

Henry IV Part 2

SYNOPSIS

The Second Part of Henry the Fourth

In despair at the death of his son Hotspur, the Earl of Northumberland lends his support to a second rebellion, led by the Archbishop of York. As the threat of civil war looms over the country, Henry IV grows sick, and is also worried that his son Hal has returned to his old life in Mistress Quickly's tavern with Falstaff and his friends Bardolph, Pistol, Peto and Poins.

Although Prince Henry spends time with them, he is also thinking about the nature of kingship and the crown.

Falstaff is sent on a recruiting expedition to Gloucestershire, where he meets some old friends of his, Justices of the Peace Shallow and Silence. Together they remember earlier, wilder times.

The rebel army is met and defeated by the King's forces, this time led by Hal's younger brother, Prince John of Lancaster.

On his deathbed Henry is reconciled with his son when he sees that he understands the nature of his responsibility. Although there is a prophecy that he will not die until he sees Jerusalem, Henry collapses and is carried into the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster. His son is crowned as Henry V. When Falstaff hears the news he hurries back to London, telling his friends that he is going to be a very important man now, but Henry rejects him: "I know thee not, old man." His transformation is complete.

Media:

DVD:

An Age of Kings (BBC TV 1960), dir. Michael Hayes (a fusion of all the history plays from *Richard II* to *Richard III*)

Chimes at Midnight (1966), dir. Orson Welles (centred round the Falstaff scenes in *Henry IV* Parts 1 and 2)

Henry IV Part 2 (BBC TV Shakespeare 1979), dir. David Giles

My Own Private Idaho (1991), dir. Gus Van Sant, with River Phoenix (the story, about rent boys in modern America, and characters make references to *Henry IV*)

Henry IV Part 2 (Shakespeare's Globe 2012), dir. Dominic Dromgoole, with Roger Allam

Henry IV Part 2 (BBC TV 2012), dir. Richard Eyre (part of mini-series *The Hollow Crown*)

Not commercially available:

The Wars of the Roses (1990), dir. Michael Bogdanov (a filming of the 1987 English Shakespeare Company stage production, uploaded to YouTube)

CD Audio:

Henry IV Part 2 (Marlowe Society)

Henry IV Part 2 (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]