

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

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 5In 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”
10 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
15 done ’t, and all his ancestors that come after him may. They may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

SHALLOW It is an old coat.

SIR HUGH The dozen white louses do become an old
20 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.

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SHALLOW 25You 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
30 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 35The 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 40Ha! 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
45 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
50 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
55 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
60 penny.

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

SIR HUGH Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is
goot gifts.

SHALLOW 65Well, 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.

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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 100It 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 105 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 110Knight, 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. 115 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 120Good 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, 125 Nym, and Pistol.

BARDOLPH You Banbury cheese!

SLENDER Ay, it is no matter.

PISTOL How now, Mephostophilus?

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SLENDER Ay, it is no matter.

NYM 130Slice, 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:

135 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
140 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,
145 “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,
150 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 155Ha, 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
160 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.

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SLENDER By this hat, then, he in the red face had it.
165 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
170 had drunk himself out of his five senses.

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
175 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
180 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
185 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 190 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!

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Enter Simple.

195 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 200 afore Michaelmas?

SHALLOW, ^ϱ *to Slender* ^ϱ 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 205 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 210 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 215 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 220 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 225 the mouth. Therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

SHALLOW Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

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

SIR HUGH 230 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 235I 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 240I 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
245 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
250 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 255The 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* ⌋ 260Will ’t please your Worship to come in, sir?

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

ANNE The dinner attends you, sir.

SLENDER 265 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
270 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
275 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
280 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
285 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
290 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
295 you.

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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 300 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 305 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 5 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;

10 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.

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 5 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 10 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 15Bardolph, 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 20 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 25 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 30Why, 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 35I 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

40 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 50 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* [∩] 55The 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 60 parts with most judicious [∩] oellades. [∩] 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* [∩] 65I 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
70 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
75 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
80 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!
85 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.
90 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 95 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,

100 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
105 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
5 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
10 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
15 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 20 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.

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MISTRESS QUICKLY A softly-sprited man, is he not?

SIMPLE 25 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, 30 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 35 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! 40 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. 45 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 50 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 55 *Oui, mets-le à mon pocket. Dépêche,*
quickly. Vere is dat knave Rugby?

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MISTRESS QUICKLY What, John Rugby, John!

⌈ *Enter Rugby.* ▮

RUGBY Here, sir.

DOCTOR CAIUS You are John Rugby, and you are Jack
60 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
65 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!
70 *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 75 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

80 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
85 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.

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MISTRESS QUICKLY This is all, indeed, la! But I'll ne'er
90 put my finger in the fire, and need not.

DOCTOR CAIUS, *ʃ to Simple ʃ* Sir Hugh send-a you?—
Rugby, *baille* me some paper.—Tarry you a little-a
while.

ʃ Rugby brings paper, and Doctor Caius writes. ʃ

MISTRESS QUICKLY, *ʃ aside to Simple ʃ* I am glad he is so
95 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
100 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, *ʃ aside to Quickly ʃ* 'Tis a great charge to come
under one body's hand.

MISTRESS QUICKLY, *ʃ aside to Simple ʃ* 105Are 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.
110 But notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind.
That's neither here nor there.

DOCTOR CAIUS, *ʃ handing paper to Simple ʃ* 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
115 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 120It 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

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Host of de Jarteer to measure our weapon. By gar,
I will myself have Anne Page.

MISTRESS QUICKLY 125Sir, 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,
130 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
135 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 140How 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
145 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.
150 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
155 faith, it is such another Nan! But, I detest, an honest

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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,
160 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 165 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.) ⌋

170 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.

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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
5 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
10 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,
15 By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might
For thee to fight,
John Falstaff.*

20 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

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picked—with the devil's name!—out of my conversation,
25 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.

30 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.

35 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
40 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 45 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
50 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
55 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

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orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness that I would have sworn his disposition
60 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
65 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
70 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
75 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
80 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
85 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 90“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

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95 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

100 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
105 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

110 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.

115 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.

120 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.

125 Take heed, ere summer comes or cuckoo birds do
sing.—

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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* 130 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.
135 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* 140 "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* 145 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 150 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 155 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.

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Enter Mistress Quickly.

160 She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

MISTRESS FORD Trust me, I thought on her. She'll fit it.

MISTRESS PAGE, *ʃ to Mistress Quickly ʃ* You are come to see my daughter Anne?

MISTRESS QUICKLY Ay, forsooth. And, I pray, how does
165 good Mistress Anne?

MISTRESS PAGE Go in with us and see. We have an hour's talk with you.

ʃ Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, and Mistress Quickly exit. ʃ

PAGE How now, Master Ford?

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

PAGE 170Yes, 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
175 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 180Ay, 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
185 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
190 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
195 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
200 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
205 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 ▮ 210None, 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

215 ▮ 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 220Tut, 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
225 fellows skip like rats.

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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
230 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
235 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
5 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
10 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 15 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
20 stand upon your honor? Why, thou unconfinable

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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
25 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 30I 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 35Not 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 40Shall 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
45 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 50I warrant thee, nobody hears. Mine own
people, mine own people.

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

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FALSTAFF Well, “Mistress Ford”—what of her?

MISTRESS QUICKLY 55Why, 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
60 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
65 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
70 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
75 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
80 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 85Ten 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

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90 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
95 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,
100 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 105Not 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
110 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
115 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

120 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,
125 he may come and go between you both. And in any

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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,
130 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
135 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 overwhelm them all!

(He exits.) *∩*

FALSTAFF Sayst thou so, old Jack? Go thy ways. I'll
140 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 145 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 150 Ay, sir.

FALSTAFF Call him in. Such ¹Brooks ²are welcome to me that o'erflows such liquor. ³(*Bardolph exits.*) ⁴Ah ha, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, have I encompassed you? Go to. *Via!*

Enter ⁵Bardolph with ⁶Ford ⁷disguised as Brook. ⁸

FORD, ⁹*as Brook* ¹⁰155 God ¹¹bless you, sir.

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

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FORD, ¹²*as Brook* ¹³I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

FALSTAFF You're welcome. What's your will?—Give us ¹⁴160 leave, drawer. ¹⁵(*Bardolph exits.*) ¹⁶

FORD, ¹⁷*as Brook* ¹⁸Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much. My name is ¹⁹Brook. ²⁰

FALSTAFF Good Master ²¹Brook, ²²I desire more acquaintance of you.

FORD, ²³*as Brook* ²⁴165 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 ²⁵170 go before, all ways do lie open.

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

FORD, ²⁶*as Brook* ²⁷Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me. ²⁸(*He sets it down.*) ²⁹If you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me ³⁰175 of the carriage.

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

FORD, ³¹*as Brook* ³²I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

FALSTAFF ³³180 Speak, good Master ³⁴Brook. ³⁵I shall be glad to be your servant.

FORD, ³⁶*as Brook* ³⁷Sir, 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
185 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
190 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.

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FALSTAFF Very well, sir. Proceed.

FORD, *as Brook* There is a gentlewoman in this
195 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
200 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
205 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
210 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
215 at her hands?

FORD, *as Brook* Never.

FALSTAFF Have you importuned her to such a
purpose?

FORD, *as Brook* Never.

FALSTAFF 220Of 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 225 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

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230 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 235 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 240 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 245 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 250 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, 255 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, *ꝑ* *taking the bag* ꝑ Master ꝑ Brook, ꝑ I will first
260 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, *ꝑ as Brook* ꝑ O, good sir!

FALSTAFF I say you shall.

FORD, *ꝑ as Brook* ꝑ 265 Want no money, Sir John; you shall want none.

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FALSTAFF Want no Mistress Ford, Master ꝑ Brook; ꝑ you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment. Even as you came in to
270 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, *ꝑ as Brook* ꝑ 275 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
280 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, *ꝑ as Brook* ꝑ I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him if you saw him.

FALSTAFF 285 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 ꝑ Brook, ꝑ thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt
290 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
295 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
300 coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at. And
I shall not only receive this villainous wrong but
stand under the adoption of abominable terms,

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and by him that does me this wrong. Terms,
names! “Amaimon” sounds well, “Lucifer” well,
305 “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
310 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
315 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
320 than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! Cuckold, cuckold,
cuckold!
He exits.

Scene 3

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
5 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 10He is wise, sir. He knew your Worship would
kill him if he came.

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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 15Alas, 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 20Now, 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;
25 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?

30 Is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?

DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, he is de coward jack-priest of de

world. He is not show his face.

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

DOCTOR CAIUS 35I 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
40 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
45 and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger

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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 50'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
55 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 60“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 65He 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 70And 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.* 71 But first, Master guest, and Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you
75 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 80We will do it.

PAGE, SHALLOW, AND SLENDER Adieu, good Master Doctor.*Page, Shallow, and Slender exit.* 71

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DOCTOR CAIUS By gar, me vill kill de priest, for he speak for a jackanape to Anne Page.

HOST 85Let 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 90By 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
95 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.

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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 5Marry, 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 10I 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
15 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.*

20 *To shallow—*

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

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⌈ *(Sings.)* ⌋

*Melodious birds sing madrigals—
Whenas I sat in Pabylon—
And a thousand vagram posies.*

25 *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—

30 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

35 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* ▮ 40Ah, 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

45 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

50 Parson.

SIR HUGH Fery well. What is it?

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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

55 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 60I 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 65He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen—and he is a knave besides, a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

PAGE, *to Shallow* 7 I warrant you, he's the man should 70 fight with him.

SLENDER, *aside* 7 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 75So 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* 7 I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear. Verefore vill you not 80 meet-a me?

SIR HUGH, *aside to Caius* 7 Pray you, use your patience.

(Aloud.) 7 In good time.

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

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SIR HUGH, *aside to Caius* 7 85Pray 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 90 *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
95 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

100 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 hands, terrestrial;

105 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

110 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 115 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

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us knog our prains together to be revenge on this
120 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 125Well, 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 5I 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 10Truly, 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 15Be 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 20Sir 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 25Indeed, 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

30 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.

35 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

40 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

45 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
50 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.

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SHALLOW 55 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 60 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?*
65 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 70 is of no having. He kept company with the wild Prince and Poin. 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 75 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, 80 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 85 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?

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PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, AND SIR HUGH 90Have 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 5Here, 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, 10 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 15 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 20Here 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.

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MISTRESS PAGE 25 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 30 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. 35 [⌈] (*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 40 humidity, this gross-wat'ry pumpkin. 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 blessed 45 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 50 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
55 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.

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FALSTAFF 60Thou 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.

65 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.

70 Come, I cannot cog and say thou art this and that like a many of these lispings hawthorn buds that come like women in men's apparel and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time. I cannot. But I love thee, none but thee; and thou deserv'st it.

MISTRESS FORD 75Do 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 80Well, 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 85Mistress 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
90 the arras.

MISTRESS FORD Pray you, do so. She's a very tattling woman. *Falstaff stands behind the arras.*

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Enter Mistress Page.

What's the matter? How now?

MISTRESS PAGE O Mistress Ford, what have you done?
95 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
100 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 105 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 110 '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
115 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 120What 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
125 rather” and “you had rather.” Your husband’s here
at hand. Bethink you of some conveyance. In the

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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
130 throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to
bucking. Or—it is whitening 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 135Let 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
140 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. ▯

145 Go, take up these clothes here quickly. Where’s the
cowstaff? 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
150 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!

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FORD 155Buck? 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
160 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 165True, 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
170 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—
175 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

180 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
185 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

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190 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 195I 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 200Ay, I do so.

MISTRESS FORD Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

FORD Amen!

MISTRESS PAGE You do yourself mighty wrong, Master
205 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 210Be 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 215'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 220Well, 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

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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* ⌋ 225Let'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

230 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 235 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 240A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!

They exit.

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.

5 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.

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Besides these, other bars he lays before me—

My riots past, my wild societies—

10 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

15 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 20 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

25 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
30 that, but that I am afeard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY, *ʃ to Anne ʃ* Hark ye, Master Slender
would speak a word with you.

ANNE

I come to him. *ʃ (Aside.) ʃ* This is my father's choice.

O, what a world of vile ill-favored faults

35 Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

MISTRESS QUICKLY And how does good Master Fenton?

Pray you, a word with you. *ʃ They talk aside. ʃ*

SHALLOW, *ʃ to Slender ʃ* She's coming. To her, coz! O
boy, thou hadst a father!

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SLENDER 40I 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 45Ay, 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 50He 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.

ʃ He steps aside. ʃ

ANNE 55Now, 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

60 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
65 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.—
70 Why, how now? What does Master Fenton here?

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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 75She 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* ⌋ 80Speak 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

85 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
90 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.

95 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.* ⌋

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MISTRESS QUICKLY This is my doing now. “Nay,” said I,
“will you cast away your child on a fool and a
100 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.* ⌋

105 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
110 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
5 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

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slighted me into the river with as little remorse as
10 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
15 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
20 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 25Come 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 30With 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 35 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 40 not her fault. She does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it 45 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 50Well, 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 55Eight 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. ‣

60 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
65 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* ‣ 70How 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

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75 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
80 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 85You 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* 90A buck-basket!

FALSTAFF 91 By the Lord, 92 a buck-basket! Rammed me
in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings,
greasy napkins, that, Master 93 Brook, 94 there
was the rankest compound of villainous smell that
95 ever offended nostril.

FORD, *as Brook* 96 And how long lay you there?

FALSTAFF 97 Nay, you shall hear, Master 98 Brook, 99 what I
have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your
good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple
100 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
105 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 106 Brook. 107
110 I suffered the pangs of three several deaths: first,

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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
115 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
120 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 121 Brook. 122

FORD, *as Brook* 125 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
130 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 135 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
140 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
145 and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself
what I am. I will now take the lecher. He is at my

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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
150 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.

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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.

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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 30You 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 35No. 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 40Articles 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 45*Accusativo, hinc*.

SIR HUGH I pray you, have your remembrance, child.

Accusativo, ʀ hung, ʀ hang, hog.

MISTRESS QUICKLY “Hang-hog” is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

SIR HUGH 50Leave 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 55'Oman, forbear.

MISTRESS PAGE, ʀ *to Mistress Quickly* ʀ Peace!

SIR HUGH What is your genitive case plural, William?

WILLIAM Genitive case?

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SIR HUGH Ay.

WILLIAM 60Genitive: *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 65 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 70 genders? Thou art as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.

MISTRESS PAGE, *ʃ to Mistress Quickly ʄ* Prithee, hold thy peace.

SIR HUGH Show me now, William, some declensions of 75 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 80He 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, 85 boy. *ʃ (To Mistress Quickly.) ʄ* Come. We stay too long.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter ʃ Sir John ʄ Falstaff ʃ and ʄ 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

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only, Mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, 5 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, *ʃ within ʄ* What ho, gossip Ford! What

ho!

MISTRESS FORD 10Step 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 15No, certainly. ▮ *Aside to her.* ▮ Speak louder.

MISTRESS PAGE Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MISTRESS FORD Why?

MISTRESS PAGE 20Why, 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
25 "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 30Of 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
35 his suspicion. But I am glad the knight is not here. Now he shall see his own foolery.

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MISTRESS FORD How near is he, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE Hard by, at street end. He will be here anon.

MISTRESS FORD 40I 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 45Which 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 50Alas, 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 55 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 60He 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 65I'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 70 woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise he

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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 75 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 80 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 85 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 90 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 95 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 100 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,
105 Wives may be merry and yet honest too.

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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
110 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
115 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
120 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 125Why, 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
130 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 135Well 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 140I 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 145Master 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 150If 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 155Master 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 160Help 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
165 more. Once more search with me.
Robert and John refill the basket and carry it off.

MISTRESS FORD, *calling offstage* ¹ 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 ¹⁷⁰Why, 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 ¹⁷⁵ 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. ¹

MISTRESS FORD Nay, good sweet husband!—Good gentlemen, ¹⁸⁰ let him ¹ not ¹ strike the old woman.

Enter Mistress Page and Sir John Falstaff disguised as an old woman. ¹

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

FORD I’ll pratt her. *(He beats Falstaff.)* ¹ Out of my door, you witch, you rag, you baggage, you polecat, ¹⁸⁵ you runnion! Out, out! I’ll conjure you, I’ll fortune-tell you! *Falstaff exits.* ¹

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 ¹⁹⁰ 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 ¹ her ¹ muffler.

FORD ¹⁹⁵ 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.

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PAGE Let's obey his humor a little further. Come,
200 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
205 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,
210 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 215 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 220 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.

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

BARDOLPH Ay, sir. I'll call 'em to you.

HOST They shall have my horses, but I'll make them
pay. I'll sauce them. They have had my house a
10 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 woman 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,

10 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

15 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
20 park at midnight? Fie, fie, he'll never come.

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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;
25 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,
30 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 the milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a
35 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

40 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,

45 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

50 That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:
Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,

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And three or four more of their growth we'll dress
Like urchins, auffs, and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads
55 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.

60 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 65 And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed 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,
70 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
75 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. *ƒ (Aside.) ƒ* And in that time
80 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 \lrcorner Brook. \lrcorner
He'll tell me all his purpose. Sure he'll come.

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MISTRESS PAGE

85 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.

\lrcorner *Page, Ford, and Sir Hugh exit.* \lrcorner

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

\lrcorner *Mistress Ford exits.* \lrcorner

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.

95 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.

\lrcorner *She exits.* \lrcorner

Scene 5

Enter Host \lrcorner and \lrcorner 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
5 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

10 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.
15 I'll call.—Bully knight! Bully Sir John! Speak from

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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 carries the coming
20 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 25 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,
30 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 35 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
40 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 45Why, 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?

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FALSTAFF 50To 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
55 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
60 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,
65 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
70 Doctor Faustus.
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 75Have 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
80 you. You are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks,
and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened.
Fare you well. *He exits.*

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Enter Doctor Caius.

DOCTOR CAIUS Vere is mine Host de Jarteer?

HOST Here, Master Doctor, in perplexity and doubtful
85 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* 90Hue 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
95 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
100 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 105 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
110 bear.

MISTRESS QUICKLY And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant, speciously one of them. Mistress Ford,

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good heart, is beaten black and blue that you cannot see a white spot about her.

FALSTAFF 115 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
120 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
125 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
5 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,
10 Who mutually hath answered my affection,
So far forth as herself might be her chooser,

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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
15 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:*
20 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
25 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,
30 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:
35 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—
40 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
45 The maid hath given consent to go with him.

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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,
50 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;
55 Besides, I'll make a present recompense.
They exit.

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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.

5 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.

10 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 15 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 20 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,

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Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam, because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in 25 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, 30 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

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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 15 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 20 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 25The 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 bid you. Come, come; trib, trib. *They exit.*

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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, 5 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 10 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, 15 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 20 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, 25 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 30 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 35 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* ⌋

40 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* ⌋

45 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.

50 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,
55 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.

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MISTRESS QUICKLY, *as Fairy Queen* 60 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,

65 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!

70 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

75 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,

80 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.

85 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.

90 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.

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PISTOL, *as Hobgoblin* 7

A trial, come!

SIR HUGH, *as a fairy* 7 Come, will this wood take fire?

7 *Sir Hugh puts a taper to Falstaff's finger, and he starts.* 7

FALSTAFF 95O, O, O!

MISTRESS QUICKLY, *as Fairy Queen* 7

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!

About him, fairies. Sing a scornful rhyme,

And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

7 *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.* 7

7 FAIRIES *sing* 7

Fie on sinful fantasy!

100 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.

105 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.

7 *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.* 7 *Enter Page, Mistress Page, Mistress Ford and Ford.*

PAGE, *to Falstaff* 7

Nay, do not fly. I think we have watched you now.

110 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?

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▮ *She points to the horns.* ▮

See you these, husband? Do not these fair yokes
Become the forest better than the town?

FORD, ▮ *to Falstaff* ▮ 115 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
120 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
125 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
130 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
135 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
140 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

145 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.

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SIR HUGH Seese is not good to give putter. Your belly is
all putter.

FALSTAFF 150“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
155 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 160A 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 165And 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
170 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 ^r Brook, ^r that you have cozened of money,
175 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
180 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.

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Enter Slender.

SLENDER 185 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 190 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 swunged him, or he should have swunged me. If I did not think it 195 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, 200 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 205 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 210 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
215 gar, a boy. It is not Anne Page. By gar, I am
cozened.

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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 220 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
225 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.

230 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,

235 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.

240 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.
245 What cannot be eschewed must be embraced.

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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
250 And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire—
Sir John and all.

FORD Let it be so, Sir John.

To Master \lceil Brook \lrcorner you yet shall hold your word,
For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

They exit.