALSTAFF : My devotion, --

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 10

- SHALLOW : It doth, it doth, it doth.
- FALSTAFF : --as it were, to ride day and night; and not to deliberate, not to remember, not to have patience to shift me, --
- SHALLOW : It is best, certain. (*Lightning, close*)
- FALSTAFF : --but to stand stained with travel, and sweating with desire to see him; thinking of nothing else, (*Lightning, close.*) putting all affairs else in oblivion, (*lightning, close, it begins to snow*) as if there were nothing else to be done but to see him.
- Shouts offstage. The crowd stops miming conversation and listens. Another crowd roar offstage.*
- HOSTESS : (*Shouts*) The King! The King!
- OTHERS : God save the King. (*As everyone rushes to get a better view.*)
- BARDOLPH : (*Shouts*) I see them! (*Crowd roar*)
- PISTOL : There roared the sea, and trumpet-clangor sounds!
- A piper emerges from the crowd. Hostess begins the following song, others join during repetition, end together.*
- HOSTESS : Enforce we us with all our might
To love Saint George, Our Lady's Knight.
- HOSTESS,
CHORUS,
OTHERS : In his virtue he will us lead;
- HOSTESS, BOY : The foe him see foremost in fight.
- ALL : To worship George then have we need,
Which is our sovereign Lady's knight.
(*Repeat*)
- Cheers. The cheers fade out. Crowd roar as king's train begin to enter.*
- BARDOLPH : (*Shouts*) God for Saint George!
- Another crowd roar.*
- FALSTAFF : God save thy Grace, King Hal, my royal Hal!

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 10

Crowd roar again.

BOY : (Shouts) King Harry!

MALE VOICES : (Shout) Harry Monmouth! ... Harry England!

PISTOL : The heav'ns thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!

Crowd roars.

FALSTAFF : God save thee, my sweet boy!

Crowd roars again.

FEMALE VOICE : God bless his majesty!

MALE VOICE : God for England!

Enter Clarence and Warwick. Crowd roar is at maximum.

FALSTAFF : My King, my Jove,

Enter Chief Justice. Maximum crowd roar. Enter the King. All but Falstaff drop to their knees, silent. Falstaff runs into the road, brushing past the Chief Justice. He falls to his knees before the King, his arms outstretched in greeting.

FALSTAFF : I speak to thee, my heart.

With a gesture, the King stops the procession. All are thunderstruck at Falstaff's temerity. A long and painful silence as the King stares him down. Wilting, Falstaff collapses to all fours in the road.

KING : (With icy scorn) I know thee not, old man, fall to thy prayers. How ill white hairs become a fool and jester! Leave gormandizing. Know that the grave doth gape for thee thrice wider than for other men. Reply not to me with a fool-born jest. (Sharply) Presume not that (inwardly, reverently) I am the thing I was, for God doth know, so shall the world perceive, that I have turned away my former self: so will I those that kept me company. When thou dost hear I am as I have been, approach me, and thou shall be as thou wast: the tutor and the feeder of my riots. Till then I banish thee, on pain of death, as I have done the rest of my misleaders, not to come near our person by ten mile. Set on.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 10

The procession resumes. Crowd roar offstage, ahead of it. Exeunt the King and his train. The crowd begins to follow. Falstaff remains on all fours, dazed. Pistol, Bardolph, Boy and Shallow remain kneeling. Crowd roar offstage again a little farther away.

VOICES : *(Offstage)* God save the King! ... God bless him! ... King Hal! God save your grace! ... God for Harry!”

The crowd continues to follow. Crowd roar offstage fainter, then fades in to silence. The snow has diminished to a sprinkle.

FALSTAFF : Master Shallow, *(He rises unsteadily)*, I owe you a thousand pound. *(The others also rise.)*

SHALLOW : Yea, marry, Sir John, which I beseech you to let me have home with me.

FALSTAFF : That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do you not grieve at this; I shall be sent for in private to him. Look you, he must seem thus to the world. *(jovial again)* This that you heard was but a color.

SHALLOW : A color that I fear you will die in, Sir John.

As he says “color” Shallow hooks his finger in his collar (pun for “color”). Finger still in his collar, Shallow mimes a hanged man. The rest writhe at this miserable joke.

FALSTAFF : Fear no colors! Go with me to dinner. Come lieutenant Pistol; come, Bardolph. I shall be sent for soon at night.

Exeunt omnes. Gradually we become aware of crowd noise, faint in the distance, from the direction the King has taken.

FEMALE VOICE : God bless your majesty!

The hubbub swells, but is still faint. Gradually the crowd noise dies away to silence.

CHORUS : *(Offstage from the abbey)* Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Dona nobis pacem. Amen.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 11

Scene 11 *Muse of Fire*

Spotlight on Pistol.

PISTOL : O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the stance of Mars, and at his heels,
Leash'd in, like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment.

Blackout

CHORUS : Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies.
Now thrive the armorers, and honor's thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.
They sell the pasture now to buy the horse.
For now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword, from hilts unto the point,
With crowns imperial, crowns, and coronets,
Promised to Harry and his followers.
Crowns imperial,
Promised to Harry and his followers,
Crowns and coronets, crowns and coronets.

Crowd roar. A spotlight finds Boy, Hostess, Bardolph, Pistol, Shallow and Davy. Hostess and Pistol are arm in arm.

CHORUS : Here comes ancient Pistol and his wife, for 'tis certain he is married
to Nell Quickly.

BOY : Mine host, Pistol, you must come to my master, and you Hostess.
He's very sick and would to bed.

CHORUS : He'll make the crow a pudding one of these days. The king hath
killed his heart.

Darkness again. A hubbub of male voices, representing parliament. A spotlight finds the king. The others remain unseen.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 11

HENRY V (Hal) : My lords, admit no happy hour
That may give furtherance to our expedition,
For now we have no thought in us but France.

Roars of assent.

HENRY V (Hal) : Therefore let our proportions for these wars
Be soon collected, and all things thought upon
That may with reasonable swiftness add
More feathers to our wings; for, God before,
We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.

CHORUS : We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.

More shouts of approval.

HENRY V (Hal) : Therefore let every man now task his thought
That this fair action may on foot be brought.

More roars of assent from the lords. Spotlight on king out. New spotlight finds Boy, Shallow, Bardolph, Pistol and Davy conversing outside Boar's Head Inn. Hostess leans out from a window.

HOSTESS : As ever you came of women, come in quickly to Sir John. Ah, poor heart! He is so shaken of a burning that it is most lamentable to behold. Ah, Sweet men, come to him.

The men rush in.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

Scene 12 *Off to War*

It is just before dawn. Pistol and Hostess, now married, stand outside Boar's Head Inn. Pistol, carrying a lantern, knocks on the door.

PISTOL : Bardolph, be blithe, Boy, bristle thy courage up, lads, rouse thy vaunting veins, ...

Bardolph, Boy, Shallow and Davy emerge from the Inn, still half asleep. Boy yawns and rubs his eyes. Bardolph carries a second lantern.

PISTOL : *(Continues)* ... for Falstaff, he is dead, and we must yearn therefore.

Bardolph and Boy are suddenly wide awake and apprehensive. All cross themselves. To do so, Pistol and Bardolph set down their lanterns before Hostess as if by chance. A spotlight discreetly reinforces this focus on Hostess. The rest commiserate while she stands motionless.

BOY,
SHALLOW,
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY : Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or in hell.

Spotlight on Hostess up. The rest are outlined in a tableau around her.

HOSTESS : Nay, sure he's not in hell, he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. He made a finer end, and went away, and it had been any Christom child. He parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide. For after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way, for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and he babbled of green fields. 'How now, Sir John,' quoth I. 'What, man! Be of good cheer!' So he cried out, 'God, God, God,' three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him he should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So he bade me lay more clothes on his feet. I put my hand into the bed, and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone. Then I felt to his knees, and so upward and upward, and all was as cold as any stone. *(Boy runs to Hostess)*

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

The sky has brightened by imperceptible degrees, and it is now first dawn. We see that we are in the Square of Act I, Scene 1. Bardolph snuffs out the lanterns, takes them inside the Inn, and returns. The square begins to fill with soldiers and common folk. Crowd noise begins. Officers begin to appear along with wagonloads of armaments and military paraphernalia. Soldiers join their units and receive pay and equipment. As sleepiness wears off, the mood becomes buoyant and patriotic. We sense that all England thrills to the marital spirit. Crowd noise stops.

BARDOLPH : Shall we shog? The King will be gone from Southampton.

SHALLOW : Londoners up!

DAVY : Londoners up!

BOY,
SHALLOW,
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY,
CHORUS : Alive, alive, alive, alive, alive! Eastcheap in the van!

Enter a procession headed by officers and prelates, on their way to Southampton. All others kneel. Priests give them absolution.

BOY, HOSTESS,
SHALLOW,
PISTOL,
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY,
CHORUS : Our king sails forth to Normandy. To France, to France, to France, to France.

As procession exits, through the audience if possible, all rise to embrace loved ones.

SOPRANO,
ALTO : Man of arms, go bravely, bravely forth!

Bagpipers appear.

SHALLOW,
BARD., PISTOL,
DAVY,
TENOR, BASS : Come, let's away, let's away ...

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

The men raise colors and march off. The Falstaffians remain. Others enter and the enlistment cycle begins anew. Vendors and street entertainers join the scene.

SHALLOW, : (continuing) ... Come, let's away, let's away ...
DAVY,
TENOR, BASS

Exeunt soldiers with bagpipes, again through the audience if possible.

SHALLOW, : ... over the channel to France, boys!
DAVY

TENOR, BASS : Away, away, away.

DAVY : Take arms, lads! A guinea a man and a go at the French!

SHALLOW : Mark on the line! A guinea a man and a go at the French!

Shouts of approval.

SOPRANO, : Cider and vinegar, tuppence a pint!
ALTO

TENOR, BASS : Who'll wrestle the Turk! A crown if you throw him!

SHALLOW : Join in, lads! A guinea a man! And a sail, boys! Shoulder your harness and shog, boys!

DAVY, : Join in lads! A walk in the sun and a sail, boys! Shoulder your
SHALLOW harness and shog, boys!

TENOR, BASS : Shoulder your harness and shog, boys!

SHALLOW, : Kiss her again and be off, boys! Good-bye to your girl and hello to
DAVY, the breach!
CHORUS

PISTOL : My Love, give me thy lips.

TENOR, BASS : Form, lads.

SOPRANO, : Apples and quince! Cider vinegar! Apples and quince!
ALTO

BASS : Kiss her again and be off, boys! Shoulder your harness and shog,
boys!

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

- SOPRANO, ALTO : Cider vinegar!
- TENOR : Kiss her again and away!
- PISTOL : *(Sternly again.)* Look to my chattels and my movables.
Let senses rule: the word is 'Pitch and pay.'
Trust none; for oaths are straws, men's faiths are wafer cakes,
And Holdfast is the only dog, my duck.
Therefore Caveto be thy counselor. *(Hostess weeps.)* ...
- TENOR, BASS : Off to France! To France!
- PISTOL : ... *(He comforts Hostess.)* Go, clear thy crystals. *(Hostess dries her tears.)*
- SOPRANO, ALTO : Faith, lads, faith, lads!
- PISTOL : Yoke-fellows in arms, let us to France, ...
- A woman begins to dance. The men clap to the rhythm.*
- PISTOL : ... like horse-leeches, my boys, ...
- The dancing and clapping continue.*
- PISTOL : ... to suck, to suck, the very blood to suck!
- BOY, HOSTESS, SHALLOW, BARDOLPH, DAVY : *(Amused at the hyperbole.)* And that's but unwholesome food, they say.
- DAVY : It's shoulder your pack.
- SHALLOW : Good-bye, Jane! Good-bye, Nan! Goodbye, Meg!
- BOY : Good-bye, Nan! Goodbye, Meg!
- PISTOL, DAVY : It's muster and march.
- BARDOLPH, PISTOL, DAVY : It's follow the drum.
- BOY, SHALLOW : Good-bye, Meg,

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

BOY, : For the King's meat, and the King's coin,
SHALLOW, : And the King's true right!
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY,
CHORUS

The clapping stops, but the dancer continues. The king appears with the Chief Justice and their train. The dancer and all others fall to their knees.

TENOR, BASS : Deo gratias Anglia. A-way.

SOPRANO, : Away, away, away,
ALTO

As the train passes, all rise to say their last farewells.

SOPRANO, : Man of arms, come safely, safely home.
ALTO

PISTOL : Touch her soft mouth, and march..

Again bagpipers appear. The soldiers march off as before. The Falstaffians remain.

SHALLOW, : Come follow the colors and shog, my boys, come follow the colors
DAVY, TENOR, : and off, my boys, come step, lads, push, lads, march, lads! Come
BASS : follow the pipes and away, my boys, and away. Good-bye, my love,
bonjour, cherie, good-bye, my love, it's up with the anchor and over
the sea, good-bye my love. Aboard lads! Push off, lads! Good-bye,
my love, bonjour, cherie, good-bye, my love, bonjour, cherie! Come
follow the colors and shog, my boys, come follow the colors and off,
my boys, come step, lads, push, lads, march, lads! Come follow the
pipes and away, my boys, and away, and away and away!

The pipers and most of the soldiers are gone. At intervals a few more follow.

TENOR, BASS : Away, away, away!

BOY : Farewell, Hostess. *(He kisses her.)*

SOPRANO, : Faith, lads!
ALTO

BARDOLPH : I cannot kiss, that is the humor of it; but adieu.

PLUMP JACK—ACT II, SCENE 12

SOPRANO, : Faith, lads!
ALTO

PISTOL : Let housewifery appear. Keep close, I thee command. *(He kisses her tenderly.)*

All other men have now gone. The Falstaffian males join in the column. The women remain. Lieutenant Pistol leads, Corporal Bardolph carries the colors and Boy beats the drum as they march off proudly for Southampton.

TENOR, BASS : *(Offstage.)* March, boys! March, boys!

BOY, HOSTESS, : Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
SOPRANO,
ALTO

SHALLOW, : March, lads! Fare thee well!
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY,
TENOR, BASS

BOY, HOSTESS, : Adieu! Adieu! Adieu! Adieu! Adieu!
SOPRANO,
ALTO

SHALLOW, : March, lads! Fare thee well! Farewell! Farewell!
BARDOLPH,
PISTOL, DAVY,
TENOR, BASS