

Henry IV Part 2 abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Insight

Situation: Leaders of the re-formed group of Welsh rebels have gathered to consider a new military engagement with the king. Bardolph wisely offers his friends his thoughts on their need for solid planning if they are to have better results than Hotspur and Worcester had when they engaged the king's forces at Shrewsbury.

LORD BARDOLPH: The question, then, standst thus: whether our present five-and-twenty thousand may hold up head without Northumberland.

HASTINGS: With him we may.

LORD BARDOLPH: Yea, marry, there's the point. But if without him we be thought too feeble, my judgment is we should not step too far.

ARCHBISHOP: 'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph, for indeed it was young Hotspur's cause at Shrewsbury.

LORD BARDOLPH: It was, my lord; who lined himself with hope, flatt'ring himself in project of a power much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts, and so, with great imagination proper to madmen, led his powers to death and, winking, leapt into destruction.

HASTINGS: It never yet did hurt to lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

Lord Bardolph to Hastings and the Archbishop

When we mean to build, we survey the plot,
Draw to scale and with the design are taught
To rate the cost, which, if we find outweighs
Ability, a model anew we
Draw or desist to build. This hope that lays
Ahead, to pluck a kingdom down and see
Another rise, leaves much for us to plot
The position and model; where we ought
Consent an agreed foundation, one lined
To weigh against the opposed, or we, left
With insufficient plans, like they who find
The house beyond what they can build, bereft
To see their half-through effort and hopes flee,
Be put to churlish winter's tyranny.