eBook

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare

For the online version of BookRags' The Merry Wives of Windsor eBook, including complete copyright information, please visit:

http://www.bookrags.com/ebooks/1517/

Copyright Information

© 2000-2014 BookRags, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Title: The Merry Wives of Windsor

Author: William Shakespeare [Craig, Oxford edition]

Release Date: November, 1998 [EBook #1517] [Most recently updated: September 24, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: *Us*-ASCII

*** *Start of the project gutenberg* EBOOK, *the merry wives of Windsor* ***

This etext was prepared by the *pg* Shakespeare Team,
a team of about twenty Project Gutenberg volunteers.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

by William Shakespeare

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Sir John Falstaff
Fenton, a young gentleman
shallow, a country justice
slender, cousin to Shallow
ford, Gentleman dwelling at Windsor
page, Gentleman dwelling at Windsor
William page, a boy, son to Page
sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson
doctor caius, a French physician
host of the Garter Inn
Bardolph, *pistol*, *Nym*, Followers of Falstaff
Robin, page to Falstaff
simple, servant to Slender
Rugby, servant to Doctor Caius

Mistress ford
mistress page
mistress Anne page, her daughter, in love with Fenton
mistress quickly, servant to Doctor Caius
servants to Page, Ford, &c.

Scene: Windsor; and the neighbourhood

ACT I.

Scene 1. Windsor. Before *page's* house.

[Enter *justice shallow*, *slender*, and *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Shallow. Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star Chamber matter of it; if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slender.
In the county of Gloucester, Justice of Peace, and 'coram.'

Shallow.
Ay, cousin Slender, and 'cust-alorum.'

Slender. Ay, and 'rato-lorum' too; and a gentleman born, Master Parson, who writes himself 'armigero' in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation---–'armigero.'

Shallow.
Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slender. All his successors, gone before him, hath done't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luces in their coat.

Shallow.
It is an old coat.

Evans.
The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well,
passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

Shallow.
The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old
coat.

Slender.
I may quarter, coz?

Shallow.
You may, by marrying.

Evans.
It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

Shallow.
Not a whit.

Evans. Yes, py'r lady! If he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures; but that is all one. If Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compremises between you.

Shallow.
The Council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Evans. It is not meet the Council hear a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot; the Council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

Shallow.
Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Evans. It is petter that friends is the sword and end it; and there is also another device in my prain, which peradventure prings goot discretions with it. There is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master George Page, which is pretty virginity.

Slender.
Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

Evans. It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire upon his death's-bed---–Got deliver to a joyful resurrections!---–give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old. It were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abraham and Mistress Anne Page.

Shallow.
Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

Evans.
Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Shallow.
I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

Evans.
Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is goot gifts.

Shallow.
Well, let us see honest Master Page. Is Falstaff there?

Evans. Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar as I do despise one that is false; or as I despise one that is not true. The knight Sir John is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for Master Page. [Knocks.] What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

Page.
[Within.] Who's there?

Evans. Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

[Enter *page*.]

Page.
I am glad to see your worships well. I thank you for my venison,
Master Shallow.

Shallow.
Master Page, I am glad to see you; much good do it your good heart!
I wished your venison better; it was ill killed. How doth good
Mistress Page?--–and I thank you always with my heart, la! with my
heart.

Page.
Sir, I thank you.

Shallow.
Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

Page.
I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

Slender.
How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on
Cotsall.

Page.
It could not be judged, sir.

Slender.
You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

Shallow.
That he will not: 'tis your fault; 'tis your fault. 'Tis a good dog.

Page.
A cur, sir.

Shallow.
Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog; can there be more said? he is
good, and fair. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

Page.
Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office
between you.

Evans.
It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak.

Shallow.
He hath wronged me, Master Page.

Page.
Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

Shallow.
If it be confessed, it is not redressed: is not that so, Master
Page? He hath wronged me; indeed he hath;---at a word, he hath,
---believe me; Robert Shallow, esquire, saith he is wronged.

Page.
Here comes Sir John.

[Enter *sir John Falstaff*, *Bardolph*, *Nym*, and *pistol*.]

Falstaff.
Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the King?

Shallow.
Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my
lodge.

Falstaff.
But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter?

Shallow.
Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

Falstaff.
I will answer it straight: I have done all this. That is now answered.

Shallow.
The Council shall know this.

Falstaff.
'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel: you'll be laughed
at.

Evans.
Pauca verba, Sir John; goot worts.

Falstaff.
Good worts! good cabbage! Slender, I broke your head; what matter
have you against me?

Slender. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern, and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket.

Bardolph.
You Banbury cheese!

Slender.
Ay, it is no matter.

Pistol.
How now, Mephostophilus!

Slender.
Ay, it is no matter.

Nym.
Slice, I say! pauca, pauca; slice! That's my humour.

Slender.
Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?

Evans. Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand: that is---–Master Page, fidelicet Master Page; and there is myself, fidelicet myself; and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

Page.
We three to hear it and end it between them.

Evans.
Fery goot: I will make a prief of it in my note-book; and we will
afterwards ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.

Falstaff.
Pistol!

Pistol.
He hears with ears.

Evans.
The tevil and his tam! what phrase is this, 'He hears with ear'?
Why, it is affectations.

Falstaff.
Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?

Slender. Ay, by these gloves, did he---–or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else!---–of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-boards that cost me two shilling and two pence a-piece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

Falstaff.
Is this true, Pistol?

Evans.
No, it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

Pistol.
Ha, thou mountain-foreigner!---–Sir John and master mine,
I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.
Word of denial in thy labras here!
Word of denial! Froth and scum, thou liest.

Slender.
By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

Nym. Be avised, sir, and pass good humours; I will say 'marry trap' with you, if you run the nuthook's humour on me; that is the very note of it.

Slender. By this hat, then, he in the red face had it; for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

Falstaff.
What say you, Scarlet and John?

Bardolph.
Why, sir, for my part, I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of
his five sentences.

Evans.
It is his 'five senses'; fie, what the ignorance is!

Bardolph.
And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashier'd; and so conclusions
passed the careires.

Slender. Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no matter; I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick; if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

Evans.
So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

Falstaff.
You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen; you hear it.

[Enter *Anne page* with wine; *mistress ford* and *mistress page*.]

Page.
Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

[Exit *Anne page*.]

Slender.
O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

Page.
How now, Mistress Ford!

Falstaff.
Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met; by your leave,
good mistress. [Kissing her.]

Page.
Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a hot venison pasty
to dinner; come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness.

[Exeunt all but *shallow*, *slender*, and *Evans*.]

Slender.
I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets
here.

[Enter *simple*.]

How, Simple! Where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? You have not the Book of Riddles about you, have you?

Simple.
Book of Riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake upon
Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

Shallow. Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz; marry, this, coz: there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here: do you understand me?

Slender.
Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that
that is reason.

Shallow.
Nay, but understand me.

Slender.
So I do, sir.

Evans.
Give ear to his motions, Master Slender: I will description the
matter to you, if you pe capacity of it.

Slender.
Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says; I pray you pardon me; he's

a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

Evans.
But that is not the question; the question is concerning your marriage.

Shallow.
Ay, there's the point, sir.

Evans.
Marry is it; the very point of it; to Mistress Anne Page.

Slender.
Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

Evans. But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth: therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

Shallow.
Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

Slender.
I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

Evans.
Nay, Got's lords and his ladies! you must speak possitable, if you can
carry her your desires towards her.

Shallow.
That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

Slender.
I will do a greater thing than that upon your request, cousin, in any
reason.

Shallow.
Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz; what I do is to pleasure
you, coz. Can you love the maid?

Slender. I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say 'Marry her,' I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

Evans.
It is a fery discretion answer; save, the fall is in the ort
'dissolutely:' the ort is, according to our meaning, 'resolutely.'
His meaning is good.

Shallow.
Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

Slender.
Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la!

Shallow.
Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

[Re-enter *Anne page*.]

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne!

Anne.
The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worships' company.

Shallow.
I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne!

Evans.
Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

[Exeunt *shallow* and *Evans*.]

Anne.
Will't please your worship to come in, sir?

Slender.
No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

Anne.
The dinner attends you, sir.

Slender.
I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, sirrah, for all you are
my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow.

[Exit *simple*.]

A justice of peace sometime may be beholding to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead. But what though? Yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

Anne.
I may not go in without your worship: they will not sit till you come.

Slender.
I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne.
I pray you, sir, walk in.

Slender. I had rather walk here, I thank you. I bruised my shin th' other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes---and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears i' the town?

Anne.
I think there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

Slender.
I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man
in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

Anne.
Ay, indeed, sir.

Slender. That's meat and drink to me now. I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it that it passed; but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favoured rough things.

[Re-enter *page*.]

Page.
Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slender.
I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

Page.
By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir! come, come.

Slender.
Nay, pray you lead the way.

Page.
Come on, sir.

Slender.
Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

Anne.
Not I, sir; pray you keep on.

Slender.
Truly, I will not go first; truly, la! I will not do you that wrong.

Anne.
I pray you, sir.

Slender.
I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome. You do yourself wrong
indeed, la!

[Exeunt.]

Scene 2. The same.

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans* and *simple*.]

Evans. Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way; and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Simple.
Well, sir.

Evans. Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page; and the letter is to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to Mistress Anne Page. I pray you be gone: I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 3. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *Falstaff*, *host*, *Bardolph*, *Nym*, *pistol*, and *Robin*.]

Falstaff.
Mine host of the Garter!

Host.
What says my bully rook? Speak scholarly and wisely.

Falstaff.
Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

Host.
Discard, bully Hercules; cashier; let them wag; trot, trot.

Falstaff.
I sit at ten pounds a week.

Host.
Thou'rt an emperor, Caesar, Keiser, and Pheazar. I will entertain
Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall tap; said I well, bully Hector?

Falstaff.
Do so, good mine host.

Host.
I have spoke; let him follow. [To *Bardolph*] Let me see thee froth and lime. I am at a word; follow.

[Exit.]

Falstaff.
Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade; an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving-man a fresh tapster. Go; adieu.

Bardolph.
It is a life that I have desired; I will thrive.

Pistol.
O base Hungarian wight! Wilt thou the spigot wield?

[Exit *Bardolph*.]

Nym.
He was gotten in drink. Is not the humour conceited?

Falstaff.
I am glad I am so acquit of this tinder-box: his thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskilful singer---he kept not time.

Nym.
The good humour is to steal at a minim's rest.

Pistol.
'Convey' the wise it call. 'Steal!' foh! A fico for the phrase!

Falstaff.
Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

Pistol.
Why, then, let kibes ensue.

Falstaff.
There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift.

Pistol.
Young ravens must have food.

Falstaff.
Which of you know Ford of this town?

Pistol.
I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

Falstaff.
My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pistol.
Two yards, and more.

Falstaff. No quips now, Pistol. Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be Englished rightly, is 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'

Pistol.
He hath studied her will, and translated her will out of honesty into
English.

Nym.
The anchor is deep; will that humour pass?

Falstaff.
Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her husband's purse; he
hath a legion of angels.

Pistol.
As many devils entertain; and 'To her, boy,' say I.

Nym.
The humour rises; it is good; humour me the angels.

Falstaff. I have writ me here a letter to her; and here another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious oeillades; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly.

Pistol.
Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Nym.
I thank thee for that humour.

Falstaff. O! she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass. Here's another letter to her: she bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheator to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to Mistress Ford. We will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pistol.
Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel? then Lucifer take all!

Nym.
I will run no base humour. Here, take the humour-letter; I will keep
the haviour of reputation.

Falstaff.
[To *Robin*] Hold, sirrah; bear you these letters tightly;
Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.
Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go;
Trudge, plod away o' hoof; seek shelter, pack!
Falstaff will learn the humour of this age;
French thrift, you rogues; myself, and skirted page.

[Exeunt *Falstaff* and *Robin*.]

Pistol.
Let vultures gripe thy guts! for gourd and fullam holds,
And high and low beguile the rich and poor;
Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,
Base Phrygian Turk!

Nym.
I have operations in my head which be humours of revenge.

Pistol.
Wilt thou revenge?

Nym.
By welkin and her star!

Pistol.
With wit or steel?

Nym.
With both the humours, I:
I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

Pistol.
And I to Ford shall eke unfold
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

Nym.
My humour shall not cool: I will incense Page to deal with poison;

I will possess him with yellowness, for the revolt of mine is
dangerous: that is my true humour.

Pistol.
Thou art the Mars of malcontents; I second thee; troop on.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 4. A room in *doctor* CAIUS'S house.

[Enter *mistress quickly*, and *simple*.]

Quickly.
What, John Rugby!

[Enter *Rugby*.]

I pray thee go to the casement, and see if you can see my master, Master Doctor Caius, coming: if he do, i' faith, and find anybody in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English.

Rugby.
I'll go watch.

Quickly.
Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the
latter end of a sea-coal fire.

[Exit *Rugby*.]

An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal; and, I warrant you, no tell-tale nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault; but let that pass. Peter Simple you say your name is?

Simple.
Ay, for fault of a better.

Quickly.
And Master Slender's your master?

Simple.
Ay, forsooth.

Quickly.
Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring-knife?

Simple.
No, forsooth; he hath but a little whey face, with a little yellow
beard---a cane-coloured beard.

Quickly.
A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

Simple.
Ay, forsooth; but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between
this and his head; he hath fought with a warrener.

Quickly.
How say you?---O! I should remember him. Does he not hold up his head,
as it were, and strut in his gait?

Simple.
Yes, indeed, does he.

Quickly.
Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell Master Parson
Evans I will do what I can for your master: Anne is a good girl,
and I wish---

[Re-enter *Rugby*.]

Rugby.
Out, alas! here comes my master.

Quickly. We shall all be shent. Run in here, good young man; go into this closet. [Shuts *simple* in the closet.] He will not stay long. What, John Rugby! John! what, John, I say! Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt he be not well that he comes not home.

[Exit Rugby.]

[Sings.] And down, down, adown-a, &c.

[Enter *doctor caius*.]

Caius.
Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys. Pray you, go and vetch me
in my closet une boitine verde---a box, a green-a box: do intend vat
I speak? a green-a box.

Quickly.
Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you. [Aside] I am glad he went not in
himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

Caius.
Fe, fe, fe fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais a la cour---
la grande affaire.

Quickly.
Is it this, sir?

Caius.
Oui; mettez le au mon pocket: depechez, quickly---Vere is dat knave, Rugby?

Quickly.
What, John Rugby? John!

[Re-enter Rugby.]

Rugby.
Here, sir.

Caius.
You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby: come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to de court.

Rugby.
'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

Caius.
By my trot, I tarry too long---Od's me! Qu'ay j'oublie? Dere is some simples in my closet dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

Quickly.
[Aside.] Ay me, he'll find the young man there, and be mad!

Caius.
O diable, diable! vat is in my closet?---Villainy! larron!
[Pulling *simple* out.] Rugby, my rapier!

Quickly.
Good master, be content.

Caius.
Verefore shall I be content-a?

Quickly.
The young man is an honest man.

Caius.
What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Quickly.
I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic. Hear the truth of it: he came of

an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

Caius.
Vell.

Simple.
Ay, forsooth, to desire her to---

Quickly.
Peace, I pray you.

Caius.
Peace-a your tongue!---Speak-a your tale.

Simple.
To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to
Mistress Anne Page for my master, in the way of marriage.

Quickly.
This is all, indeed, la! but I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire,
and need not.

Caius.
Sir Hugh send-a you?---Rugby, baillez me some paper: tarry you a
little-a while. [Writes.]

Quickly. I am glad he is so quiet: if he had been throughly moved, you should have heard him so loud and so melancholy. But notwithstanding, man, I'll do you your master what good I can; and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master---I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself---

Simple.
'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

Quickly. Are you avis'd o' that? You shall find it a great charge; and to be up early and down late; but notwithstanding,---to tell you in your ear,---I would have no words of it---my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page; but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind, that's neither here nor there.

Caius. You jack'nape; give-a dis letter to Sir Hugh; by gar, it is a shallenge: I will cut his troat in de Park; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; it is not good you tarry here: by gar, I will cut all his two stones; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog.

[Exit *simple*.]

Quickly.
Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter-a ver dat:---do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest; and I have appointed mine host of de Jartiere to measure our weapon. By gar, I vill myself have Anne Page.

Quickly.
Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We must give folks
leave to prate: what, the good-jer!

Caius.
Rugby, come to the court vit me. By gar, if I have not Anne Page,
I shall turn your head out of my door. Follow my heels, Rugby.

[Exeunt *caius* and *Rugby*.]

Quickly. You shall have An fool's-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that: never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

Fenton.
[Within.] Who's within there? ho!

Quickly.
Who's there, I trow? Come near the house, I pray you.

[Enter *Fenton*.]

Fenton.
How now, good woman! how dost thou?

Quickly.
The better, that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fenton.
What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

Quickly.
In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that
is your friend, I can tell you that by the way; I praise heaven for it.

Fenton.
Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? Shall I not lose my suit?

Quickly.
Troth, sir, all is in His hands above; but notwithstanding, Master
Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book she loves you. Have not your worship
a wart above your eye?

Fenton.
Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

Quickly. Well, thereby hangs a tale; good faith, it is such another Nan; but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke bread. We had an hour's talk of that wart; I shall never laugh but in that maid's company;---but, indeed, she is given too much to allicholy and musing. But for you ---well, go to.

Fenton.
Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee; let me
have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, commend me.

Quickly.
Will I? i' faith, that we will; and I will tell your worship more of
the wart the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

Fenton.
Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

Quickly. Farewell to your worship.---[Exit *Fenton*.] Truly, an honest gentleman; but Anne loves him not; for I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon 't, what have I forgot?

[Exit.]

ACT II.

Scene 1. Before *page's* house

[Enter *mistress page*, with a letter.]

Mrs. Page.
What! have I scaped love-letters in the holiday-time of my beauty,
and am I now a subject for them? Let me see.

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use Reason
for his precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor. You
are not young, no more am I; go to, then, there's sympathy:
you are merry, so am I; ha! ha! then there's more sympathy;
you love sack, and so do I; would you desire better sympathy?
Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page, at the least, if the love
of soldier can suffice, that I love thee. I will not say,
pity me: 'tis not a soldier-like phrase; but I say, Love me.
By me,
Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might,
For thee to fight,
John Falstaff.'

What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked, wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show himself a young gallant. What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked, with the devil's name! out of my

conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth:---Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men. How shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

[Enter *mistress ford*.]

Mrs. Ford.
Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

Mrs. Page.
And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

Mrs. Page.
Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford.
Well, I do, then; yet, I say, I could show you to the contrary.
O, Mistress Page! give me some counsel.

Mrs. Page.
What's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford.
O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to
such honour!

Mrs. Page.
Hang the trifle, woman; take the honour. What is it?---Dispense with
trifles;---what is it?

Mrs. Ford.
If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment or so, I could be
knighted.

Mrs. Page.
What? thou liest. Sir Alice Ford! These knights will hack; and so
thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

Mrs. Ford. We burn daylight: here, read, read; perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking: and yet he would not swear; praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Greensleeves.' What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs. To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter; but let thine inherit first, for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names, sure, more, and these are of the second edition. He will print them, out of doubt; for he cares not what he puts into the press, when he would put us two: I had rather be a giantess and lie under Mount Pelion. Well, I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.

Mrs. Ford.
Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the very words. What doth
he think of us?

Mrs. Page. Nay, I know not; it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he know some strain in me that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

Mrs. Ford.
'Boarding' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.

Mrs. Page. So will I; if he come under my hatches, I'll never to sea again. Let's be revenged on him; let's appoint him a meeting, give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead him on with a fine-baited delay, till he hath pawned his horses to mine host of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O, that my husband saw this letter! It would give eternal food to his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Why, look where he comes; and my good man too: he's as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause; and that, I hope, is an unmeasurable distance.

Mrs. Ford.
You are the happier woman.

Mrs. Page.
Let's consult together against this greasy knight. Come hither.

[They retire.]

[Enter *ford*, *pistol*, and *page* and *Nym*.]

Ford.
Well, I hope it be not so.

Pistol.
Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs:
Sir John affects thy wife.

Ford.
Why, sir, my wife is not young.

Pistol.
He woos both high and low, both rich and poor,
Both young and old, one with another, Ford;
He loves the gallimaufry. Ford, perpend.

Ford.
Love my wife!

Pistol.
With liver burning hot: prevent, or go thou,
Like Sir Actaeon he, with Ringwood at thy heels.---
O! odious is the name!

Ford.
What name, sir?

Pistol.
The horn, I say. Farewell:
Take heed; have open eye, for thieves do foot by night;
Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo birds do sing.
Away, Sir Corporal Nym.
Believe it, Page; he speaks sense.

[Exit *pistol*.]

Ford.
[Aside] I will be patient: I will find out this.

Nym. [To *page*] And this is true; I like not the humour of lying. He hath wronged me in some humours: I should have borne the humoured letter to her; but I have a sword, and it shall bite upon my necessity. He loves your wife; there's the short and the long. My name is Corporal Nym; I speak, and I avouch 'tis true. My name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife. Adieu. I love not the humour of bread and cheese; and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

[Exit *Nym*.]

Page.
[Aside.] 'The humour of it,' quoth 'a! Here's a fellow frights
English out of his wits.

Ford.
I will seek out Falstaff.

Page.
I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

Ford.
If I do find it: well.

Page.
I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' the town
commended him for a true man.

Ford.
'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.

Page.
How now, Meg!

Mrs. Page.
Whither go you, George?---–Hark you.

Mrs. Ford.
How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?

Ford.
I melancholy! I am not melancholy. Get you home, go.

Mrs. Ford.
Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head now. Will you go,
Mistress Page?

Mrs. Page.
Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George?
[Aside to *Mrs. Ford*] Look who comes yonder: she shall be our
messenger to this paltry knight.

Mrs. Ford.
[Aside to *Mrs. Page*] Trust me, I thought on her: she'll fit it.

[Enter *mistress quickly*.]

Mrs. Page.
You are come to see my daughter Anne?

Quickly.
Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne?

Mrs. Page.
Go in with us and see; we'd have an hour's talk with you.

[Exeunt *mistress page*, *mistress ford*, and *mistress quickly*.]

Page.
How now, Master Ford!

Ford.
You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

Page.
Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

Ford.
Do you think there is truth in them?

Page. Hang 'em, slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it; but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives are a yoke of his discarded men; very rogues, now they be out of service.

Ford.
Were they his men?

Page.
Marry, were they.

Ford.
I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter?

Page.
Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage toward my wife,
I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than
sharp words, let it lie on my head.

Ford.
I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loath to turn them together.
A man may be too confident. I would have nothing 'lie on my head': I
cannot be thus satisfied.

Page.
Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes. There is either
liquor in his pate or money in his purse when he looks so merrily.

[Enter *host* and *shallow*.]

How now, mine host!

Host.
How now, bully-rook! Thou'rt a gentleman. Cavaliero-justice, I say!

Shallow.
I follow, mine host, I follow. Good even and twenty, good Master
Page! Master Page, will you go with us? We have sport in hand.

Host.
Tell him, cavaliero-justice; tell him, bully-rook.

Shallow.
Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest
and Caius the French doctor.

Ford.
Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

Host.
What say'st thou, my bully-rook?

[They go aside.]

Shallow. [To *page*.] Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be. [They converse apart.]

Host.
Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavaliero?

Ford.
None, I protest: but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me
recourse to him, and tell him my name is Brook, only for a jest.

Host.
My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress; said I well? and
thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight. Will you go, mynheers?

Shallow.
Have with you, mine host.

Page.
I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

Shallow. Tut, sir! I could have told you more. In these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccadoes, and I know not what: 'tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Host.
Here, boys, here, here! Shall we wag?

Page.
Have with you. I had rather hear them scold than fight.

[Exeunt *host*, *shallow*, and *page*.]

Ford. Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily. She was in his company at Page's house, and what they made there I know not. Well, I will look further into 't; and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed.

[Exit.]

Scene 2. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *Falstaff* and *pistol*.]

Falstaff.
I will not lend thee a penny.

Pistol.
Why then, the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.
I will retort the sum in equipage.

Falstaff. Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn; I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow, Nym; or else you had looked through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damned in hell for swearing to gentlemen my friends you were good soldiers and tall fellows; and when Mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took 't upon mine honour thou hadst it not.

Pistol.
Didst not thou share? Hadst thou not fifteen pence?

Falstaff. Reason, you rogue, reason. Thinkest thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you: go: a short knife and a throng!---–to your manor of Picht-hatch! go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue!---–you stand upon your honour!---–Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the terms of my honour precise. I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

Pistol.
I do relent; what wouldst thou more of man?

[Enter *Robin*.]

Robin.
Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Falstaff.
Let her approach.

[Enter *mistress quickly*.]

Quickly.
Give your worship good morrow.

Falstaff.
Good morrow, good wife.

Quickly.
Not so, an't please your worship.

Falstaff.
Good maid, then.

Quickly.
I'll be sworn; As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

Falstaff.
I do believe the swearer. What with me?

Quickly.
Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Falstaff.
Two thousand, fair woman; and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Quickly.
There is one Mistress Ford, sir,---–I pray, come a little nearer this
ways:---–I myself dwell with Master Doctor Caius.

Falstaff.
Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say,---–

Quickly.
Your worship says very true;---–I pray your worship come a little
nearer this ways.

Falstaff.
I warrant thee nobody hears---–mine own people, mine own people.

Quickly.
Are they so? God bless them, and make them His servants!

Falstaff.
Well: Mistress Ford, what of her?

Quickly.
Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord, Lord! your worship's a wanton!
Well, heaven forgive you, and all of us, I pray.

Falstaff.
Mistress Ford; come, Mistress Ford---–

Quickly. Marry, this is the short and the long of it. You have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful: the best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary; yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift;

smelling so sweetly,---all musk, and so rushling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her. I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty: and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all; and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners; but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

Falstaff.
But what says she to me? be brief, my good she-Mercury.

Quickly. Marry, she hath received your letter; for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

Falstaff.
Ten and eleven?

Quickly. Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of: Master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him; he's a very jealousy man; she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

Falstaff.
Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

Quickly. Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship: Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you too; and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other; and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home, but she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man: surely I think you have charms, la! yes, in truth.

Falstaff.
Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my good parts aside,
I have no other charms.

Quickly.
Blessing on your heart for 't!

Falstaff.
But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife and Page's wife
acquainted each other how they love me?

Quickly. That were a jest indeed! They have not so little grace, I hope: that were a trick indeed! But Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves: her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page; and, truly, Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and truly she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page; no remedy.

Falstaff.
Why, I will.

Quickly. Nay, but do so then; and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and in any case have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Falstaff.
Fare thee well; commend me to them both. There's my purse; I am yet
thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman.---–

[Exeunt *mistress quickly* and *Robin*.]

This news distracts me.

Pistol.
This punk is one of Cupid's carriers;
Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights;
Give fire; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all!

[Exit.]

Falstaff. Say'st thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

[Enter *Bardolph*, with a cup of sack.]

Bardolph. Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you and be acquainted with you: and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Falstaff.
Brook is his name?

Bardolph.
Ay, sir.

Falstaff.
Call him in. [Exit *Bardolph*.] Such Brooks are welcome to me, that
o'erflow such liquor. Ah, ha! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, have
I encompassed you? Go to; via!

[Re-enter *Bardolph*, with *ford* disguised.]

Ford.
Bless you, sir!

Falstaff.
And you, sir; would you speak with me?

Ford.
I make bold to press with so little preparation upon
you.

Falstaff.
You're welcome. What's your will?---Give us leave, drawer.

[Exit *Bardolph*.]

Ford.
Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much: my name is Brook.

Falstaff.
Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good Sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something embold'ned me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

Falstaff.
Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me; if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Falstaff.
Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford.
I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

Falstaff.
Speak, good Master Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant.

Ford. Sir, I hear you are a scholar,---I will be brief with you, and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection; but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know how easy is it to be such an offender.

Falstaff.
Very well, sir; proceed.

Ford.
There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford.

Falstaff.
Well, sir.

Ford. I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her; fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many to know what she would have given; briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means, meed, I am sure, I have received none, unless experience be a jewel that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this,

Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Falstaff.
Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

Ford.
Never.

Falstaff.
Have you importuned her to such a purpose?

Ford.
Never.

Falstaff.
Of what quality was your love, then?

Ford.
Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have
lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Falstaff.
To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

Falstaff.
O, sir!

Ford. Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife: use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Falstaff. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

Ford. O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves; I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattled against me. What say you to't, Sir John?

Falstaff. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

Ford.
O good sir!

Falstaff.
I say you shall.

Ford.
Want no money, Sir John; you shall want none.

Falstaff. Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; even as you came in to me her assistant or go-between parted from me: I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave, her husband, will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

Ford.
I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir?

Falstaff. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not; yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favoured. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

Ford.
I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him if you saw him.

Falstaff. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night. Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night.

[Exit.]

Ford. What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him; the hour is fixed; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends. But Cuckold! Wittol!---–Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous; I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself;

then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

[Exit.]

Scene 3. A field near Windsor.

[Enter *caius* and *Rugby*.]

Caius.
Jack Rugby!

Rugby.
Sir?

Caius.
Vat is de clock, Jack?

Rugby.
'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.

Caius.
By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his
Pible vell dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead
already, if he be come.

Rugby.
He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill him if he came.

Caius.
By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him. Take your
rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

Rugby.
Alas, sir, I cannot fence!

Caius.
Villany, take your rapier.

Rugby.
Forbear; here's company.

[Enter *host*, *shallow*, *slender*, and *page*.]

Host.
Bless thee, bully doctor!

Shallow.
Save you, Master Doctor Caius!

Page.
Now, good Master Doctor!

Slender.
Give you good morrow, sir.

Caius.
Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my Francisco? Ha, bully! What says my Aesculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? Ha! is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?

Caius.
By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show
his face.

Host.
Thou art a Castalion King Urinal! Hector of Greece, my boy!

Caius.
I pray you, bear witness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree
hours for him, and he is no come.

Shallow. He is the wiser man, Master doctor: he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions. Is it not true, Master Page?

Page.
Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now
a man of peace.

Shallow. Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old, and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one. Though we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, Master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Master Page.

Page.
'Tis true, Master Shallow.

Shallow. It will be found so, Master Page. Master Doctor Caius, I come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace; you have showed yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, Master Doctor.

Host.
Pardon, guest-justice.---–A word, Monsieur Mockwater.

Caius.
Mock-vater! Vat is dat?

Host.
Mockwater, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

Caius.
By gar, then I have as much mockvater as de Englishman.---–Scurvy
jack-dog priest! By gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host.
He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

Caius.
Clapper-de-claw! Vat is dat?

Host.
That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius.
By gar, me do look he shall clapper-de-claw me; for, by gar, me
vill have it.

Host.
And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

Caius.
Me tank you for dat.

Host.
And, moreover, bully---–but first: Master guest, and Master Page,
and eke Cavaliero Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore.

[Aside to them.]

Page.
Sir Hugh is there, is he?

Host.
He is there: see what humour he is in; and I will bring the
doctor about by the fields. Will it do well?

Shallow.
We will do it.

Page, *shallow*, and *slender*.
Adieu, good Master Doctor.

[Exeunt *page*, *shallow*, and *slender*.]

Caius.
By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape
to Anne Page.

Host. Let him die. Sheathe thy impatience; throw cold water on thy choler; go about the fields with me through Frogmore; I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her. Cried I aim? Said I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you for dat: by gar, I love you; and I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

Host.
For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page: said I well?

Caius.
By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Host.
Let us wag, then.

Caius.
Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

[Exeunt.]

ACT III

Scene 1. A field near Frogmore.

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans* and *simple*.]

Evans.
I pray you now, good Master Slender's serving-man, and friend
Simple by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius,
that calls himself doctor of physic?

Simple.
Marry, sir, the pittie-ward, the park-ward, every way; old Windsor
way, and every way but the town way.

Evans.
I most fehemently desire you you will also look that
way.

Simple.
I will, Sir.

[Exit.]

Evans.
Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and trempling of mind!
I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am!
I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have goot
opportunities for the 'ork: pless my soul!

[Sings]
To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sings madrigals;
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies.
To shallow--–

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry.

[Sings.]
Melodious birds sing madrigals,--–
Whenas I sat in Pabylon,--–
And a thousand vagram posies.
To shallow,--–

[Re-enter *simple*.]

Simple.
Yonder he is, coming this way, Sir Hugh.

Evans.
He's welcome.

[Sings]
To shallow rivers, to whose falls--–

Heaven prosper the right!--–What weapons is he?

Simple.
No weapons, sir. There comes my master, Master Shallow, and another
gentleman, from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

Evans.
Pray you give me my gown; or else keep it in your arms.
[Reads in a book.]

[Enter *page*, *shallow*, and *slender*.]

Shallow.
How now, Master Parson! Good morrow, good Sir Hugh. Keep a gamester

from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Slender.
[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

Page.
'Save you, good Sir Hugh!

Evans.
Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

Shallow.
What, the sword and the word! Do you study them both, Master Parson?

Page.
And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatic day!

Evans.
There is reasons and causes for it.

Page.
We are come to you to do a good office, Master Parson.

Evans.
Fery well; what is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.

Shallow.
I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of
his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Evans.
What is he?

Page.
I think you know him: Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French
physician.

Evans.
Got's will and His passion of my heart! I had as lief you would
tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page.
Why?

Evans. He has no more knowledge in Hibbocrates and Galen,---and he is a knave besides; a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

Page.
I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

Slender.
[Aside] O, sweet Anne Page!

Shallow.
It appears so, by his weapons. Keep them asunder; here comes
Doctor Caius.

[Enter *host*, *caius*, and *Rugby*.]

Page.
Nay, good Master Parson, keep in your weapon.

Shallow.
So do you, good Master Doctor.

Host.
Disarm them, and let them question; let them keep their limbs whole
and hack our English.

Caius.
I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear: verefore will you
not meet-a me?

Evans.
[Aside to *caius*.] Pray you use your patience; in good time.

Caius.
By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

Evans. [Aside to *caius*.] Pray you, let us not be laughing-stogs to other men's humours; I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends. [Aloud.] I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogscomb for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius.
Diable!---Jack Rugby,---mine Host de Jarretiere,---have I not stay for
him to kill him? Have I not, at de place I did appoint?

Evans.
As I am a Christians soul, now, look you, this is the place
appointed. I'll be judgment by mine host of the Garter.

Host.
Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaullia; French and Welsh, soul-curer
and body-curer!

Caius.
Ay, dat is very good; excellent!

Host. Peace, I say! Hear mine host of the Garter. Am I politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? No; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? No; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so;---–give me thy hand, celestial; so. Boys of art, I have deceived you both; I have directed you to wrong places; your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow.

Shallow.
Trust me, a mad host!---–Follow, gentlemen, follow.

Slender.
[Aside] O, sweet Anne Page!

[Exeunt *shallow*, *slender*, *page*, and *host*.]

Caius.
Ha, do I perceive dat? Have you make-a de sot of us, ha, ha?

Evans. This is well; he has made us his vlouting-stog. I desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy, cogging companion, the host of the Garter.

Caius.
By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me where is Anne
Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

Evans.
Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you follow.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 2. A street in Windsor.

[Enter *mistress page* and *Robin*.]

Mrs. Page. Nay, keep your way, little gallant: you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Robin.
I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man than follow him
like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page.
O! you are a flattering boy: now I see you'll be a courtier.

[Enter *ford.*]

Ford.
Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

Mrs. Page.
Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

Ford.
Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company.
I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mrs. Page.
Be sure of that---two other husbands.

Ford.
Where had you this pretty weathercock?

Mrs. Page.
I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of.
What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

Robin.
Sir John Falstaff.

Ford.
Sir John Falstaff!

Mrs. Page.
He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such a league between
my good man and he! Is your wife at home indeed?

Ford.
Indeed she is.

Mrs. Page.
By your leave, sir: I am sick till I see her.

[Exeunt *Mrs. Page* and *Robin.*]

Ford. Has Page any brains? Hath he any eyes? Hath he any thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty mile as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage; and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind: and Falstaff's boy with her! Good plots! They are laid; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so

seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actaeon; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim. [Clock strikes] The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search; there I shall find Falstaff. I shall be rather praised for this than mocked; for it is as positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there. I will go.

[Enter *page*, *shallow*, *slender*, *host*, *sir Hugh Evans*, *caius*, and *Rugby*.]

Shallow, *page*, &c.
Well met, Master Ford.

Ford.
Trust me, a good knot; I have good cheer at home, and I pray you
all go with me.

Shallow.
I must excuse myself, Master Ford.

Slender.
And so must I, sir; we have appointed to dine with Mistress Anne,
and I would not break with her for more money than I'll speak of.

Shallow.
We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and my cousin
Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

Slender.
I hope I have your good will, father Page.

Page.
You have, Master Slender; I stand wholly for you. But my wife,
Master doctor, is for you altogether.

Caius.
Ay, be-gar; and de maid is love-a me: my nursh-a Quickly tell me
so mush.

Host. What say you to young Master Fenton? He capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May; he will carry 't, he will carry 't; 'tis in his buttons; he will carry 't.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having: he kept company with the wild Prince and Pointz; he is of too high a region, he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance; if he take her, let him take her simply; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

Ford.
I beseech you, heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner:
besides your cheer, you shall have sport; I will show you a monster.
Master Doctor, you shall go; so shall you, Master Page; and you,

Sir Hugh.

Shallow.
Well, fare you well; we shall have the freer wooing at Master Page's.

[Exeunt *shallow* and *slender*.]

Caius.
Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

[Exit *Rugby*.]

Host.
Farewell, my hearts; I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink
canary with him.

[Exit *host*.]

Ford. [Aside] I think I shall drink in pipe-wine first with him. I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

All.
Have with you to see this monster.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 3. A room in *Ford's* house.

[Enter *mistress ford* and *mistress page*.]

Mrs. Ford.
What, John! what, Robert!

Mrs. Page.
Quickly, quickly:---Is the buck-basket---

Mrs. Ford.
I warrant. What, Robin, I say!

[Enter *servants* with a basket.]

Mrs. Page.
Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford.
Here, set it down.

Mrs. Page.
Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew-house; and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and, without any pause or staggering, take this basket on your shoulders: that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet-Mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side.

Mrs. Page.
You will do it?

Mrs. Ford.
I have told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and
come when you are called.

[Exeunt *servants*.]

Mrs. Page.
Here comes little Robin.

[Enter *Robin*.]

Mrs. Ford.
How now, my eyas-musket! what news with you?

Robin.
My Master Sir John is come in at your back-door, Mistress Ford,
and requests your company.

Mrs. Page.
You little Jack-a-Lent, have you been true to us?

Robin. Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your being here, and hath threatened to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for he swears he'll turn me away.

Mrs. Page.
Thou 'rt a good boy; this secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to
thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose. I'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford.
Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone.

[Exit *Robin*.]

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

Mrs. Page.
I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.

[Exit.]

Mrs. Ford.
Go to, then; we'll use this unwholesome humidity, this gross watery
pumpion; we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

[Enter *Falstaff.*]

Falstaff.
'Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?' Why, now let me die, for
I have lived long enough: this is the period of my ambition:
O this blessed hour!

Mrs. Ford.
O, sweet Sir John!

Falstaff. Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish; I would thy husband were dead. I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford.
I your lady, Sir John! Alas, I should be a pitiful
lady.

Falstaff. Let the court of France show me such another. I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond; thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

Mrs. Ford.
A plain kerchief, Sir John; my brows become nothing else; nor that
well neither.

Falstaff. By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so: thou wouldst make an absolute courtier; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford.
Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

Falstaff. What made me love thee? Let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog and say thou art this and that, like a many of these lisping hawthorn-buds that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple-time; I cannot; but I love thee, none but thee; and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford.
Do not betray me, sir; I fear you love Mistress Page.

Falstaff.
Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the Counter-gate, which
is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

Mrs. Ford.
Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you shall one day find it.

Falstaff.
Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

Robin. [Within] Mistress Ford! Mistress Ford! here's Mistress Page at the door, sweating and blowing and looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

Falstaff.
She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

Mrs. Ford.
Pray you, do so; she's a very tattling woman.

[*Falstaff* hides himself.]

[Re-enter *mistress page* and *Robin*.]

What's the matter? How now!

Mrs. Page.
O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you are
overthrown, you are undone for ever!

Mrs. Ford.
What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

Mrs. Page.
O well-a-day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband,
to give him such cause of suspicion!

Mrs. Ford.
What cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Page.
What cause of suspicion? Out upon you! how am I mistook in you!

Mrs. Ford.
Why, alas, what's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: you are undone.

Mrs. Ford.
[Aside.] Speak louder.--–
'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. Pray heaven it be not so that you have such a man here! but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do?---–There is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame as much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame! never stand 'you had rather' and 'you had rather': your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or---–it is whiting-time---–send him by your two men to Datchet-Mead.

Mrs. Ford.
He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

Falstaff.
[Coming forward] Let me see 't, let me see 't. O, let me see 't!
I'll in, I'll in; follow your friend's counsel; I'll in.

Mrs. Page.
What, Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

Falstaff.
I love thee and none but thee; help me away: let me creep in here.
I'll never---–

[He gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen.]

Mrs. Page.
Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men, Mistress Ford. You
dissembling knight!

Mrs. Ford.
What, John! Robert! John!

[Exit *Robin*.]

[Re-enter *servants*.]

Go, take up these clothes here, quickly; where's the cowl-staff? Look how you drumble! Carry them to the laundress in Datchet-Mead; quickly, come.

[Enter *ford*, *page*, *caius*, and *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Ford. Pray you come near. If I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me, then let me be your jest; I deserve it. How now, whither bear you this?

Servant.
To the laundress, forsooth.

Mrs. Ford.
Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You were best meddle
with buck-washing.

Ford.
Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck! Buck, buck, buck!
ay, buck; I warrant you, buck; and of the season too, it shall appear.

[Exeunt *servants* with the basket.]

Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers; search, seek, find out. I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first. [Locking the door.] So, now uncape.

Page.
Good Master Ford, be contented: you wrong yourself
too much.

Ford.
True, Master Page. Up, gentlemen, you shall see sport anon; follow
me, gentlemen.

[Exit.]

Evans.
This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

Caius.
By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France.

Page.
Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search.

[Exeunt *Evans*, *page*, and *caius*.]

Mrs. Page.
Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mrs. Ford.
I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or
Sir John.

Mrs. Page.
What a taking was he in when your husband asked who was in the basket!

Mrs. Ford.
I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so throwing him into
the water will do him a benefit.

Mrs. Page.
Hang him, dishonest rascal! I would all of the same strain were in
the same distress.

Mrs. Ford.
I think my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being
here, for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

Mrs. Page.
I will lay a plot to try that, and we will yet have more tricks
with Falstaff: his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water, and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

Mrs. Page.
We will do it; let him be sent for to-morrow eight o'clock, to
have amends.

[Re-enter *ford*, *page*, *caius*, and *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Ford.
I cannot find him: may be the knave bragged of that he could not
compass.

Mrs. Page.
[Aside to *Mrs. Ford*.] Heard you that?

Mrs. Ford.
[Aside to *Mrs. Page*.] Ay, ay, peace.---–
You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

Ford.
Ay, I do so.

Mrs. Ford.
Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

Ford.
Amen!

Mrs. Page.
You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

Ford.
Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Evans. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

Caius.
Be gar, nor I too; there is no bodies.

Page. Fie, fie, Master Ford, are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha' your distemper in this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

Ford.
'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.

Evans.
You suffer for a pad conscience. Your wife is as honest a 'omans as
I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

Caius.
By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well, I promised you a dinner. Come, come, walk in the Park: I pray you pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this. Come, wife, come, Mistress Page; I pray you pardon me; pray heartily, pardon me.

Page. Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

Ford.
Any thing.

Evans.
If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

Caius.
If there be one or two, I shall make-a the turd.

Ford.
Pray you go, Master Page.

Evans.
I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

Caius.
Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart.

Evans.
A lousy knave! to have his gibes and his mockeries!

[Exeunt.]

Scene 4. A room in *page's* house.

[Enter *Fenton*, *Anne page*, and *mistress quickly*. *Mistress quickly* stands apart.]

Fenton.
I see I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

Anne.
Alas! how then?

Fenton.
Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object, I am too great of birth;
And that my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.

Anne.
May be he tells you true.

Fenton.
No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I wooed thee, Anne:
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

Anne.
Gentle Master Fenton,
Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir.
If opportunity and humblest suit
Cannot attain it, why then,---–hark you hither.

[They converse apart.]

[Enter *shallow*, *slender*, and *mistress quickly*.]

Shallow.
Break their talk, Mistress Quickly: my kinsman shall speak for himself.

Slender.
I'll make a shaft or a bolt on 't. 'Slid, 'tis but venturing.

Shallow.
Be not dismayed.

Slender.
No, she shall not dismay me. I care not for that, but that I am afeard.

Quickly.
Hark ye; Master Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne.
I come to him. [Aside.] This is my father's choice.
O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

Quickly.
And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a
word with you.

Shallow.
She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

Slender. I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress Anne the jest how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shallow.
Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slender.
Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

Shallow.
He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slender.
Ay, that I will come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a squire.

Shallow.
He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne.
Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shallow.
Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort. She
calls you, coz; I'll leave you.

Anne.
Now, Master Slender.

Slender.
Now, good Mistress Anne.---–

Anne.
What is your will?

Slender.
My will! 'od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er
made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature,
I give heaven praise.

Anne.
I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

Slender. Truly, for mine own part I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions; if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go better than I can. You may ask your father; here he comes.

[Enter *page* and *mistress page*.]

Page.
Now, Master Slender: love him, daughter Anne.
Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here?
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house:
I told you, sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

Fenton.
Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

Mrs. Page.
Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

Page.
She is no match for you.

Fenton.
Sir, will you hear me?

Page.
No, good Master Fenton.
Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender, in.
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.

[Exeunt *page*, *shallow*, and *slender*.]

Quickly.
Speak to Mistress Page.

Fenton.
Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce, against all checks, rebukes, and manners,
I must advance the colours of my love
And not retire: let me have your good will.

Anne.
Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

Mrs. Page.
I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

Quickly.
That's my master, Master doctor.

Anne.
Alas! I had rather be set quick i' the earth.
And bowl'd to death with turnips.

Mrs. Page.
Come, trouble not yourself. Good Master Fenton,
I will not be your friend, nor enemy;
My daughter will I question how she loves you,
And as I find her, so am I affected.
Till then, farewell, sir: she must needs go in;
Her father will be angry.

Fenton.
Farewell, gentle mistress. Farewell, Nan.

[Exeunt *Mrs. Page* and *Anne*.}

Quickly.
This is my doing now: 'Nay,' said I, 'will you cast away your child
on a fool, and a physician? Look on Master Fenton.' This is my doing.

Fenton.
I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night
Give my sweet Nan this ring. There's for thy pains.

Quickly.
Now Heaven send thee good fortune!

[Exit *Fenton*.]

A kind heart he hath; a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would my master had Mistress Anne; or I would Master Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would Master Fenton had her; I will do what I can for them all three, for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously for Master Fenton. Well, I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: what a beast am I to slack it!

[Exit.]

Scene 5. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *Falstaff* and *Bardolph*.]

Falstaff.
Bardolph, I say,--–

Bardolph.
Here, sir.

Falstaff.
Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in 't.

[Exit *Bardolph*.]

Have I lived to be carried in a basket, and to be thrown in the Thames like a barrow of butcher's offal? Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and buttered, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' the litter; and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell I should down. I had been drowned but that the shore was shelvy and shallow; a death that I abhor, for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

[Re-enter *Bardolph*, with the sack.]

Bardolph.
Here's Mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

Falstaff.
Come, let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; for my belly's
as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins.
Call her in.

Bardolph.
Come in, woman.

[Enter *mistress quickly*.]

Quickly.
By your leave. I cry you mercy. Give your worship good morrow.

Falstaff.
Take away these chalices. Go, brew me a pottle of sack finely.

Bardolph.
With eggs, sir?

Falstaff.
Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage.

[Exit *Bardolph*.]

How now!

Quickly.
Marry, sir, I come to your worship from Mistress Ford.

Falstaff.
Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford;
I have my belly full of ford.

Quickly.
Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take
on with her men; they mistook their erection.

Falstaff.
So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

Quickly. Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine; I must carry her word quickly. She'll make you amends, I warrant you.

Falstaff.
Well, I will visit her. Tell her so; and bid her think what a man
is; let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Quickly.
I will tell her.

Falstaff.
Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?

Quickly.
Eight and nine, sir.

Falstaff.
Well, be gone; I will not miss her.

Quickly.
Peace be with you, sir.

[Exit.]

Falstaff.
I marvel I hear not of Master Brook; he sent me word to stay within.
I like his money well. O! here he comes.

[Enter *ford* disguised.]

Ford.
Bless you, sir!

Falstaff.
Now, Master Brook, you come to know what hath passed between me
and Ford's wife?

Ford.
That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

Falstaff.
Master Brook, I will not lie to you: I was at her house the hour
she appointed me.

Ford.
And how sped you, sir?

Falstaff.
Very ill-favouredly, Master Brook.

Ford.
How so, sir? did she change her determination?

Falstaff. No. Master Brook; but the peaking cornuto her husband, Master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

Ford.
What! while you were there?

Falstaff.
While I was there.

Ford.
And did he search for you, and could not find you?

Falstaff.
You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mistress
Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, in her invention
and Ford's wife's distraction, they conveyed me into a buck-basket.

Ford.
A buck-basket!

Falstaff. By the Lord, a buck-basket! rammed me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins, that, Master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril.

Ford.
And how long lay you there?

Falstaff. Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane; they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door; who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket. I quaked for fear lest the lunatic knave would have searched it; but Fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook: I suffered the pangs of three several deaths: first, an intolerable fright to be detected with a jealous rotten bell-wether; next, to be compassed like a good bilbo in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that; a man of my kidney, think of that, that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw: it was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that, hissing hot, think of that, Master Brook!

Ford.
In good sadness, sir, I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered
all this. My suit, then, is desperate; you'll undertake her no more.

Falstaff. Master Brook, I will be thrown into Etna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding; I have received from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

Ford.
'Tis past eight already, sir.

Falstaff. Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed, and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her: adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.

[Exit.]

Ford. Hum! ha! Is this a vision? Is this a dream? Do I sleep? Master Ford, awake; awake, Master Ford. There's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford. This 'tis to be married; this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am; I will now take the lecher; he is at my house. He cannot scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a half-penny purse, nor into a pepper box; but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will

search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame; if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me; I'll be horn-mad.

[Exit.]

ACT IV.

Scene I. The street.

[Enter *mistress page*, *mistress quickly*, and *William*.]

Mrs. Page.
Is he at Master Ford's already, think'st thou?

Quickly. Sure he is by this; or will be presently; but truly he is very courageous mad about his throwing into the water. Mistress Ford desires you to come suddenly.

Mrs. Page.
I'll be with her by and by; I'll but bring my young man here to
school. Look where his master comes; 'tis a playing day, I see.

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans*.]

How now, Sir Hugh, no school to-day?

Evans.
No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

Quickly.
Blessing of his heart!

Mrs. Page.
Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at
his book; I pray you ask him some questions in his accidence.

Evans.
Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

Mrs. Page.
Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master; be not afraid.

Evans.
William, how many numbers is in nouns?

William.
Two.

Quickly.
Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say
'Od's nouns.'

Evans.
Peace your tattlings! What is 'fair,' William?

William.
Pulcher.

Quickly.
Polecats! There are fairer things than polecats, sure.

Evans.
You are a very simplicity 'oman; I pray you, peace. What is
'lapis,' William?

William.
A stone.

Evans.
And what is 'a stone,' William?

William.
A pebble.

Evans.
No, it is 'lapis'; I pray you remember in your prain.

William.
Lapis.

Evans.
That is a good William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

William.
Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined:
Singulariter, nominativo; hic, haec, hoc.

Evans.
Nominativo, hig, hag, hog; pray you, mark: genitivo, hujus. Well,
what is your accusative case?

William.
Accusativo, hinc.

Evans.
I pray you, have your remembrance, child. Accusativo, hung, hang, hog.

Quickly.
'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

Evans.
Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the focative case, William?

William.
O vocativo, O.

Evans.
Remember, William: focative is caret.

Quickly.
And that's a good root.

Evans.
'Oman, forbear.

Mrs. Page.
Peace.

Evans.
What is your genitive case plural, William?

William.
Genitive case?

Evans.
Ay.

William.
Genitive: horum, harum, horum.

Quickly.
Vengeance of Jenny's case; fie on her! Never name her, child, if
she be a whore.

Evans.
For shame, 'oman.

Quickly. You do ill to teach the child such words. He teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast enough of themselves; and to call 'horum;' fie upon you!

Evans. 'Oman, art thou lunatics? Hast thou no understandings for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? Thou art as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.

Mrs. Page.
Prithee, hold thy peace.

Evans.
Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

William.
Forsooth, I have forgot.

Evans.
It is qui, quae, quod; if you forget your 'quis', your 'quaes',
and your 'quods', you must be preeches. Go your ways and play; go.

Mrs. Page.
He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

Evans.
He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

Mrs. Page.
Adieu, good Sir Hugh.

[Exit *sir Hugh*.]

Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 2. A room in *Ford's* house.

[Enter *Falstaff* and *mistress ford*.]

Falstaff. Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance. I see you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, Mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

Mrs. Ford.
He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

Mrs. Page.
[Within.] What ho! gossip Ford, what ho!

Mrs. Ford.
Step into the chamber, Sir John.

[Exit *Falstaff*.]

[Enter *mistress page*.]

Mrs. Page.
How now, sweetheart! who's at home besides yourself?

Mrs. Ford.
Why, none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page.
Indeed!

Mrs. Ford.
No, certainly.---[Aside to her.] Speak louder.

Mrs. Page.
Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

Mrs. Ford.
Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again. He so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever; and so buffets himself on the forehead, crying 'Peer out, peer out!' that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility, and patience, to this his distemper he is in now. I am glad the fat knight is not here.

Mrs. Ford.
Why, does he talk of him?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him; and swears he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket; protests to my husband he is now here; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion. But I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford.
How near is he, Mistress Page?

Mrs. Page.
Hard by, at street end; he will be here anon.

Mrs. Ford.
I am undone! the knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why, then, you are utterly shamed, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you! Away with him, away with him! better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford.
Which way should he go? How should I bestow him? Shall I put him
into the basket again?

[Re-enter *Falstaff.*}

Falstaff.
No, I'll come no more i' the basket. May I not go out ere he come?

Mrs. Page. Alas! three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here?

Falstaff.
What shall I do? I'll creep up into the chimney.

Mrs. Ford.
There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces.

Mrs. Page.
Creep into the kiln-hole.

Falstaff.
Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note: there is no hiding you in the house.

Falstaff.
I'll go out then.

Mrs. Page.
If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir John. Unless
you go out disguised,---

Mrs. Ford.
How might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the day! I know not! There is no woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise he might put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

Falstaff.
Good hearts, devise something: any extremity rather than a mischief.

Mrs. Ford.
My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brainford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page.
On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is; and there's
her thrummed hat, and her muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

Mrs. Ford.
Go, go, sweet Sir John. Mistress Page and I will look some linen
for your head.

Mrs. Page.
Quick, quick! we'll come dress you straight; put on the gown the while.

[Exit *Falstaff*.]

Mrs. Ford. I would my husband would meet him in this shape; he cannot abide the old woman of Brainford; he swears she's a witch, forbade her my house, and hath threatened to beat her.

Mrs. Page.
Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel; and the devil guide his
cudgel afterwards!

Mrs. Ford.
But is my husband coming?

Mrs. Page.
Ay, in good sadness is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever
he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford.
We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again,
to meet him at the door with it as they did last time.

Mrs. Page.
Nay, but he'll be here presently; let's go dress him like the
witch of Brainford.

Mrs. Ford.
I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up;
I'll bring linen for him straight.

[Exit.]

Mrs. Page.
Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.
We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,
Wives may be merry and yet honest too.
We do not act that often jest and laugh;
'Tis old but true: 'Still swine eats all the draff.'

[Exit.]

[Re-enter *mistress ford*, with two *servants*.]

Mrs. Ford.
Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders; your master is
hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him. Quickly, dispatch.

[Exit.]

First servant.
Come, come, take it up.

Second servant.
Pray heaven, it be not full of knight again.

First servant.
I hope not; I had lief as bear so much lead.

[Enter *ford*, *page*, *shallow*, *caius*, and *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain! Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket! O you panderly rascals! there's a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy against me. Now shall the devil be shamed. What, wife, I say! Come, come forth! behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching!

Page.
Why, this passes, Master Ford! you are not to go loose any longer;
you must be pinioned.

Evans.
Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog.

Shallow.
Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

Ford.
So say I too, sir.---–

[Re-enter *mistress ford*.]

Come hither, Mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, Mistress, do I?

Mrs. Ford.
Heaven be my witness, you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford.
Well said, brazen-face! hold it out. Come forth, sirrah.

[Pulling clothes out of the basket.]

Page.
This passes!

Mrs. Ford.
Are you not ashamed? Let the clothes alone.

Ford.
I shall find you anon.

Evans.
'Tis unreasonable. Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come away.

Ford.
Empty the basket, I say!

Mrs. Ford.
Why, man, why?

Ford. Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket: why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is; my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs. Ford.
If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

Page.
Here's no man.

Shallow.
By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this wrongs you.

Evans.
Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of
your own heart; this is jealousies.

Ford.
Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page.
No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

[Servants carry away the basket.]

Ford. Help to search my house this one time. If I find not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me 'As jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.' Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

Mrs. Ford.
What, hoa, Mistress Page! Come you and the old woman down; my
husband will come into the chamber.

Ford.
Old woman? what old woman's that?

Mrs. Ford.
Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brainford.

Ford. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element. We know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag you; come down, I say!

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, good sweet husband! Good gentlemen, let him not strike the
old woman.

[Re-enter *Falstaff* in woman's clothes, led by *mistress page*.]

Mrs. Page.
Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.

Ford.
I'll prat her.---–[Beats him.] Out of my door, you witch, you rag,
you baggage, you polecat, you ronyon! Out, out! I'll conjure you,
I'll fortune-tell you.

[Exit *Falstaff*.]

Mrs. Page.
Are you not ashamed? I think you have killed the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, he will do it. 'Tis a goodly credit for you.

Ford.
Hang her, witch!

Evans.
By yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch indeed; I like not when
a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you follow; see but the issue of my jealousy; if I cry out thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again.

Page.
Let's obey his humour a little further. Come, gentlemen.

[Exeunt *ford*, *page*, *shallow*, *caius*, and *Evans*.]

Mrs. Page.
Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most unpitifully methought.

Mrs. Page.
I'll have the cudgel hallowed and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

Mrs. Ford.
What think you? May we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

Mrs. Page.
The spirit of wantonness is sure scared out of him; if the devil have him not in fee-simple, with fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.

Mrs. Ford.
Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?

Mrs. Page. Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

Mrs. Ford.
I'll warrant they'll have him publicly shamed; and methinks there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publicly shamed.

Mrs. Page.
Come, to the forge with it then; shape it. I would not have things cool.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 3. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *host* and *Bardolph*.]

Bardolph.
Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses; the Duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

Host.
What duke should that be comes so secretly? I hear not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen; they speak English?

Bardolph.
Ay, sir; I'll call them to you.

Host. They shall have my horses, but I'll make them pay; I'll sauce them; they have had my house a week at command; I have turned away my other guests. They must come off; I'll sauce them. Come.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 4. A room in *Ford's* house.

[Enter *page*, *ford*, *mistress page*, *mistress ford*, and *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Evans.
'Tis one of the best discretions of a 'oman as ever I did look upon.

Page.
And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

Mrs. Page.
Within a quarter of an hour.

Ford.
Pardon me, wife. Henceforth, do what thou wilt;
I rather will suspect the sun with cold
Than thee with wantonness: now doth thy honour stand,
In him that was of late an heretic,
As firm as faith.

Page.
'Tis well, 'tis well; no more.
Be not as extreme in submission
As in offence;
But let our plot go forward: let our wives
Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

Ford.
There is no better way than that they spoke of.

Page.
How? To send him word they'll meet him in the park at midnight?
Fie, fie! he'll never come!

Evans. You say he has been thrown in the rivers; and has been grievously peaten as an old 'oman; methinks there should be terrors in him, that he should not come; methinks his flesh is punished; he shall have no desires.

Page.
So think I too.

Mrs. Ford.
Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,
And let us two devise to bring him thither.

Mrs. Page.
There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner:
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Received, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Page.
Why, yet there want not many that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak.
But what of this?

Mrs. Ford.
Marry, this is our device;
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us,
Disguis'd, like Herne, with huge horns on his head.

Page.
Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come,
And in this shape. When you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? What is your plot?

Mrs. Page.
That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:
Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,
And three or four more of their growth, we'll dress
Like urchins, ouphs, and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands. Upon a sudden,
As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a sawpit rush at once
With some diffused song; upon their sight
We two in great amazedness will fly:
Then let them all encircle him about,
And fairy-like, to pinch the unclean knight;
And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape profane.

Mrs. Ford.
And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound,
And burn him with their tapers.

Mrs. Page.
The truth being known,
We'll all present ourselves; dis-horn the spirit,
And mock him home to Windsor.

Ford.
The children must
Be practis'd well to this or they'll ne'er do 't.

Evans.
I will teach the children their behaviours; and I will
be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the knight with my
taber.

Ford.
That will be excellent. I'll go buy them vizards.

Mrs. Page.
My Nan shall be the Queen of all the Fairies,
Finely attired in a robe of white.

Page.
That silk will I go buy. [Aside.] And in that time
Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away,
And marry her at Eton. Go, send to Falstaff straight.

Ford.
Nay, I'll to him again, in name of Brook;
He'll tell me all his purpose. Sure, he'll come.

Mrs. Page.
Fear not you that. Go, get us properties
And tricking for our fairies.

Evans.
Let us about it. It is admirable pleasures, and fery
honest knaveries.

[Exeunt *page*, *ford*, and *Evans*.]

Mrs. Page.
Go, Mistress Ford.
Send Quickly to Sir John to know his mind.

[Exit *Mrs. Ford*.]

I'll to the Doctor; he hath my good will,
And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.
That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;
And he my husband best of all affects:
The Doctor is well money'd, and his friends
Potent at court: he, none but he, shall have her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.

[Exit.]

Scene 5. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *host* and *simple*.]

Host.
What wouldst thou have, boor? What, thick-skin? Speak, breathe,
discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

Simple.
Marry, sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff from Master Slender.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new. Go knock and call; he'll speak like an Anthropophaginian unto thee; knock, I say.

Simple. There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his chamber; I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come down; I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host.
Ha! a fat woman? The knight may be robbed. I'll call. Bully knight!
Bully Sir John! Speak from thy lungs military. Art thou there? It
is thine host, thine Ephesian, calls.

Falstaff.
[Above] How now, mine host?

Host.
Here's a Bohemian-Tartar tarries the coming down of thy fat woman.
Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourible.
Fie! privacy? fie!

[Enter *Falstaff*.]

Falstaff.
There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with, me; but
she's gone.

Simple.
Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brainford?

Falstaff.
Ay, marry was it, mussel-shell: what would you with her?

Simple. My master, sir, my Master Slender, sent to her, seeing her go thorough the streets, to know, sir, whether one Nym, sir, that beguiled him of a chain, had the chain or no.

Falstaff.
I spake with the old woman about it.

Simple.
And what says she, I pray, sir?

Falstaff.
Marry, she says that the very same man that beguiled Master Slender
of his chain cozened him of it.

Simple.
I would I could have spoken with the woman herself; I had other
things to have spoken with her too, from him.

Falstaff.
What are they? Let us know.

Host.
Ay, come; quick.

Simple.
I may not conceal them, sir.

Falstaff.
Conceal them, or thou diest.

Simple.
Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress Anne Page: to know
if it were my master's fortune to have her or no.

Falstaff.
'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

Simple.
What sir?

Falstaff.
To have her, or no. Go; say the woman told me so.

Simple.
May I be bold to say so, sir?

Falstaff.
Ay, Sir Tike; like who more bold?

Simple.
I thank your worship; I shall make my master glad with these tidings.

[Exit.]

Host.
Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, Sir John. Was there a wise
woman with thee?

Falstaff. Ay, that there was, mine host; one that hath taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life; and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

[Enter *Bardolph*.]

Bardolph.
Out, alas, sir! cozenage, mere cozenage!

Host.
Where be my horses? Speak well of them, varletto.

Bardolph. Run away, with the cozeners; for so soon as I came beyond Eton, they threw me off, from behind one of them, in a slough of mire; and set spurs and away, like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses.

Host.
They are gone but to meet the Duke, villain; do not say they be
fled; Germans are honest men.

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans*.]

Evans.
Where is mine host?

Host.
What is the matter, sir?

Evans. Have a care of your entertainments: there is a friend of mine come to town tells me there is three cozen-germans that has cozened all the hosts of Readins, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you; you are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stogs, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.

[Exit.]

[Enter *doctor caius*.]

Caius.
Vere is mine host de Jarteer?

Host.
Here, Master Doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

Caius. I cannot tell vat is dat; but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a Duke de Jamany. By my trot, dere is no duke that the court is know to come; I tell you for good will: Adieu.

[Exit.]

Host.
Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, knight; I am undone. Fly,
run, hue and cry, villain; I am undone!

[Exeunt *host* and *Bardolph*.]

Falstaff. I would all the world might be cozened, for I have been cozened and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.

[Enter *mistress quickly*.]

Now! whence come you?

Quickly.
From the two parties, forsooth.

Falstaff. The devil take one party and his dam the other! And so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

Quickly.
And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant; speciously one of them;
Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you
cannot see a white spot about her.

Falstaff. What tellest thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brainford. But that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

Quickly. Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber; you shall hear how things go, and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that you are so crossed.

Falstaff.
Come up into my chamber.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 6. Another room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *Fenton* and *host*.]

Host.
Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy; I will give over all.

Fenton.
Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,
And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee
A hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

Host.
I will hear you, Master Fenton; and I will, at the least, keep your
counsel.

Fenton.
From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page,
Who, mutually, hath answered my affection,
So far forth as herself might be her chooser,
Even to my wish. I have a letter from her
Of such contents as you will wonder at;
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter
That neither, singly, can be manifested
Without the show of both; wherein fat Falstaff
Hath a great scare: the image of the jest
I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host:
To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,
Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen;
The purpose why is here: in which disguise,
While other jests are something rank on foot,
Her father hath commanded her to slip
Away with Slender, and with him at Eton
Immediately to marry; she hath consented:
Now, sir,
Her mother, even strong against that match
And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed
That he shall likewise shuffle her away,
While other sports are tasking of their minds;
And at the deanery, where a priest attends,
Straight marry her: to this her mother's plot
She seemingly obedient likewise hath

Made promise to the doctor. Now thus it rests:
Her father means she shall be all in white;
And in that habit, when Slender sees his time
To take her by the hand and bid her go,
She shall go with him: her mother hath intended
The better to denote her to the doctor,--–
For they must all be mask'd and vizarded--–
That quaint in green she shall be loose enrob'd,
With ribands pendent, flaring 'bout her head;
And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,
To pinch her by the hand: and, on that token,
The maid hath given consent to go with him.

Host.
Which means she to deceive, father or mother?

Fenton.
Both, my good host, to go along with me:
And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar
To stay for me at church, 'twixt twelve and one,
And in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host.
Well, husband your device; I'll to the vicar.
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

Fenton.
So shall I evermore be bound to thee;
Besides, I'll make a present recompense.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

Scene 1. A room in the Garter Inn.

[Enter *Falstaff* and *mistress quickly*.]

Falstaff.
Prithee, no more prattling; go: I'll hold. This is the third time;
I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away! go. They say there is
divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death. Away!

Quickly.
I'll provide you a chain, and I'll do what I can to get you a pair
of horns.

Falstaff.
Away, I say; time wears; hold up your head, and mince.

[Exit *Mrs. Quickly*.]

[Enter *ford*.]

How now, Master Brook! Master Brook, the matter will be known tonight, or never. Be you in the Park about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

Ford.
Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed?

Falstaff. I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man; but I came from her, Master Brook, like a poor old woman. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you: he beat me grievously in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam, because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along with me; I'll tell you all, Master Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow me: I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 2. Windsor Park.

[Enter *page*, *shallow*, and *slender*.]

Page.
Come, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch till we see the light
of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

Slender. Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white and cry 'mum'; she cries 'budget,' and by that we know one another.

Shallow.
That's good too; but what needs either your 'mum' or her 'budget'?
The white will decipher her well enough. It hath struck ten o'clock.

Page. The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well. Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away; follow me.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 3. The street in Windsor.

[Enter *mistress page*, *mistress ford*, and *doctor caius*.]

Mrs. Page. Master Doctor, my daughter is in green; when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the Park; we two must go together.

Caius.
I know vat I have to do; adieu.

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, sir. [Exit *caius*.] My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter; but 'tis no matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heart break.

Mrs. Ford.
Where is Nan now, and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil,
Hugh?

Mrs. Page. They are all couched in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscured lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mrs. Ford.
That cannot choose but amaze him.

Mrs. Page.
If he be not amazed, he will be mocked; if he be amazed, he will
every way be mocked.

Mrs. Ford.
We'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page.
Against such lewdsters and their lechery,
Those that betray them do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford.
The hour draws on: to the oak, to the oak!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 4. Windsor Park

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans*, disguised, with others as Fairies.]

Evans.
Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts. Be pold,
I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-ords,
do as I pid you. Come, come; trib, trib.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 5. Another part of the Park.

[Enter *Falstaff* disguised as *Herne* with a buck's head on.]

Falstaff. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on. Now the hot-blooded gods assist me! Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy horns. O powerful love! that in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other a man a beast. You were also, Jupiter, a swan, for the love of Leda. O omnipotent love! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose! A fault done first in the form of a beast; O Jove, a beastly fault! and then another fault in the semblance of a fowl: think on't, Jove, a foul fault! When gods have hot backs what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow? Who comes here? my doe?

[Enter *mistress ford* and *mistress page*.]

Mrs. Ford.
Sir John! Art thou there, my deer? my male deer?

Falstaff. My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of 'Greensleeves'; hail kissing-comfits and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

[Embracing her.]

Mrs. Ford.
Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

Falstaff. Divide me like a brib'd buck, each a haunch; I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter? Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

[Noise within.]

Mrs. Page.
Alas! what noise?

Mrs. Ford.
Heaven forgive our sins!

Falstaff.
What should this be?

Mrs. Ford.
Away, away!

Mrs. Page.
Away, away!

[They run off.]

Falstaff.
I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that's

in me should set hell on fire; he would never else cross me thus.

[Enter *sir Hugh Evans* like a Satyr, *pistol* as a Hobgoblin, *Anne page* as the the Fairy Queen, attended by her Brothers and Others, as fairies, with waxen tapers on their heads.]

Anne.
Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

Pistol.
Elves, list your names: silence, you airy toys!
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unrak'd, and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:
Our radiant Queen hates sluts and sluttery.

Falstaff.
They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.

[Lies down upon his face.]

Evans.
Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Rein up the organs of her fantasy,
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy;
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.

Anne.
About, about!
Search Windsor castle, elves, within and out:
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room,
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flower:
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;

And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white;
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee.
Fairies use flowers for their charactery.
Away! disperse! But, till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter let us not forget.

Evans.
Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set;
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.

Falstaff.
Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me
to a piece of cheese!

Pistol.
Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth.

Anne.
With trial-fire touch me his finger-end:
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend
And turn him to no pain; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

Pistol.
A trial! come.

Evans.
Come, will this wood take fire?

[They burn him with their tapers.]

Falstaff.
Oh, oh, oh!

Anne.
Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!
About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

Song.

Fie on sinful fantasy!
Fie on lust and luxury!

Lust is but a bloody fire,
Kindled with unchaste desire,
Fed in heart, whose flames aspire,
As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.
Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
Pinch him for his villany;
Pinch him and burn him and turn him about,
Till candles and star-light and moonshine be out.

[During this song the Fairies pinch *Falstaff*. *Doctor caius* comes one way, and steals away a fairy in green; *slender* another way, and takes off a fairy in white; and *Fenton* comes, and steals away *Anne page*. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the fairies run away. *Falstaff* pulls off his buck's head, and rises.]

[Enter *page*, *ford*, *mistress page*, *mistress ford*. They lay hold on *Falstaff*.]

Page.
Nay, do not fly; I think we have watch'd you now:
Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?

Mrs. Page.
I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher.
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
See you these, husband? do not these fair yokes
Become the forest better than the town?

Ford. Now, sir, who's a cuckold now? Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his horns, Master Brook; and, Master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for it, Master Brook.

Mrs. Ford.
Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet. I will never
take you for my love again; but I will always count you my deer.

Falstaff.
I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

Ford.
Ay, and an ox too; both the proofs are extant.

Falstaff. And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies; and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent when 'tis upon ill employment!

Evans.
Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies
will not pinse you.

Ford.
Well said, fairy Hugh.

Evans.
And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

Ford.
I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her
in good English.

Falstaff. Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? Shall I have a cox-comb of frieze? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

Evans.
Seese is not good to give putter: your belly is all putter.

Falstaff. 'Seese' and 'putter'! Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

Mrs. Page. Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Ford.
What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

Mrs. Page.
A puffed man?

Page.
Old, cold, withered, and of intolerable entrails?

Ford.
And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page.
And as poor as Job?

Ford.
And as wicked as his wife?

Evans. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings and swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

Falstaff.
Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected;
I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel. Ignorance itself is
a plummet o'er me; use me as you will.

Ford. Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pander: over and above that you have suffered, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

Mrs. Ford.
Nay, husband, let that go to make amends;
Forget that sum, so we'll all be friends.

Ford.
Well, here's my hand: all is forgiven at last.

Page. Yet be cheerful, knight; thou shalt eat a posset tonight at my house; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her, Master Slender hath married her daughter.

Mrs. Page. [Aside] Doctors doubt that; if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

[Enter *slender*.]

Slender.
Whoa, ho! ho! father Page!

Page.
Son, how now! how now, son! have you dispatched?

Slender.
Dispatched! I'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on't;
would I were hanged, la, else!

Page.
Of what, son?

Slender. I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy: if it had not been i' the church, I would have swinged him, or he should have swinged me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir! and 'tis a postmaster's boy.

Page.
Upon my life, then, you took the wrong.

Slender. What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

Page.
Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how you should
know my daughter by her garments?

Slender. I went to her in white and cried 'mum' and she cried 'budget' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

Evans.
Jeshu! Master Slender, cannot you see put marry poys?

Page.
O I am vexed at heart: what shall I do?

Mrs. Page. Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

[Enter *doctor caius*.]

Caius. Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened; I ha' married un garcon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page; by gar, I am cozened.

Mrs. Page.
Why, did you take her in green?

Caius.
Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy: by gar, I'll raise all Windsor.

[Exit.]

Ford.
This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

Page.
My heart misgives me; here comes Master Fenton.

[Enter *Fenton* and *Anne page*.]

How now, Master Fenton!

Anne.
Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

Page.
Now, Mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

Mrs. Page.
Why went you not with Master Doctor, maid?

Fenton.
You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.
You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy that she hath committed,

And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Ford.
Stand not amaz'd: here is no remedy:
In love, the heavens themselves do guide the state:
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

Falstaff.
I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand
to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

Page.
Well, what remedy?---–Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
What cannot be eschew'd must be embrac'd.

Falstaff.
When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chas'd.

Mrs. Page.
Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days!
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

Ford.
Let it be so. Sir John,
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
For he, to-night, shall lie with Mistress Ford.

[Exeunt.]

*** *End of the project gutenberg* EBOOK, *the merry wives of Windsor* ***

This file should be named 2ws2010.txt or 2ws2010.zip
Corrected *editions* of our eBooks get a new *number*, 2ws2011.txt
versions based on separate sources get new *letter*, 2ws2010a.txt

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the *us* unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we usually do not keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

We are now trying to release all our eBooks one year in advance of the official release dates, leaving time for better editing. Please be encouraged to tell us about any error or corrections, even years after the official publication date.

Please note neither this listing nor its contents are final til midnight of the last day of the month of any such announcement. The official release date of all Project Gutenberg eBooks is at Midnight, Central Time, of the last day of the stated month. A preliminary version may often be posted for suggestion, comment and editing by those who wish to do so.

Most people start at our Web sites at: http://gutenberg.net or http://promo.net/pg

These Web sites include award-winning information about Project Gutenberg, including how to donate, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter (free!).

Those of you who want to download any eBook before announcement can get to them as follows, and just download by date. This is also a good way to get them instantly upon announcement, as the indexes our cataloguers produce obviously take a while after an announcement goes out in the Project Gutenberg Newsletter.

http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext05 or ftp://ftp.ibi
blio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext05

Or *etext04, 03, 02, 01, 00, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 92, 91 or 90*

Just search by the first five letters of the filename you want, as it appears in our Newsletters.

Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)

We produce about two million dollars for each hour we work. The time it takes us, a rather conservative estimate, is fifty hours to get any eBook selected, entered, proofread, edited, copyright searched and analyzed, the copyright letters written, *etc*. Our projected audience is one hundred million readers. If the value per text is nominally estimated at one dollar then we produce $2 million dollars per hour in 2002 as we release over 100 new text files per month: 1240 more eBooks in 2001 for a total of 4000+ We are already on our way to trying for 2000 more eBooks in 2002 If they reach just 1-2% of the world's population then the total will reach over half a trillion eBooks given away by year's end.

The Goal of Project Gutenberg is to Give Away 1 Trillion eBooks! This is ten thousand titles each to one hundred million readers, which is only about 4% of the present number of computer users.

Here is the briefest record of our progress (* means estimated):

eBooks	Year	Month
1	1971	July
10	1991	January
100	1994	January
1000	1997	August
1500	1998	October
2000	1999	December
2500	2000	December
3000	2001	November
4000	2001	October/November
6000	2002	December*
9000	2003	November*

10000 2004 January*

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been created to secure a future for Project Gutenberg into the next millennium.

We need your donations more than ever!

As of February, 2002, contributions are being solicited from people and organizations in: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

We have filed in all 50 states now, but these are the only ones that have responded.

As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states. Please feel free to ask to check the status of your state.

In answer to various questions we have received on this:

We are constantly working on finishing the paperwork to legally request donations in all 50 states. If your state is not listed and you would like to know if we have added it since the list you have, just ask.

While we cannot solicit donations from people in states where we are not yet registered, we know of no prohibition against accepting donations from donors in these states who approach us with an offer to donate.

International donations are accepted, but we don't know *anything* about how to make them tax-deductible, or even if they *can* be made deductible, and don't have the staff to handle it even if there are ways.

Donations by check or money order may be sent to:

Project gutenberg literary archive foundation
809 North 1500 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

Contact us if you want to arrange for a wire transfer or payment method other than by check or money order.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been approved by the *us* Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization with *ein* [Employee Identification Number] 64-622154. Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. As fund-raising requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund-raising will begin in the additional states.

We need your donations more than ever!

You can get up to date donation information online at:

http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html

***

If you can't reach Project Gutenberg,
you can always email directly to:

Michael S. Hart *hart@pobox.com*

Prof. Hart will answer or forward your message.

We would prefer to send you information by email.

The Legal Small Print

(Three Pages)

****Start***the small print*!***For public domain* EBOOKS***start**** Why is this "Small Print!" statement here? You know: lawyers. They tell us you might sue us if there is something wrong with your copy of this eBook, even if you got it for free from someone other than us, and even if what's wrong is not our fault. So, among other things, this "Small Print!" statement disclaims most of our liability to you. It also tells you how you may distribute copies of this eBook if you want to.

BEFORE! You use or read this EBOOK By using or reading any part of this *project gutenberg*-tm eBook, you indicate that you understand, agree to and accept this "Small Print!" statement. If you do not, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for this eBook by sending a request within 30 days of receiving it to the person you got it from. If you received this eBook on a physical medium (such as a disk), you must return it with your request.

About project gutenberg-tm EBOOKS This *project gutenberg*-tm eBook, like most *project gutenberg*-tm eBooks, is a "public domain" work distributed by Professor Michael S. Hart through the Project Gutenberg Association (the "Project"). Among other things, this means that no one owns a United States copyright on or for this work, so the Project (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth below, apply if you wish to copy and distribute this eBook under the "*Project gutenberg*" trademark.

Please do not use the "*Project gutenberg*" trademark to market any commercial products without permission.

To create these eBooks, the Project expends considerable efforts to identify, transcribe and proofread public domain works. Despite these efforts, the Project's eBooks and any medium they may be on may contain "Defects". Among other things, Defects may take the form of incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other eBook medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

Limited warranty; *disclaimer of damages* But for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described below, [1] Michael Hart and the Foundation (and any other party you may receive this eBook from as a *project gutenberg*-tm eBook) disclaims all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees, and [2] *you have no Remedies for negligence or under strict liability*, *or for Breach of warranty or contract*, *including but not limited to indirect*, *consequential*, *punitive or incidental damages*, *even if you give notice of the possibility of such damages*.

If you discover a Defect in this eBook within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending an explanatory note within that time to the person you received it from. If you received it on a physical medium, you must return it with your note, and such person may choose to alternatively give you a replacement copy. If you received it electronically, such person may choose to alternatively give you a second opportunity to receive it electronically.

This EBOOK *is otherwise provided to you* "*As-is*". *No other warranties of any kind*, *express or implied*, *are made to you as to the* EBOOK *or any medium it may be on*, *including but not limited to warranties of merchantability or fitness for* A *particular purpose*.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you may have other legal rights.

Indemnity You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation, and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this eBook, [2] alteration, modification, or addition to the eBook, or [3] any Defect.

Distribution under "*Project gutenberg*-tm" You may distribute copies of this eBook electronically, or by disk, book or any other medium if you either delete this "Small Print!" and all other references to Project Gutenberg, or:

[1] Only give exact copies of it. Among other things, this requires that you do not remove, alter or modify the eBook or this "small print!" statement. You may however, if you wish, distribute this eBook in machine readable binary, compressed, mark-up, or proprietary form, including any form resulting from conversion by word processing or hypertext software, but only so long as *EITHER*:

[*] The eBook, when displayed, is clearly readable, and does *not* contain characters other than those intended by the author of the work, although tilde (~), asterisk (*) and underline (_) characters may be used to convey punctuation intended by the author, and additional characters may be used to indicate hypertext links; *or*

[*] The eBook may be readily converted by the reader at no expense into plain ASCII, EBCDIC or equivalent form by the program that displays the eBook (as is the case, for instance, with most word processors); *or*

[*] You provide, or agree to also provide on request at no additional cost, fee or expense, a copy of the eBook in its original plain ASCII form (or in EBCDIC or other equivalent proprietary form).

[2] Honor the eBook refund and replacement provisions of this "Small Print!" statement.

[3] Pay a trademark license fee to the Foundation of 20% of the gross profits you derive calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. If you don't derive profits, no royalty is due. Royalties are payable to "Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation" the 60 days following each date you prepare (or were legally required to prepare) your annual (or equivalent periodic) tax return. Please contact us beforehand to let us know your plans and to work out the details.

What if you WANT to send money even if you don't have to? Project Gutenberg is dedicated to increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form.

The Project gratefully accepts contributions of money, time, public domain materials, or royalty free copyright licenses. Money should be paid to the: "Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

If you are interested in contributing scanning equipment or software or other items, please contact Michael Hart at: hart@pobox.com

[Portions of this eBook's header and trailer may be reprinted only when distributed free of all fees. Copyright (C) 2001, 2002 by Michael S. Hart. Project Gutenberg is a TradeMark and may not be used in any sales of Project Gutenberg eBooks or other materials be they hardware or software or any other related product without express permission.]

*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS*Ver.02/11/02**End**