The Merry Wives of Windsor

By William Shakespeare

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with Susan Ruddick - Sarah Blackstone - Charles Darlington

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Characters in the Play

MISTRESS FORD
FORD, her husband
Their servants:
  JOHN
  ROBERT

MISTRESS PAGE
PAGE, her husband
ANNE, their daughter
WILLIAM, their son

DOCTOR CAIUS, a French doctor, suitor to Anne Page
MISTRESS QUICKLY, the doctor's housekeeper
JOHN RUGBY, the doctor's manservant

SIR HUGH Evans, a Welsh parson

HOST of the Garter Inn

Windsor Children, disguised as fairies

Sir John FALSTAFF, an impoverished knight
Falstaff's servants:
  ROBIN, his page
  BARDOLPH
  PISTOL
  NYM

FENTON, a gentleman, suitor to Anne Page

Robert SHALLOW, a visiting justice of the peace
Abraham SLENDER, his nephew, a young gentleman suitor to
  Anne Page
SIMPLE, Slender's servant

ACT 1

Scene 1

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 Custalorum.

SLENDER Ay, and Ratolorum 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.

SIR HUGH 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.

SIR HUGH It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

SHALLOW Not a whit.

SIR HUGH 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 compromises between you.

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

SIR HUGH 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 visaments in that.

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

SIR HUGH 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 Thomas Page, which is pretty virginity.

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

SIR HUGH 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.

SLENDER Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

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

SLENDER I know the young gentlewoman. She has good gifts.

SIR HUGH Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

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

SIR HUGH 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. *He knocks.* What ho? Got pless your house here.

PAGE*, within* Who's there?

SIR HUGH 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 Master 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.

SIR HUGH 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.

Enter Sir John Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

PAGE Here comes Sir John.
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 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.
SIR HUGH *Pauca verba*, Sir John, good 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.
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 humor.
SLENDER, (*to Shallow*) Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?
SIR HUGH 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.
SIR HUGH Fery goot. I will make a prief of it in my notebook, and we will afterwards 'ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.
FALSTAFF Pistol.
PISTOL He hears with ears.
SIR HUGH 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 twopence apiece of Yed Miller, by these gloves.
FALSTAFF Is this true, Pistol?
SIR HUGH No, it is false, if it is a pickpurse.

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*, indicating Nym* By these gloves, then 'twas he.

NYM Be avised, sir, and pass good humors. I will say "marry trap with you" if you run the nuthook's humor 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.

SIR HUGH It is "his five senses." Fie, what the ignorance is!

BARDOLPH*, to Falstaff* And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashiered. And so conclusions passed the careers.

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.

SIR HUGH 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.

PAGE Nay, daughter, carry the wine in. We'll drink within. *Anne Page exits.*

SLENDER O heaven, this is Mistress Anne Page.

Enter Mistress Ford and Mistress Page.

PAGE How now, Mistress Ford?

FALSTAFF Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met. By your leave, good mistress. *He 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.

All but Slender, Shallow, and Sir Hugh exit.

SLENDER I had rather than forty shillings I had my book of *Songs and Sonnets* here!

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 upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

SHALLOW*, to Slender* 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.

SIR HUGH Give ear to his motions, Master Slender. I will description the matter to you, if you be 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.

SIR HUGH But that is not the question. The question is concerning your marriage.

SHALLOW Ay, there's the point, sir.

SIR HUGH 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 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.

SIR HUGH Nay, Got's lords and His ladies! You must speak positable, 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 content. But if you say "Marry her," I will marry her. That I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

SIR HUGH It is a fery discretion answer, save the fall is in the 'ord "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!

Enter Anne Page.

SHALLOW Here comes fair Mistress Anne.—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.
SIR HUGH 'Od's plessèd will, I will not be absence at the grace. *Sir Hugh and Shallow exit.*
ANNE*, to Slender* 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 ahungry, I thank you, forsooth. (*To Simple.*) Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow. (*Simple exits.*) 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' th' 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-favored rough things.

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!

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Sir Hugh Evans and Simple.

SIR HUGH 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.

SIR HUGH Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter (*handing him a paper*), 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.

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Sir John Falstaff, Host, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, and Robin, Falstaff's Page.

FALSTAFF Mine Host of the Garter!

HOST What says my bullyrook? 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.—Let me see thee froth and lime. I am at a word. Follow.

Host exits.

FALSTAFF Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade. An old cloak makes a new jerkin, a withered servingman 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? *Bardolph exits.*

NYM He was gotten in drink. Is not the humor conceited?

FALSTAFF I am glad I am so acquit of this tinderbox. His thefts were too open. His filching was like an unskillful singer; he kept not time.

NYM The good humor is to steal at a minute'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 behavior, to be Englished rightly, is "I am Sir John Falstaff's."
PISTOL*, aside to Nym* He hath studied her will and translated her will—out of honesty into English.
NYM*, aside to Pistol* The anchor is deep. Will that humor pass?
FALSTAFF Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse. He hath a legion of angels.
PISTOL*, aside to Nym* As many devils entertain, and "To her, boy," say I.
NYM*, aside to Pistol* The humor rises; it is good. Humor me the angels.
FALSTAFF*, showing two papers* 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*, aside to Nym* Then did the sun on dunghill shine.
NYM*, aside to Pistol* I thank thee for that humor.
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 cheaters 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*, to Falstaff* I will run no base humor. Here, take the humor-letter. I will keep the havior of reputation.
FALSTAFF*, giving papers 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 i' th' hoof, seek shelter, pack!

Falstaff will learn the humor of the age:
French thrift, you rogues—myself and skirted page.

Falstaff and Robin exit.

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

NYM I have operations which be humors of revenge.

PISTOL Wilt thou revenge?

NYM By welkin and her star!

PISTOL With wit or steel?

NYM With both the humors, I. I will discuss the humor of this love to Ford.

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

NYM My humor shall not cool. I will incense Ford to deal with poison. I will possess him with yellowness, for the revolt of mine is dangerous. That is my true humor.

PISTOL Thou art the Mars of malcontents. I second thee. Troop on.

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Mistress Quickly and Simple.

MISTRESS QUICKLY What, John Rugby! (*Enter 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 anybody in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English.

RUGBY I'll go watch.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Go, and we'll have a posset for 't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a seacoal fire. (*Rugby exits.*) An honest, willing, kind fellow as ever servant shall come in house withal; and, I warrant you, no telltale 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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY And Master Slender's your master?

SIMPLE Ay, forsooth.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Does he not wear a great round beard like a glover's paring knife?

SIMPLE No, forsooth. He hath but a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-colored beard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY A softly-sprited 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.

MISTRESS 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.

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—

Enter Rugby.

RUGBY Out, alas! Here comes my master.

MISTRESS QUICKLY We shall all be shent.—Run in here, good young man. Go into this closet. He will not stay long. (*Simple exits.*) What, John Rugby! John! What, John, I say! Go, John, go enquire for my master. I doubt he be not well, that he comes not home. *Rugby exits.* (*She sings.*) *And down, down, adown 'a, etc.*

Enter Doctor Caius.

DOCTOR CAIUS Vat is you sing? I do not like dese toys. Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet *un boîtier 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. *She exits.*

DOCTOR CAIUS *Fe, fe, fe, fe! Ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais à la cour—la grande affaire.*

Enter Mistress Quickly with a small box.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Is it this, sir?

DOCTOR CAIUS *Oui, mets-le à mon* pocket. *Dépêche*, quickly. Vere is dat knave Rugby?

MISTRESS QUICKLY What, John Rugby, John!

Enter Rugby.

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'oublié?* Dere is some simples in my closet dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind. *He exits.*

MISTRESS QUICKLY Ay me! He'll find the young man there, and be mad!

Enter Doctor Caius.

DOCTOR CAIUS *O diable, diable!* Vat is in my closet? Villainy! *Larron!* (*Pulling out Simple.*) Rugby, my rapier!
MISTRESS QUICKLY Good master, be content.
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, be not so phlegmatic. Hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.
DOCTOR CAIUS Vell?
SIMPLE Ay, forsooth. To desire her to—
MISTRESS QUICKLY Peace, I pray you.
DOCTOR 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.
MISTRESS QUICKLY This is all, indeed, la! But I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire, and need not.
DOCTOR CAIUS*, to Simple* Sir Hugh send-a you?—Rugby, *baille* me some paper.—Tarry you a little-a while.

Rugby brings paper, and Doctor Caius writes.

MISTRESS QUICKLY*, aside to Simple* 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*, aside to Quickly* 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.
MISTRESS QUICKLY*, aside to Simple* Are you advised 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.
DOCTOR CAIUS*, handing paper to Simple* You, jack'nape, give-a this letter to Sir Hugh. By gar, it is a shallenge. I will cut his troat in de park, and I will teach a scurvy jackanape 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.

Simple exits.

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 measure our weapon. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate. What the goodyear!

DOCTOR CAIUS Rugby, come to the court with me. (*To Mistress Quickly.*) By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door.—Follow my heels, Rugby.

MISTRESS QUICKLY You shall have Anne—

Caius and Rugby exit.

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 trow? Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter Fenton.

FENTON How now, good woman? How dost thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY The better that it pleases your good Worship to ask.

FENTON 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, think'st 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. Have not your Worship a wart above your eye?

FENTON Yes, marry, have I. What of that?

MISTRESS 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 today. Hold, there's money for thee. (*He hands her money.*) Let me have thy voice in my behalf. If thou see'st her before me, commend me.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Farewell to your Worship.

(*Fenton exits.*)

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?

She exits.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Enter Mistress Page reading 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.
She reads.
Ask me no reason why I love you, for though Love use Reason for his precisian, he admits him not for his counselor. 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 behavior 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.

MISTRESS FORD Mistress Page! Trust me, I was going to your house.
MISTRESS PAGE And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.
MISTRESS FORD Nay, I'll ne'er believe that. I have to show to the contrary.
MISTRESS PAGE Faith, but you do, in my mind.
MISTRESS FORD Well, I do, then. Yet I say I could show you to the contrary. 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 honor!

MISTRESS PAGE Hang the trifle, woman; take the honor. 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? These knights will hack, and so thou shouldst not alter the article of thy gentry.

MISTRESS FORD We burn daylight. Here, read, read. Perceive how I might be knighted. (*She gives a paper to Mistress Page, who reads it.*) 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?

MISTRESS 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. (*She gives a paper to Mistress Ford, who reads it.*) 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.

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. 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.

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 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.
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 talk aside.*

Enter Ford with Pistol, and Page with 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 Acteon, 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. *He exits.*
FORD*, aside* I will be patient. I will find out this.
NYM*, to Page* And this is true. I like not the humor of lying. He hath wronged me in some humors. I should have borne the humored 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 humor of bread and cheese. Adieu. *He exits.*
PAGE*, aside* "The humor of it," quoth he? Here's a fellow frights English out of his wits.
FORD*, aside* I will seek out Falstaff.
PAGE*, aside* I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.
FORD*, aside* If I do find it—well.
PAGE*, aside* I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' th' town commended him for a true man.
FORD*, aside* 'Twas a good sensible fellow—well.

Mistress Page and Mistress Ford come forward.

PAGE*, to Mistress Page* How now, Meg?
MISTRESS PAGE Whither go you, George? Hark you.
They talk aside.
MISTRESS FORD*, to 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 crochets in thy head now.—Will you go, Mistress Page?
MISTRESS PAGE Have with you.—You'll come to dinner, George? (*Aside to Mistress Ford.*) Look who comes yonder.

Enter Mistress Quickly.

She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.
MISTRESS FORD Trust me, I thought on her. She'll fit it.
MISTRESS PAGE*, to Mistress Quickly* 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.
Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, and Mistress Quickly exit.
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.

Enter Host.

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.—How now, mine Host?
HOST How now, bullyrook? Thou 'rt a gentleman.—Cavaleiro Justice, I say!

Enter Shallow.

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, Cavaleiro Justice; tell him, bullyrook.
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' th' Garter, a word with you.
HOST What say'st thou, my bullyrook?
The Host and Ford talk 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.
Shallow and Page talk aside.
HOST*, to Ford* Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest cavalier?
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. (*To Shallow and Page.*) Will you go, ameers?
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, stoccados, 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.
Page, Host, and Shallow exit.
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 labor. If she be otherwise, 'tis labor well bestowed.
He exits.

Scene 2

Enter Sir John 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 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 gemini 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 honor thou hadst it not.

PISTOL Didst not thou share? Hadst thou not fifteen pence?

FALSTAFF Reason, you rogue, reason. Think'st 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 Pickt-hatch, go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue? You stand upon your honor? Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the terms of my honor precise. Ay, ay, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand and hiding mine honor 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 honor! 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, goodwife.

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 Shall I vouchsafe your Worship a word or two?

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

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Are they so? God bless them and make them His servants!

FALSTAFF Well, "Mistress Ford"—what of her?

MISTRESS 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"—

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 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.

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 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.

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, 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.

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. Her husband has a marvelous 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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Nay, but do so then, and, look you, he may come and go between you both. And in any case have a nayword, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand anything; 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. (*He gives her money.*) I am yet thy debtor.—Boy, go along with this woman. (*Mistress Quickly and Robin exit.*) This news distracts me.

PISTOL*, aside*

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!

He exits.

FALSTAFF Sayst 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 wine.

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. (*He hands Falstaff the wine.*)

FALSTAFF Brook is his name?

BARDOLPH Ay, sir.

FALSTAFF Call him in. Such Brooks are welcome to me that o'erflows such liquor. (*Bardolph exits.*) Ah ha, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, have I encompassed you? Go to. *Via!*

Enter Bardolph with Ford disguised as Brook.

FORD*, as Brook* God bless you, sir.

FALSTAFF And you, sir. Would you speak with me?

FORD*, as Brook* I make bold to press with so little

preparation upon you.
FALSTAFF You're welcome. What's your will?—Give us leave, drawer. *Bardolph exits.*
FORD*, as Brook* Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much. My name is Brook.
FALSTAFF Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.
FORD*, as Brook* 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 emboldened 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*, as Brook* Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me. *He sets it down.* 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*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* 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 it is to be such an offender.
FALSTAFF Very well, sir. Proceed.
FORD*, as Brook* There is a gentlewoman in this town—her husband's name is Ford.
FALSTAFF Well, sir.
FORD*, as Brook* 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, *as Brook* Never.
FALSTAFF Have you importuned her to such a purpose?
FORD, *as Brook* Never.
FALSTAFF Of what quality was your love, then?
FORD, *as Brook* 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, *as Brook* 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 warlike, courtlike, and learned preparations.
FALSTAFF O, sir!
FORD, *as Brook* Believe it, for you know it. There is money. (*He points to the bag.*) 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, *as Brook* O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor 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 defenses, which now are too too strongly embattled against me. What say you to 't, Sir John?
FALSTAFF, *taking the bag* 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, *as Brook* O, good sir!
FALSTAFF I say you shall.
FORD, *as Brook* 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*, as Brook* I am blessed 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*, as Brook* 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. *Falstaff exits.*

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 villainous 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," "Wittoll," "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 aquavitae 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!

He exits.

Enter Doctor Caius and Rugby.

DOCTOR CAIUS Jack Rugby.
RUGBY Sir?
DOCTOR CAIUS Vat is the 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 Villainy, take your rapier.
RUGBY Forbear. Here's company.

Enter Page, Shallow, Slender, and Host.

HOST God bless thee, bully doctor!
SHALLOW God save you, Master Doctor Caius!
PAGE Now, good Master Doctor!
SLENDER Give you good morrow, sir.
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 thy pass, thy puncto, 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 Galien, my heart of elder, ha? Is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?
DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, he is de coward jack-priest of de vorld. He is not show his face.
HOST Thou art a Castalion King Urinal Hector of Greece, my boy!
DOCTOR 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 am 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. (*To Caius.*) A word, Monsieur Mockwater.

DOCTOR CAIUS "Mockvater"? Vat is dat?

HOST "Mockwater," in our English tongue, is "valor," bully.

DOCTOR 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS "Clapper-de-claw"? Vat is dat?

HOST That is, he will make thee amends.

DOCTOR 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS Me tank you for dat.

HOST And moreover, bully—(*He draws Shallow, Page, and Slender aside.*) But first, Master guest, and Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore.

PAGE Sir Hugh is there, is he?

HOST He is there. See what humor 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. *Page, Shallow, and Slender exit.*

DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, me vill kill de priest, for he speak for a jackanape 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 farmhouse a-feasting, and thou shalt woo her. Cried game! Said I well?

DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, me dank you vor 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?

DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, 'tis good. Vell said.

HOST Let us wag, then.

DOCTOR CAIUS Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

They exit.

ACT 3

Scene 1

Enter Sir Hugh Evans (*with a book and a sword*) *and Simple* (*carrying Sir Hugh's gown*).

SIR HUGH I pray you now, good Master Slender's servingman and friend Simple by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius, that calls himself doctor of physic?

SIMPLE Marry, sir, the Petty-ward, the Park-ward, every way; Old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

SIR HUGH I most fehemently desire you, you will also look that way.

SIMPLE I will, sir. *He exits.*

SIR HUGH Pless my soul, how full of cholers 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 good 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 rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sings madrigals.

Enter Simple.

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

SIR HUGH 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.

SIR HUGH Pray you, give me my gown—or else keep it in your arms.

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 God save you, good Sir Hugh!
SIR HUGH God 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?
SIR HUGH There is reasons and causes for it.
PAGE We are come to you to do a good office, Master Parson.
SIR HUGH 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.
SIR HUGH What is he?
PAGE I think you know him: Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.
SIR HUGH Got's will and His passion of my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.
PAGE Why?
SIR HUGH 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*, to Shallow* 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, Doctor Caius, and Rugby.
Caius and Sir Hugh offer to fight.

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.
Page and Shallow disarm Caius and Sir Hugh.
DOCTOR CAIUS*, to Sir Hugh* I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear. Verefore vill you not meet-a me?
SIR HUGH*, aside to 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*, aside to Caius* Pray you, let us not be laughing-stocks to other men's humors. I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends. (*Aloud.*) By Jeshu, I will knog your urinal about your knave's cogscomb.

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 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 Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer!

DOCTOR 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. (*To Caius.*) Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. (*To Sir Hugh.*) 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. (*To Page and Shallow.*) Come, lay their swords to pawn. (*To Caius and Sir Hugh.*) Follow me, lads of peace, follow, follow, follow.

Host exits.

SHALLOW Afore God, a mad Host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

SLENDER*, aside* O, sweet Anne Page!

Shallow, Page, and Slender exit.

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

SIR HUGH This is well! He has made us his vloutingstog. 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 Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you, follow.

Sir Hugh, Caius, Simple, and Rugby exit.

Scene 2

Enter Robin followed by Mistress Page.

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.

MISTRESS 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?

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 weathercock?
MISTRESS 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!
MISTRESS PAGE He, he. I can never hit on 's name. There is such a league between my goodman and he. Is your wife at home indeed?
FORD Indeed, she is.
MISTRESS PAGE By your leave, sir. I am sick till I see her. *Mistress Page and Robin exit.*
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 willful Acteon, and to these violent proceedings all my neighbors shall cry aim. *A 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, Doctor Caius, and Rugby.

SHALLOW, PAGE, ETC. 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.

DOCTOR CAIUS Ay, be-gar, and de maid is love-a me! My nursh-a Quickly tell me so mush.

HOST*, to Page* 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 Poins. 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.

Shallow and Slender exit.

DOCTOR CAIUS Go home, John Rugby. I come anon.

Rugby exits.

HOST Farewell, my hearts. I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him. *He exits.*

FORD*, aside* I think I shall drink in pipe-wine first with him; I'll make him dance.—Will you go, gentles?

PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, AND SIR HUGH Have with you to see this monster.

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Mistress Ford and Mistress Page.

MISTRESS FORD What, John! What, Robert!

MISTRESS PAGE Quickly, quickly! Is the buck-basket—

MISTRESS FORD I warrant.—What, Robert, I say!

Enter John and Robert with a large buck-basket.

MISTRESS PAGE Come, come, come.

MISTRESS FORD Here, set it down.

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 in the brewhouse, 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.

MISTRESS PAGE You will do it?

MISTRESS FORD I ha' told them over and over. They lack no direction.—Be gone, and come when you are called. *John and Robert exit.*

MISTRESS PAGE Here comes little Robin.

Enter Robin.

MISTRESS 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.

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. This secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to thee and shall make thee a new doublet and hose.—I'll go hide me.

MISTRESS FORD Do so.—Go tell thy master I am alone. (*Robin exits.*) Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MISTRESS PAGE I warrant thee. If I do not act it, hiss me. *She exits.*

MISTRESS FORD Go to, then. We'll use this unwholesome humidity, this gross-wat'ry pumpion. We'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter Sir John 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 blessèd 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 right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

MISTRESS FORD A plain kerchief, Sir John. My brows become nothing else, nor that well neither.

FALSTAFF Thou art a tyrant 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 semicircled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

MISTRESS 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 deserv'st 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 Counter gate, 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.

Enter Robin.

ROBIN 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 stands behind the arras.*

Enter Mistress Page.

What's the matter? How now?
MISTRESS PAGE O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you're overthrown, you're undone forever!
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 upon 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 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 forever.

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 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.

MISTRESS FORD He's too big to go in there. What shall I do? *Falstaff comes forward.*

FALSTAFF 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? (*Aside to him.*) Are these your letters, knight?

FALSTAFF*, aside to Mistress Page* I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never—

Falstaff goes into the basket; they cover him with dirty clothes.

MISTRESS PAGE*, to Robin* Help to cover your master, boy.—Call your men, Mistress Ford.—You dissembling knight! *Robin exits.*

MISTRESS FORD What, John! Robert! John!

Enter Robert and John.

Go, take up these clothes here quickly. Where's the cowlstaff? Look how you drumble! Carry them to the laundress in Datchet Mead. Quickly! Come.

Enter Ford, Page, Doctor 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?

ROBERT AND JOHN To the laundress, forsooth.

MISTRESS 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.

Robert and John exit with the buck-basket.

Gentlemen, I have dreamed tonight; 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. (*He locks 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. *He exits.*

SIR HUGH This is fery fantastical humors 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. *Page, Sir Hugh, and Caius exit.*

MISTRESS PAGE Is there not a double excellency in this?

MISTRESS FORD I know not which pleases me better—that my husband is deceived, or Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE What a taking was he in when your husband asked who was in the basket!

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

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

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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?

MISTRESS PAGE We will do it. Let him be sent for tomorrow eight o'clock to have amends.

Enter Ford, Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh.

FORD I cannot find him. Maybe 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 If there be anypody 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 Be gar, nor I too. There is nobodies.

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.

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

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.

Mistress Page and Mistress Ford exit.

PAGE*, to Caius and Sir Hugh* Let's go in, gentlemen. But, trust me, we'll mock him. (*To Ford, Caius, and Sir Hugh.*) I do invite you tomorrow 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 Anything.

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

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

FORD Pray you, go, Master Page.

Ford and Page exit.

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

They exit.

Scene 4

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
Alas, how then?

FENTON Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object I am too great of birth,
And that, my state being galled 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 Maybe 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 sealèd 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 talk aside.

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.

MISTRESS QUICKLY*, to Anne* 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-favored faults
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

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

They talk aside.

SHALLOW*, to Slender* 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 longtail, 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.

He steps aside.

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.

Enter Page and Mistress Page.

Here he comes.

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 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.

Page, Shallow, and Slender exit.

MISTRESS QUICKLY*, to Fenton* 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 colors of my love
And not retire. Let me have your good will.

ANNE

Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY That's my master, Master Doctor.

ANNE

Alas, I had rather be set quick i' th' earth
And bowled 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. She must needs go in;
Her father will be angry.

FENTON

Farewell, gentle mistress.—Farewell, Nan.

Mistress Page and Anne Page exit.

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, once tonight
Give my sweet Nan this ring. There's for thy pains.

He gives her money and a ring.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Now heaven send thee good fortune.

Fenton exits.

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!

She exits.

Scene 5

Enter Sir John Falstaff.

FALSTAFF Bardolph, I say!

Enter Bardolph.

BARDOLPH Here, sir.

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

Bardolph exits.

Have I lived to be carried in a basket like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? 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. 'Sblood, the rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' th' 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 I had been swelled! By the Lord, I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Enter Bardolph with cups of 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. *He drinks.* 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*, to Bardolph* 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. *Bardolph exits.* 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, say'st thou?

MISTRESS QUICKLY Eight and nine, sir.

FALSTAFF Well, be gone. I will not miss her.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Peace be with you, sir.

Mistress Quickly exits.

FALSTAFF I marvel I hear not of Master Brook. He sent me word to stay within. I like his money well.

Enter Ford disguised as Brook.

O, here he comes.

FORD*, as Brook* God bless you, sir.

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

FORD*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* And sped you, sir?

FALSTAFF Very ill-favoredly, Master Brook.

FORD*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* What, while you were there?

FALSTAFF While I was there.

FORD*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* 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 bellwether; 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 horseshoe! Think of that—hissing hot—think of that, Master Brook.

FORD*, as Brook* 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*, as Brook* '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. *Falstaff exits.*

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.

He exits.

ACT 4

Scene 1

Enter Mistress Page, Mistress Quickly, and William.

MISTRESS PAGE Is he at Master Ford's already, think'st thou?
MISTRESS 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.
MISTRESS PAGE I'll be with her by and by. I'll but bring my young man here to school.

Enter Sir Hugh Evans.

Look where his master comes. 'Tis a playing day, I see.—How now, Sir Hugh, no school today?
SIR HUGH No. Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.
MISTRESS QUICKLY Blessing of his heart!
MISTRESS 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.
SIR HUGH Come hither, William. Hold up your head. Come.
MISTRESS PAGE Come on, sirrah. Hold up your head. Answer your master. Be not afraid.
SIR HUGH William, how many numbers is in nouns?
WILLIAM Two.
MISTRESS QUICKLY Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say " 'Od's nouns."
SIR HUGH Peace your tattlings!—What is "fair," William?
WILLIAM *Pulcher.*
MISTRESS QUICKLY Polecats? There are fairer things than polecats, sure.
SIR HUGH You are a very simplicity 'oman. I pray you, peace.—What is *lapis*, William?
WILLIAM A stone.
SIR HUGH And what is "a stone," William?
WILLIAM A pebble.
SIR HUGH No. It is *lapis*. I pray you, remember in your prain.
WILLIAM *Lapis.*
SIR HUGH 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*.
SIR HUGH *Nominativo, hig, haeg, hog.* Pray you, mark: *genitivo, huius*. Well, what is your accusative case?
WILLIAM *Accusativo, hinc.*

SIR HUGH I pray you, have your remembrance, child. *Accusativo, hung, hang, hog.*
MISTRESS QUICKLY "Hang-hog" is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.
SIR HUGH Leave your prabbles, 'oman.—What is the focative case, William?
WILLIAM O—*vocativo*—O—
SIR HUGH Remember, William, focative is *caret*.
MISTRESS QUICKLY And that's a good root.
SIR HUGH 'Oman, forbear.
MISTRESS PAGE*, to Mistress Quickly* Peace!
SIR HUGH What is your genitive case plural, William?
WILLIAM Genitive case?
SIR HUGH Ay.
WILLIAM Genitive: *horum, harum, horum*.
MISTRESS QUICKLY Vengeance of Ginny's case! Fie on her! Never name her, child, if she be a whore.
SIR HUGH For shame, 'oman!
MISTRESS 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 "whorum."—Fie upon you!
SIR HUGH '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.
MISTRESS PAGE*, to Mistress Quickly* Prithee, hold thy peace.
SIR HUGH Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.
WILLIAM Forsooth, I have forgot.
SIR HUGH It is *qui, quae, quod*. If you forget your qui's, your quae's, and your quod's, you must be preeches. Go your ways and play, go.
MISTRESS PAGE He is a better scholar than I thought he was.
SIR HUGH He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.
MISTRESS PAGE Adieu, good Sir Hugh.—Get you home, boy. (*To Mistress Quickly.*) Come. We stay too long.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Sir John 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, compliment, 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 th' chamber, Sir John.
Falstaff exits.

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 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.
MISTRESS FORD Why, does he talk of him?
MISTRESS 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.
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? How should I bestow him? Shall I put him into the basket again?

Enter Sir John Falstaff.

FALSTAFF No, I'll come no more i' th' 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. 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.
MISTRESS FORD There they always use to discharge their birding pieces.
MISTRESS PAGE Creep into the kiln-hole.

FALSTAFF Where is it?
MISTRESS 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.
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 thrummed 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.

Falstaff exits.

MISTRESS FORD 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, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!
MISTRESS FORD But is my husband coming?
MISTRESS PAGE Ay, in good sadness is he, and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.
MISTRESS 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.
MISTRESS PAGE Nay, but he'll be here presently. Let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.
MISTRESS FORD I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up. I'll bring linen for him straight. *She exits.*
MISTRESS 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."

She exits.

Enter Mistress Ford with Robert and John, who bring the buck-basket.

MISTRESS 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.

She exits.

ROBERT Come, come, take it up.

JOHN Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

ROBERT I hope not. I had lief as bear so much lead.

They pick up the basket.

Enter Ford, Page, Doctor Caius, Sir Hugh Evans, and Shallow.

FORD Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again?—Set down the basket, villain. *They put the basket down.* Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket! O, you panderly rascals! There's a knot, a gang, 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.

SIR HUGH 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.

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. *He pulls clothes out of the basket.*

PAGE This passes.

MISTRESS FORD Are you not ashamed? Let the clothes alone.

FORD I shall find you anon.

SIR HUGH 'Tis unreasonable. Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come, away.

FORD*, to the Servants* 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. 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.

MISTRESS FORD If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death. *Robert and John empty the basket.*

PAGE Here's no man.

SHALLOW By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford. This wrongs you.

SIR HUGH 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.

FORD Help to search my house this one time. If I find not what I seek, show no color for my extremity. Let me forever 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.

Robert and John refill the basket and carry it off.

MISTRESS FORD*, calling offstage* 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 Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

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 th' figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element. We know nothing.— Come down, you witch, you hag, you! Come down, I say!

Ford seizes a cudgel.

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

Enter Mistress Page and Sir John Falstaff disguised as an old woman.

MISTRESS PAGE Come, Mother Pratt; come, give me your hand.

FORD I'll pratt her. (*He beats Falstaff.*) Out of my door, you witch, you rag, you baggage, you polecat, you runnion! Out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you! *Falstaff exits.*

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 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 humor a little further. Come, gentlemen.

Ford, Page, Caius, Sir Hugh, and Shallow exit.

MISTRESS PAGE Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

MISTRESS FORD Nay, by th' Mass, that he did not; 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, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

MISTRESS 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.

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 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.

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS PAGE Come, to the forge with it, then shape it. I would not have things cool.

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Host and Bardolph.

BARDOLPH Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses. The Duke himself will be tomorrow 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.

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Page, Ford, Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, and Sir Hugh Evans.

SIR HUGH '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. Now doth thy honor 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 offense.
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.
SIR HUGH 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.
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,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
Doth all the wintertime, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragged 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?
MISTRESS FORD Marry, this is our device,
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.
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?
MISTRESS 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, aufs, 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 diffusèd 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.
FORD And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposèd fairies pinch him sound
And burn him with their tapers.
MISTRESS 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 practiced well to this, or they'll ne'er do 't.
SIR HUGH I will teach the children their behaviors, and I will be like a jackanapes also, to burn the knight with my taber.
FORD That will be excellent. I'll go buy them vizards.
MISTRESS PAGE
My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies,
Finely attirèd 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.
MISTRESS PAGE
Fear not you that. Go get us properties
And tricking for our fairies.
SIR HUGH Let us about it. It is admirable pleasures and fery honest knaveries.

Page, Ford, and Sir Hugh exit.

MISTRESS PAGE Go, Mistress Ford,
Send quickly to Sir John to know his mind.

Mistress Ford exits.

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-moneyed, and his friends
Potent at court. He, none but he, shall have her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.

She exits.

Scene 5

Enter Host and Simple.

HOST What wouldst thou have, boor? What, thickskin? 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, *within* 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 honorable. Fie! Privacy? Fie!

Enter Sir John 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 Brentford?

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 through 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.

HOST 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; like who more bold.

SIMPLE I thank your Worship. I shall make my master glad with these tidings. *He exits.*

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*, to Host* 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.

SIR HUGH Where is mine Host?
HOST What is the matter, sir?
SIR HUGH 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 Readings, of Maidenhead, of Colnbrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you. You are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well. *He exits.*

Enter Doctor Caius.

DOCTOR CAIUS Vere is mine Host de Jarteer?
HOST Here, Master Doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.
DOCTOR CAIUS I cannot tell vat is dat. But it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamanie. By my trot, dere is no duke that the court is know to come. I tell you for good will. Adieu. *He exits.*
HOST*, to Bardolph* Hue and cry, villain, go!—Assist me, knight. I am undone.—Fly, run; hue and cry, villain! I am undone. *Host and Bardolph exit.*
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 cudgeled, 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 crestfallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero. Well, if my wind were but long enough, I would repent.

Enter Mistress Quickly.

Now, whence come you?
MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS 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 tell'st thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colors of the rainbow, and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford. But that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me i' th' stocks, i' th' common stocks, for a witch.

MISTRESS 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. *She gives him a paper.* 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.

They exit.

Scene 6

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. Fat Falstaff
Hath a great scene; the image of the jest
I'll show you here at large. *He shows the Host a paper.* Hark, good mine Host:
Tonight 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, ever 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 dean'ry, 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 masked and vizarded—
That quaint in green she shall be loose enrobed,
With ribbons 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.

They exit.

ACT 5

Scene 1

Enter Sir John 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.

MISTRESS 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. *Mistress Quickly exits.*

Enter Ford disguised as Brook.

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*, as Brook* 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 tonight I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Page, Shallow, and Slender.

PAGE Come, come. We'll couch i' th' castle ditch till we see the light of our fairies.—Remember, son Slender, my—

SLENDER Ay, forsooth, I have spoke with her, and we have a nayword 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.

They exit.

Scene 3

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 hand; 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. *Caius exits.* 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 heartbreak.

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

MISTRESS 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.

MISTRESS FORD That cannot choose but amaze him.

MISTRESS PAGE If he be not amazed, he will be mocked. If he be amazed, he will every way be mocked.

MISTRESS FORD We'll betray him finely.

MISTRESS PAGE
Against such lewdsters and their lechery,
Those that betray them do no treachery.

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

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter Sir Hugh Evans and boys disguised, like him, as Fairies.

SIR HUGH 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. *They exit.*

Scene 5

Enter Sir John Falstaff wearing a buck's head.

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' th' forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow?

Enter Mistress Page and Mistress Ford.

Who comes here? My doe?

MISTRESS 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 eryngoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here. *He embraces her.*

MISTRESS FORD Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

FALSTAFF Divide me like a bribed 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. *A noise of horns within.*

MISTRESS PAGE Alas, what noise?

MISTRESS FORD Heaven forgive our sins!

FALSTAFF What should this be?

MISTRESS FORD AND MISTRESS PAGE Away, away. *The two women 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 Mistress Quickly, Pistol, Sir Hugh Evans, Anne Page and boys, all disguised as Fairies and carrying tapers.

MISTRESS QUICKLY*, as Fairy Queen*

Fairies black, gray, green, and white,
You moonshine revelers and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixèd destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

PISTOL*, as Hobgoblin*

Elves, list your names. Silence, you airy toys!—
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap,
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept.
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry.

Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.
FALSTAFF, *aside*
They are fairies. He that speaks to them shall die.
I'll wink and couch. No man their works must eye.
He crouches down and covers his eyes.
SIR HUGH, *as a fairy*
Where's Bead? Go you, and where you find a maid
That ere she sleep has thrice her prayers said,
Raise 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.
MISTRESS QUICKLY, *as Fairy Queen* About, about!
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out.
Strew good luck, aufs, 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 installment, coat, and sev'ral crest
With loyal blazon evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring.
Th' 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 em'rald 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.
SIR HUGH, *as a fairy*
Pray you, lock hand in hand. Yourselves in order set;
And twenty glowworms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But stay! I smell a man of Middle Earth.
FALSTAFF, *aside* Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese.
PISTOL, *as Hobgoblin, to Falstaff*
Vile worm, thou wast o'erlooked even in thy birth.
MISTRESS QUICKLY, *as Fairy Queen, to Sir Hugh*
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, *as Hobgoblin*
A trial, come!
SIR HUGH, *as a fairy* Come, will this wood take fire?
Sir Hugh puts a taper to Falstaff's finger, and he starts.
FALSTAFF O, O, O!
MISTRESS QUICKLY, *as Fairy Queen*
Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!

About him, fairies. Sing a scornful rhyme,
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

Here they pinch him and sing about him, and Doctor Caius comes one way and steals away a boy in white. And Slender comes another way; he takes a boy in green. And Fenton steals Mistress Anne Page.

FAIRIES *sing*
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 villainy.
Pinch him and burn him and turn him about,
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

A noise of hunting is made within, and all the fairies run away from Falstaff, who pulls off his buck's head and rises up. Enter Page, Mistress Page, Mistress Ford and Ford.

PAGE*, to Falstaff*
Nay, do not fly. I think we have watched 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?
She points to the horns.
See you these, husband? Do not these fair yokes
Become the forest better than the town?
FORD*, to Falstaff* 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.
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. 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.
SIR HUGH Sir John Falstaff, serve Got and leave your

desires, and fairies will not pinse you.
FORD Well said, Fairy Hugh.
SIR HUGH 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'erreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? Shall I have a coxcomb of frieze? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.
SIR HUGH 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.
MISTRESS 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?
MISTRESS 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?
SIR HUGH 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.
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.
MISTRESS 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' th' 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 post-master'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 post-master'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 cozened! I ha' married *un garçon*, a boy; *un paysan*, by gar, a boy. It is not Anne Page. By gar, I am cozened.
MISTRESS PAGE Why? Did you take her in green?
DOCTOR CAIUS Ay, be gar, and 'tis a boy. Be gar, I'll raise all Windsor.
FORD This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

Enter Fenton and Anne Page.

PAGE My heart misgives me. Here comes Master Fenton.—How now, Master Fenton!
ANNE 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 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.
Th' offense 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 cursèd hours
Which forcèd marriage would have brought upon her.

FORD*, to Page and Mistress Page*
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 eschewed 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 hold your word,
For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

They exit.