

Henry IV Part 2 abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 1

Reflection

Situation: Henry IV has a heart-to-heart conversation with the earl of Warwick, one of his confidants. The king acknowledges that significant elements of English society are upset with his leadership.

WARWICK: It is but as a body yet distempered, which to his former strength may be restored with good advice and little medicine. My Lord Northumberland (Percy) will soon be cooled.

KING: O, if this were soon. The happiest youth, viewing his progress through, what perils past, what crosses to ensue, would shut the book and sit him down and die.

Henry IV to Warwick

Richard and Percy were to each a friend,
Yet within a brief two years it did end
With them at war. For eight years was Percy
The man nearest my soul, who laid his life
Under my foot, yea, offered no mercy
To the eyes of Richard. Yet in that strife,
Richard, eyes brimming with tears, told him "Look
Thee as the ladder by which Bolingbroke
Ascends my throne," knowing not that greatness
And I were compelled to kiss. He followed
Saying, "the time shall come where great distress
From foul sins shall leave past support destroyed,"
Thus foretelling of this time's enmity
And the division of our amity.

WARWICK: There is a history in all men's lives figuring the natures of the times deceased, the which observed, a man may prophesy, with a near aim, of the main chance of things as yet not come to life, who in their seeds and weak beginning lie intreasured. King Richard might have created perfect guess that great Northumberland, then false to him, would of that seed grow to a greater falseness, which should not find a ground to root upon unless on you.

KING: They say the Bishop and Northumberland are fifty thousand strong.