

Henry VI, Part 2

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, sc. 1 (line 331 - Verse)

York

Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,

And change misdoubt to resolution:

Be that thou hopest to be, or what thou art

Resign to death; it is not worth the enjoying:

Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man,

And find no harbour in a royal heart.

Faster than spring-time showers comes thought on thought,

And not a thought but thinks on dignity.

My brain more busy than the labouring spider

Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.

Well, nobles, well, 'tis politicly done,

To send me packing with an host of men:

I fear me you but warm the starved snake,

Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting your hearts.

'Twas men I lack'd and you will give them me:

I take it kindly; and yet be well assured

You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.

Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,

I will stir up in England some black storm

Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;

And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage

Until the golden circuit on my head,

Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,

Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.
And, for a minister of my intent,
I have seduced a headstrong Kentishman,
John Cade of Ashford,
To make commotion, as full well he can,
Under the title of John Mortimer.
In Ireland have I seen this stubborn Cade
Oppose himself against a troop of kerns,
And fought so long, till that his thighs with darts
Were almost like a sharp-quill'd porpentine;
And, in the end being rescued, I have seen
Him caper upright like a wild Morisco,
Shaking the bloody darts as he his bells.
Full often, like a shag-hair'd crafty kern,
Hath he conversed with the enemy,
And undiscover'd come to me again
And given me notice of their villanies.
This devil here shall be my substitute;
For that John Mortimer, which now is dead,
In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble:
By this I shall perceive the commons' mind,
How they affect the house and claim of York.
Say he be taken, rack'd and tortured,
I know no pain they can inflict upon him
Will make him say I moved him to those arms.
Say that he thrive, as 'tis great like he will,
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength

And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;
For Humphrey being dead, as he shall be,
And Henry put apart, the next for me.