

The Marry Wives of Windsor

ACT I

SCENE I. Windsor. Before PAGE's house.

BLOCK I

Enter 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.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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 compromises between you.

SHALLOW

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it: and there is also another device in my prain, there is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master Thomas Page, which is pretty virginity.

SLENDER

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

It is that fery person for all the orld, and seven hundred pounds of moneys, is hers, when she is 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.

SLENDER

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SHALLOW

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

Enter PAGE

SHALLOW

Well, let us see honest Master Page.

PAGE

I am glad to see your worships well.

SHALLOW

Is Sir John Falstaff here?

PAGE

Sir, he is within.

SHALLOW

He hath wronged me, Master Page.

PAGE

Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

SHALLOW

If it be confessed, it is not redress'd: 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 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 kissed your keeper's daughter?

SHALLOW

Tut, a trifle! 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

You'll be laughed at. 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 afterward 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!: slice! that's my humour.

SLENDER

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

FALSTAFF

Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?

SLENDER

Ay, by these gloves, did he, by these gloves.

FALSTAFF

Is this true, Pistol?

PISTOL

Froth and scum, thou liest!

SLENDER

By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

NYM

Be avised, sir, and pass good humours: 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.

SLENDER

I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, and not with drunken knaves.

SIR HUGH EVANS

So Got judge 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, following

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. *Kisses her*
And Mistress Page, I desire more acquaintance of you. *Kisses 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 except SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SLENDER

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

BLOCK 2

Enter SIMPLE

How now, 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 a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

SHALLOW

Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz; marry, this, coz.

SIR HUGH EVANS

The question is concerning your marriage.

SHALLOW

Ay, there's the point, sir.

SIR HUGH 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.

SIR HUGH EVANS

But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips;

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.

SHALLOW

Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet 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, but if you say, 'Marry her,' I will marry her.

SIR HUGH EVANS

(to Simple) Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way: and there dwells one Mistress Quickly,

SIMPLE

Well, sir.

SIR HUGH 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.

Exit Simple

SHALLOW

Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

Re-enter ANNE PAGE

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne!

ANNE PAGE

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

SHALLOW

I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exeunt SHALLOW and SIR HUGH EVANS

ANNE PAGE

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

SLENDER

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

ANNE PAGE

The dinner attends you, sir.

SLENDER

I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth.

ANNE PAGE

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 PAGE

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, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

ANNE PAGE

Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

SLENDER

I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.

Exeunt

ACT 1, SCENE II. The same. A room in the Garter Inn.

BLOCK 3

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. My expenses run ten pounds a week.

Host

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 thou beggarly rogue! wilt thou the spigot wield?

Exit BARDOLPH

NYM

He was conceived in drink: is not the humour conceited?

FALSTAFF

Well, sirs, I am almost penniless. Which of you know Ford of this town?

PISTOL

I know the knave: 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; and the voice of her behavior, is, 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'

PISTOL

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

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 glances; 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! She bears the purse too; she is, all gold and bounty. I will be treasurer 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 my reputation.

FALSTAFF

[To ROBIN] Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly; Sail to these golden shores. Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go; Trudge, away; seek shelter, pack! You rogues!

Exeunt FALSTAFF and ROBIN

PISTOL

Let vultures gripe thy guts! Sixpence I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack, Base Phrygian Turk!

NYM

I have 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 unfold how Falstaff, varlet vile, his gold will hold, and his soft couch defile.

NYM

My humour shall not cool: I will incense Page and possess him with jealousy, that is my true humour.

PISTOL

Thou art the Mars of malecontents: I second thee; troop on.

Exeunt

ACT I, SCENE III A room in DOCTOR CAIUS' house.

BLOCK 4

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, John 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 any body in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the king's English.

RUGBY

I'll go watch.

Exit RUGBY

Peter Simple, you say your name is?

SIMPLE

Ay, for fault of a better.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And Master Slender's your master?

SIMPLE

Ay, forsooth.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

We shall all be scolded. Run in here, good young man; go into this closet: he will not stay long.

Shuts SIMPLE in the closet

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.

Singing

And down, down, adown-a, & c.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vat is you sing? I do not like desk toys. Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert, a box, a green-a box: do intend vat I speak? a green-a box.

MISTRESS 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Is it this, sir?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Oui; mette le au mon pocket: depeche, quickly. Vere is dat knave Rugby?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, John Rugby! John!

RUGBY

Here, sir!

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

RUGBY

'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

DOCTOR CAIUS

By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me! Qu'ai-j'oublie! dere is some remedies in my closet, dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind. (*Mistress Quickly tries to obstruct him*)

O diable, diable! vat is in my closet? Villain! larron!

Pulling SIMPLE out

Rugby, my rapier!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Good master, be content.

BLOCK 5**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Wherefore shall I be content-a?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

The young man is an honest man.

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I beseech you., hear the truth of it: he came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vell.

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.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Sir Hugh send-a you? Rugby, baille me some paper. (*to Simple*) Tarry you a little-a while.

Writes

MISTRESS QUICKLY

[Aside to SIMPLE] My master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page: but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind,—that's neither here nor there.

DOCTOR CAIUS

You jack'nape, give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar, it is a shallenge: I will cut his throat in dee 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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

DOCTOR 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 Jarteer to umpire the duel. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well.

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

Exeunt DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY

MISTRESS 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!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Who's there, I wonder! Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter FENTON

FENTON

How now, good woman? how dost thou? What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

MISTRESS 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?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, Master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you.

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

FENTON

Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

MISTRESS 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

BLOCK 6

SCENE I. Before PAGE'S house.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter

MISTRESS 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.

Reads

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use Reason for his physician, 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 wine, 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! O wicked world! 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

You look very ill.

MISTRESS FORD

O Mistress Page, give me some counsel!

MISTRESS PAGE

What's the matter, woman?

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Hang the trifle, woman! take the honour. What is it? dispense with trifles; what is it?

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

What? thou liest! Sir Alice Ford! Thou shouldst not alter thy rank.

MISTRESS 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 men's looks; and yet he praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly reproof to all uncomeliness. What tempest 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?

MISTRESS PAGE

Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs! Here's the twin-brother of thy letter. 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.

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, I know not: for, sure, unless he know some quality in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, I will consent to act any villany against him, that may not sully our chastity. O, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD

You are the happier woman.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

They retire

Enter FORD with PISTOL, and PAGE with NYM

FORD

Well, I hope it be not so.

PISTOL

Hope is a dog in some affairs: Sir John loves 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 variety: Ford, consider.

FORD

Love my wife!

PISTOL

With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou,

FORD

What, sir?

PISTOL

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

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. 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. and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

Exit

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 rogue, though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man.

FORD

'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.

BLOCK 7

PAGE

How now, Meg!

MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward

MISTRESS PAGE

Whither go you, George? Hark you.

MISTRESS FORD

How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?

FORD

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

MISTRESS FORD

Faith, thou hast some notions in thy head. Now, will you go, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

I'll go with you. You'll come to dinner, George.

Aside to MISTRESS FORD

Look who comes yonder: she shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

MISTRESS FORD

[Aside to MISTRESS PAGE] Trust me, I thought on her: she'll fit it.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS PAGE

You are come to see my daughter Anne?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Go in with us and see: we 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

If he should intend this voyage towards 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

How now, mine host!

Host

How now, bully-rook! thou'rt a gentleman.

Enter SHALLOW

SHALLOW

Master Page, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.

Host

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.

Drawing him aside

Host

What sayest thou, my bully-rook?

SHALLOW

[To PAGE] Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host will be umpire and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places;

They converse apart

Host

Hast thou no suit against my knight, my Bully-rook?

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; To him.-and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight. Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

PAGE

Have with you. I would rather hear them scold than fight.

Exeunt Host, SHALLOW, and PAGE

FORD

Though Page be a secure fool, an 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

ACT II, SCENE II. A room in the Garter Inn.**BLOCK 8**

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.

FALSTAFF

Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should borrow against my name; I am damned in hell for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers and tall fellows; and when Mistress Bridget lost the golden 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? You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you stand upon your honour! Why, thou unconfinable baseness, I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand am fain to deceive, to cheat and to steal; and yet you, rogue, will hide under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

PISTOL

I do relent: what would thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN

ROBIN

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

FALSTAFF

Let her approach.

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Give your worship good morrow.

FALSTAFF

Good morrow, good wife.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Not so, an't please your worship.

FALSTAFF

Good maid, then.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I'll be sworn,

As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

FALSTAFF

I do believe the swearer. What with me?

MISTRESS 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,--

MISTRESS 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.

Well, Mistress Ford; what of her?

MISTRESS 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...

FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS 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?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you know 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.

FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS 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, as any is in Windsor, 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 attractions of my good parts aside I have no other charms.

MISTRESS 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?

MISTRESS 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: You must send her your page; no remedy.

FALSTAFF

Why, I will.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Nay, but do so, then: and, look you, he may come and go between you both.

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 strumpet is one of Cupid's carriers: Clap on more sails; pursue; Give fire: she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all! *Exit*

FALSTAFF

Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter BARDOLPH

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.

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised

Exit Bardolph

BLOCK 9

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: for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something embolden'd 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

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 dotting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her, to give me sight of her. Briefly, I have pursued

her as love hath pursued me. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or, in my means, reward I am sure, I have received none.

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. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse. 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 could come to her with any detection in my hand, I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, and her marriage-vow, 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: 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-favored. 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, vulgar 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.

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;. Page is an ass, a secure ass: he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous. 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

ACT II SCENE III. A field near Windsor.**BLOCK 10**

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY

DOCTOR CAIUS

Jack Rugby!

RUGBY

Sir?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vat is de clock, Jack?

RUGBY

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

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible well, 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.

DOCTOR 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Villany, take your rapier.

RUGBY

Forbear; here's company.

Enter Host, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE

DOCTOR 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. Is he dead, my Aesculapius? is he dead?

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show his face. I pray you, bear vitness 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

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

Master Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace. You must go with me, master doctor.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Scurvy jack-dog priest! by gar, me vill cut his ears. for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host

Let him die:: go about the fields with me through Frogmore: I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, and thou shalt woo her. Said I well?

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, me dank you for dat: by gar, I love you; Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

Exeunt

ACT III

BLOCK II

SCENE I. A field near Frogmore.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS

SIR HUGH EVANS

'Pless my soul, how full of anger I am, and trempling of mind! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard. Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry.

Sings

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

SHALLOW

How now, master Parson!

SLENDER

[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

PAGE

'Save you, good Sir Hugh!

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?

SIR HUGH EVANS

There is reasons and causes for it.

PAGE

Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience.

SIR HUGH EVANS

What is he?

PAGE

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

Got's will, a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

SLENDER

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

Enter Host, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY

SHALLOW

Keep them asunder.

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.

(They start to fight)

DOCTOR CAIUS

(Aside to Evans) I pray you, wherefore vill you not meet-a me?

SIR HUGH EVANS

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you, use your patience:*(aloud)* In good time.

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you let us not be laughing-stocks 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 cockscomb for missing your meetings and appointments.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Diable! Jack Rugby,--mine host de Jarteer,--have I not stay for him to kill him? have I not, at de place I did appoint?

SIR HUGH EVANS

As I am a Christians soul now, this is the place appointed.

Host

Peace, I say! hear mine host of the Garter. 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

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

This is well; he has made us his laughing stock. 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exeunt

Act III, SCENE II. A street.

BLOCK 12

Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

MISTRESS 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.

Enter FORD

FORD

Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS PAGE

Be sure of that,--two other husbands.

FORD

Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

ROBIN

Sir John Falstaff.

FORD

Sir John Falstaff!

MISTRESS PAGE

Is your wife at home indeed?

FORD

Indeed she is.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exeunt MISTRESS 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. His wife is going to my wife, and to these violent proceedings our revolted wives share damnation together and all my neighbours applaud

Clock heard

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, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY

SHALLOW PAGE & C

Well met, Master Ford.

FORD

Trust me, a good company: 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.

DOCTOR 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.

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

DOCTOR 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

FORD

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

PAGE

Have with you to see this monster.

Exeunt

ACT III, SCENE III. A room in FORD'S house.**BLOCK 13**

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

MISTRESS FORD

Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by: and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this basket, trudge with it in all haste, and empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side. Be gone, and come when you are called.

Exeunt Servants

Enter ROBIN

MISTRESS FORD

How now, my sparrow-hawk! what news with you?

ROBIN

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

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS PAGE

Thou'rt a good boy: I'll go hide me.

MISTRESS FORD

Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone.

Exit ROBIN

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exit

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!

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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 arched beauty of the brow that becomes the Venetian headdress.

MISTRESS FORD

A plain kerchief, Sir John: my brows become nothing else.

FALSTAFF

Thou art a traitor to say so: the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait. Come, thou canst not hide it.

MISTRESS FORD

Believe me, there is 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 lispings hawthorn-buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersberries; I cannot: but I love thee; none but thee; and thou deservest it.

MISTRESS FORD

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

FALSTAFF

Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the Debtor's prison, which is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

MISTRESS FORD

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

FALSTAFF

Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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!

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

What cause of suspicion?

MISTRESS PAGE

What cause of suspicion! Out pon you! how am I mistook in you!

MISTRESS FORD

Why, alas, what's the matter?

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD

'Tis not so, I hope.

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

For shame! never lose time over '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 washing: or--it is bleaching-time--send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

FALSTAFF

I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never--

Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

What, John! Robert! John!

Exit ROBIN

Re-enter Servants

Go take up these clothes here quickly. Convey them to the laundress in Datchet-meat; quickly, come.

Enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

BLOCK 14

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.

MISTRESS FORD

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

Exeunt Servants with the basket

FORD

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 flush him out.

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

DOCTOR 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 PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Is there not a double excellency in this?

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Re-enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

[Aside to MISTRESS FORD] Heard you that?

MISTRESS FORD

You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

FORD

Ay, I do so.

MISTRESS FORD

Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

FORD

Amen!

MISTRESS PAGE

You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

FORD

Ay, ay; I must bear it.

SIR HUGH 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!

DOCTOR CAIUS

By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.

PAGE

Fie, fie, Master Ford! are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination?

SIR HUGH EVANS

Your wife is as honest a 'omans as I will desires among five thousand..

DOCTOR 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; Shall it be so?

FORD

Any thing.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

DOCTOR CAIUS

If dere be one or two, I shall make-a de turd.

FORD

Pray you, go, Master Page.

SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you now, remembrance tomorrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

DOCTOR CAIUS

Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!

SIR HUGH EVANS

A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!

Exeunt

ACT III, SCENE IV. A room in PAGE'S house.

BLOCK 15

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

FENTON

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

ANNE PAGE

Alas, how then?

FENTON

Why, thou must be thyself. He doth object I am too great of birth—, and that, my state being squandered away, I seek to heal it only by his wealth: and tells me 'tis a thing impossible I should love thee but as a property.

ANNE PAGE

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 woo'd thee, Anne: yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value than gold; and 'tis the very riches of thyself that now I aim at.

ANNE PAGE

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. Be not dismayed.

SLENDER

No, but I am afeard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

ANNE PAGE

I come to him.

Aside

This is my father's choice. O, what a world of vile ill-favor'd faults looks handsome in three hundred pounds a-year!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you. *(they converse together)*

SHALLOW

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

SLENDER

I had a father, Mistress Anne.

SHALLOW

Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLENDER

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

SHALLOW

He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

SLENDER

Ay, that I will.

SHALLOW

He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

ANNE PAGE

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 PAGE

Now, Master Slender,--

SLENDER

Now, good Mistress Anne,--

ANNE PAGE

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 PAGE

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: They can tell you how things go better than I can.

Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE

PAGE

Now, Master Slender: love him, daughter Anne. Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here?

I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

FENTON

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

MISTRESS 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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Speak to Mistress Page.

FENTON

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter in such a righteous fashion as I do: let me have your good will.

ANNE PAGE

Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

(aside) That's my master, master doctor.

ANNE PAGE

Alas, I had rather be bowl'd to death with turnips!

MISTRESS 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:

FENTON

Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.

Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ANNE PAGE

MISTRESS 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, give my sweet Nan this ring: there's for thy pains.

MISTRESS 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*

ACT III, SCENE V. A room in the Garter Inn.**BLOCK 16**

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, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? 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 I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Re-enter BARDOLPH with sack

BARDOLPH

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

FALSTAFF

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 kidneys. Call her in.

BARDOLPH

Come in, woman!

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS 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

Yes sir.

Exit BARDOLPH

FALSTAFF

How now!

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I will tell her.

FALSTAFF

Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Eight and nine, sir.

FALSTAFF

Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

MISTRESS 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

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 sped you, sir?

FALSTAFF

Very ill-favoredly, Master Brook.

FORD

How so, sir? Did she change her determination?

FALSTAFF

No, Master Brook; but the peaking Cornuto her husband, Master Brook, 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, 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 villanous smell that ever offended nostril.

FORD

And how long lay you there?

FALSTAFF

Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me and away went I for foul clothes: 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, I am sorry that for my sake you have sufferd 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 halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper-box: but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. I'll be horn-mad.

Exit

ACT IV, SCENE I. A room in FORD'S house.**BLOCK 17**

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD

FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford, your sorrow is greater than my sufferance. I see you are devoted in your love, and I profess requital; not only, Mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the complement and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

MISTRESS FORD

He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Within] What, ho, gossip Ford! what, ho!

MISTRESS FORD

Step into the chamber, Sir John.

Exit FALSTAFF

Enter MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

Why, none but mine own people.

MISTRESS PAGE

Indeed!

MISTRESS FORD

No, certainly.

Aside to her

Speak louder.

MISTRESS PAGE

Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MISTRESS FORD

Why?

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, woman, your husband is up to his old tricks again: he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; I am glad the fat knight is not here.

MISTRESS FORD

Why, does he talk of him?

MISTRESS PAGE

Of none but him.

MISTRESS FORD

How near is he, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

I am undone! The knight is here.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD

Which way should he go? 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?

MISTRESS PAGE

Alas, three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out.

FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS FORD

There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces. There is no hiding you in the house.

FALSTAFF

I'll go out then.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

How might we disguise him?

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD

My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS FORD

John! Robert! I would my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch; forbade her my house and hath threatened to beat her.

MISTRESS PAGE

Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel.

Enter two servants

MISTRESS FORD

Go, sirs, take the basket again. your master is hard at door; if he bid you stop, obey him: quickly, dispatch.

Exit

First Servant

Come, come, let us take it.

Second Servant

Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS. **BLOCK 18**

FORD

Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, you may then unfool me! Let loose the basket, villain! Somebody call my wife. What's in the basket! O you rascals! there's a knot, a pack, a conspiracy against me: What, wife, I say! Come, come forth! Behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching!

PAGE

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

SIR HUGH 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; 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?

MISTRESS 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 all!

MISTRESS FORD

Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

FORD

I shall find you anon.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

FORD

Empty the basket, I say!

MISTRESS FORD

Why, man, why?

FORD

Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed
out of my house yesterday in this basket.

MISTRESS 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.

FORD

Well, he's not here I seek for.

PAGE

No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

FORD

Help to search my house this one time. Satisfy me once more.

MISTRESS FORD

What, ho, Mistress Page! come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the
chamber.

FORD

Old woman! what old woman's that?

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

FORD

A witch, a hussey, an old cheating hussey! Have I not forbid her my house? She works by
charms, by spells, Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!

MISTRESS FORD

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

Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, and MISTRESS PAGE

FORD

Beating Falstaff

Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage! out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

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

FORD

Hang her, witch!

SIR HUGH EVANS

By the 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.

PAGE

Let's obey his humour a little further: come, gentlemen.

Exeunt FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

MISTRESS FORD

Nay, he beat him most unpitifully, methought.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

What think you? may we pursue him with any further revenge?

MISTRESS PAGE

The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scared out of him: he will never, I think, attempt us again.

MISTRESS FORD

Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?

MISTRESS PAGE

Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the mad ideas out of your husband's brains.

MISTRESS FORD

I'll warrant they'll have him publicly shamed.

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, let us shape it: I would not have things cool.

Exeunt

ACT 4, SCENE II. A Street in Windsor.**BLOCK 19**

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

I would all the world might be cheated; for I have been cheated and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the world, 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. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.

ACT 4, SCENE III. A room in FORD'S house.**BLOCK 20**

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS

SIR HUGH 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?

MISTRESS 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.

PAGE

Tis well, 'tis well; no more. 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.

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter, once a keeper here in Windsor forest, doth, at still midnight, walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns; and there he blights the tree and bewitches the cattle and makes milk-cows yield blood.

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?

MISTRESS FORD

Marry, this is our device; that Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us, disguised like Hearne with huge horns on his head.

MISTRESS PAGE

Nan Page my daughter and and three or four more of her growth we'll dress like urchins, elves and fairies, green and white, Then let them all encircle him about and, fairy-like, to-pinch the unclean knight, and ask him why, in their so sacred paths he dares to tread.

MISTRESS FORD

And till he tell the truth, let the supposed fairies pinch him sound.

MISTRESS PAGE

My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies, finely attired in a robe of white.

PAGE

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.

MISTRESS PAGE

Fear not you that. Go get us properties and tricking for our fairies.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Let us about it: it is admirable pleasures and fery honest knaveries.

Exeunt PAGE, FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE

Go, Mistress Ford, send quickly to Sir John, to know his mind.

Exit MISTRESS 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; the doctor is well money'd, he, none but he, shall have her,

Exit

ACT 4, SCENE IV. A room in the Garter Inn.**BLOCK 21**

Enter FENTON and Host

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.

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 answer'd my affection, 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 abundantly on foot, her father hath commanded her, dressed all in white, to slip away with Slender and with him at Eton immediately to marry: she hath consented: Now, sir, her mother, ever strong against that match and firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed that he shall likewise shuffle her away, but she dressed in green, 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.

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, 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 I. A room in the Garter Inn.****BLOCK 22**

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY

FALSTAFF

Prithee, no more prattling; go. I'll keep the engagement. This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away, go.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

FALSTAFF

Away, I say; time wears: trip off.

Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY

Enter FORD

How now, Master Brook! Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, 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, beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman. I am in haste; go along with me: I'll tell you all, Master Brook. I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

Exeunt

ACT 5, SCENE II. Windsor Park.

BLOCK 23

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

PAGE

Remember, son Slender, my daughter will come to you in white.

SLENDER

Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her.

SHALLOW

That's good too: the white will decipher her well.

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

Act 5, SCENE III. A street leading to the Park.

BLOCK 24

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and DOCTOR CAIUS

MISTRESS PAGE

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

DOCTOR CAIUS

I know vat I have to do. Adieu.

MISTRESS PAGE

Fare you well, sir.

Exit DOCTOR CAIUS

My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter.

MISTRESS FORD

Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil Hugh?

MISTRESS PAGE

They are all hidden 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.

MISTRESS FORD

That cannot choose but fright him.

MISTRESS PAGE

If he be not frightened, he will every way be mocked.

MISTRESS FORD

The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!

Exeunt

ACT V, SCENE IV. Another part of Windsor Park.**BLOCK 25**

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised, with others as Fairies

SIR HUGH EVANS

Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts: be pold, I pray you; come, come; trib, trib.

Exeunt

Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne

FALSTAFF

The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me! O powerful love! that, in some respects, makes a beast a man, in some other, a man a beast. For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Who comes here? my doe?

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS FORD

Sir John! art thou there, my deer? my male deer?

FALSTAFF

My doe with the black tail! Let the sky rain potatoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here. *Hugs her*

MISTRESS FORD

Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

FALSTAFF

Divide me like a stolen buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to myself, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Speak I like Herne the hunter? As I am a true spirit, welcome!

Noise within

MISTRESS PAGE

Alas, what noise?

MISTRESS FORD

Heaven forgive our sins

FALSTAFF

What should this be?

MISTRESS FORD MISTRESS 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.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised as before; PISTOL, as Hobgoblin; MISTRESS QUICKLY, ANNE PAGE, and others, as Fairies, with tapers

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers and shades of night,
Attend your duty and your profession.

PISTOL

Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.

FALSTAFF

They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die: I'll close my eyes and hide: no man their works must eye.

Lies down upon his face

SIR HUGH EVANS

Those that sleep and think not on their sins, pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

About, about; till 'tis one o'clock, our dance of custom round about the oak of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Come, will this wood take fire?

They burn him with their tapers

FALSTAFF

Oh, Oh, Oh!

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire! About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme; and, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

SONG.**BLOCK 26**

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 starlight and moonshine be out.

During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a boy in green; SLENDER another way, and takes off a boy in white; and FENTON comes and steals away ANN 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, and MISTRESS FORD

PAGE

Nay, do not fly; I think we have caught you now. Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?

MISTRESS PAGE

I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher. Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?

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.

MISTRESS 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.

FALSTAFF

And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

SHALLOW

Well said, fairy Hugh.

SIR HUGH EVANS *(to Ford)*

And leave your jealousies too, I pray you.

FORD *(to Evans)*

I will never mistrust my wife again till thou art able to woo her in good English.

FALSTAFF

Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too?

MISTRESS PAGE

Why Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

FORD

What, a pudding? a bag of flax?

MISTRESS PAGE

A puffed man?

PAGE

Old, cold, withered and of intolerable entrails?

SIR HUGH EVANS

And given to fornications, and to taverns and sack.

FALSTAFF

Well, I am your theme: you have the advantage of me; I am dejected; use me as you will.

FORD

Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master Brook, that you have cheated of money, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

PAGE

Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset to-night 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.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Aside] I 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?

SLENDER

Settled! I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great brutish boy. If it had not been i' the church, I would have beaten him, or he should have beaten me.

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.

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 yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

MISTRESS 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

DOCTOR CAIUS

Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cheated: I ha' married un garcon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cheated.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, did you take her in green?

DOCTOR 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 PAGE

Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

PAGE

Now, mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

MISTRESS PAGE

Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

FENTON

You do confuse 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 betrothed, are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us. The offence is holy that she hath committed.

FORD

Stand not amazed; 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 avoided must be embraced.

FALSTAFF

When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased.

MISTRESS 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 keep your word

For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

Exeunt