

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## Shakespeare Speaks

### I'll send him packing

---



#### **Narrator**

It's early morning at the Globe Theatre. William Shakespeare and his actors are rehearsing Henry IV Part I. In this scene, it's late at night, and young Prince Hal, played by Robert Harley, and his friend Falstaff – that's Thomas Swann – are in the pub. But... the King's messenger has just arrived.

#### **Thomas Swann as Falstaff**

... Shall I give him his answer?

#### **Robert Harley as Prince Hal**

Prithee do, Jack.

#### **Thomas Swann as Falstaff**

Faith and I'll send him packaged...

#### **Will**

Stoooooppppp!!! Thomas, Thomas, it's packing... I'll send him packing... Not packaged. You're not putting him in a box or a parcel. Remember: you want the King's messenger to go away!

#### **Thomas Swann**

Sorry, Will... I'm not my best today...

#### **Actor 1**

One too many beers last night, eh Thomas?!

#### **Actor 2**

He thinks he's Falstaff for real!

#### **Will**

Thomas. Listen to me. Falstaff and Prince Hal are having a great time. That's why Hal doesn't want to see the messenger.

#### **Robert Harley**

Will...

**Will**

What is it, Robert?!

**Robert Harley**

I do like the messenger's name: Gravity. Gravity! A serious man who doesn't like to have fun. Not like Falstaff. He's...

**Actor 1**

Old!

**Actor 2**

...and fat!

**Actor 1**

He's always telling jokes...

**Actor 2**

He's never got any money!

**Thomas Swann**

That last bit's true enough Will.

**Will**

Now, now Thomas – you're perfect for this part. The audience are going to love you! Let's go again, from: What doth Gravity do out of his bed at midnight?

**Thomas Swann as Falstaff**

What doth Gravity do out of his bed at midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

**Robert Harley as Prince Hal**

Prithee do, Jack.

**Thomas Swann as Falstaff**

Faith, and I'll send him packing!

**Will**

Bravo! Let's take a break.

**Narrator**

We'll leave them there for now. Falstaff is one of Shakespeare's most popular characters. He drinks, steals and runs away from danger, but Shakespeare's audiences loved his comic genius and sense of fun. In Henry IV, Prince Hal prefers the company of Falstaff – and his criminal friends – to noblemen. Shakespeare's phrase **I'll send him packing** has the same meaning today: I really don't want this person around me, so I'll send them away. It's also used in sport, to talk about beating an opponent. Take Gwyn Jones, former captain of the Welsh rugby team, who said before a match:

**Clip 1**

This is our chance to do it and we should send them packing with their tails between their legs.

**Clip 2**

I've no patience when people try to sell me things at the door. I usually send them packing.

**Will**

Let's try it once more.

**Actor 1**

Come on Thomas!

**Actor 2**

You can do it!

**Thomas Swann**

Will you all shush?!

**Actors 1 & 2**

To shush or not to shush, that is the question.