The Merry Wives of Windsor

20 + Characters

Sir John Falstaff - a very fat rogue.

Master Fenton - a young, good-looking gentleman.

Justice Robert Shallow - an old and respectable man.

Master Frank Ford - a middle-aged, middle-class gentleman.

Master George Page - a wealthy gentleman.

William Page - the young son of Master George Page and Mistress Margaret.

Sir Hugh Evans - a Welsh parson.

Doctor Caius - a French physician.

Host of the Garter Inn - an innkeeper.

Bardolph - one of Falstaff's followers.

Pistol - one of Falstaff's followers.

Nym - one of Falstaff's followers.

Robin - Falstaff's page.

Peter Simple - Slender's servant.

John Rugby - Dr. Caius's servant.

Mistress Alice Ford - a middle-aged lady of Windsor.

Mistress Margaret Page - a middle-aged lady of...

Anne Page - the daughter of Master George Page and Mistress Margaret.

Mistress Quickly - Dr. Caius's housekeeper.

Master Abraham Slender - Justice Shallow's nephew.

Servants and children
ACT 1

SCENE I. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter MASTER OF CEREMONIES, FALSTAFF, HOST, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL, and ROBIN*

**FALSTAFF**
Mine host of the Garter!

**Host**
What says my bully-rook? speak scholarly and wisely.

**FALSTAFF**
Truly, mine host, I must turn away some followers.

**Host**
Discard, let them wag; trot, trot.

*Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and EVANS*

**FALSTAFF**
Now, Master Shallow; you’ll complain of me to the king?

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

**FALSTAFF**
But not kissed your keeper’s daughter!

**SHALLOW**
Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

**FALSTAFF**
I will answer it straight: I have done all this: this is now answered.

**EVANS**
Peace, I pray you!
FALSTAFF  
Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.  
I must cony-catch; I must shift.  
PISTOL  
Young ravens must have food.  
FALSTAFF  
Which of you know Ford of this town?  
NYM  
He is of substance good.  
FALSTAFF  
My honest ladies, I will tell you what I am about.  
PISTOL  
Two yards, and more.  
FALSTAFF  
No quips now, Pistol! Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift.  
Briefly, I do mean to woo Ford's wife! Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her husband's purse: he hath a legion of angels.  
MYM  
As many devils entertain!  
BARDOLPH  
'To her, boy,' say I.  
FALSTAFF  
I have writ me here a letter to her: and here another to Page's wife, she bears the purse too; Ah, I will trade to them both.  
Go bear thou this letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to Mistress Ford: we will thrive, we will thrive.  
MASTER OF CEREMONIES  
The dinner attends you. Come gentles, come!

SCENE II. A room in DOCTOR CAIUS' house.
Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY

MISTRESS QUICKLY
What, Rugby! Go to the casement and see if you see my master, Doctor Caius, coming.

RUGBY
I'll go watch.

MISTRESS QUICKLY
Go; and we'll have a posset.

Exit RUGBY

Peter Simple, you say your name is?

SIMPLE
Ay.

MISTRESS QUICKLY
And Master Slender's your master?

SIMPLE
Ay, forsooth.

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

Re-enter RUGBY

RUGBY
Out, alas! here comes my master.

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

Shuts SIMPLE in the closet.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS
Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert,
a green-a box.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Ay, forsooth; I'll fetch it you.

*Aside*

I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

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

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Is it this, sir?

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

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
What, Rugby! Rugby!

**RUGBY**
Here.sir!

**DOCTOR CAIUS**
By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me! Qu'ai-j'oublie! dere is some simples in my closet, dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Ay me, he'll find the young man here, and be mad!

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

*Pulling SIMPLE out*

Rugby, my rapier!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Good master, be content.
The young man is an honest man.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**
Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
He came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

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

*Writes*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
[Aside to SIMPLE] Have no words of it,--my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page. I know her mind,--that's neither here nor there.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**
You jack'nape, give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; it is a shenenge: I will cut his troat in dee park; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; By gar, I will cut all his two stones.

*Exit SIMPLE*

**DOCTOR CAIUS**
It is no matter: By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well!

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

*Exeunt DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
I know Anne's mind for that: never a woman
can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

**FENTON**
[Within] Who's within there? ho!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Who's there? Come near, I pray you.

*Enter FENTON*

**FENTON**
How now, good woman?
What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle.

**FENTON**
Shall I do any good, thinkest thou?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, Master Fenton, she loves you. --well, go to.

**FENTON**
Well, I shall see her to-day.
Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Farewell to your worship.

*Exit FENTON*

Truly, an honest gentleman: but Anne loves him not; for I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon't! what have I forgot?

*Exit*

**ACT II**
SCENE I. Before PAGE'S house.

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter

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

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though
Love use Reason for his physician, he admits him
not for his counsellor. Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page,—at
the least, if the love of soldier can suffice,—
that I love thee. I will not say, pity me; 'tis
not a soldier-like phrase: but I say, love me. By me,
Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might
For thee to fight, JOHN FALSTAFF'
O wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with
age to show himself a young gallant! What an
unweighed behavior hath this Flemish drunkard
picked--with the devil's name!--out of my
conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me?
How shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be,
as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Enter MISTRESS FORD

MISTRESS FORD
Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

MISTRESS PAGE
And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.
MISTRESS FORD
O Mistress Page, give me some counsel!
MISTRESS PAGE
What's the matter, woman?
What is it?
MISTRESS FORD
We burn daylight: here, read, read;
I shall think the worse of fat
men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of
men's liking. Did you ever hear the like?
MISTRESS PAGE
Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and
Ford differs!
Here's the twin-brother of thy letter.
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…
Let's be revenged on him!
MISTRESS FORD
Nay, I will consent to act any villany against him,
that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O,
that my husband saw this letter! it would give
eternal food to his jealousy.
MISTRESS PAGE
Why, look where he comes; and my good man too: he's
as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause;
and that I hope is an unmeasurable distance.
Let's consult together against this greasy knight.
Come hither.
They retire
Enter FORD with PISTOL, and PAGE with NYM

PAGE
How now, Meg!
MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward

MISTRESS PAGE
Whither go you, George? Hark you.
MISTRESS FORD
How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?
Will you go, Mistress Page?
MISTRESS PAGE
Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George.
Aside to MISTRESS FORD

Look who comes yonder: she shall be our messenger
to this paltry knight.
MISTRESS FORD
[Aside to MISTRESS PAGE] Trust me, I thought on her:
she'll fit it.
Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

MISTRESS PAGE
You are come to see my daughter Anne?
MISTRESS QUICKLY
Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne?
MISTRESS PAGE
Go in with us and see: we have an hour's talk with
you.
Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and MISTRESS QUICKLY
Host
How now, bully-rook! thou'rt a gentleman.

Enter SHALLOW

SHALLOW
I follow, mine host, I follow. Master Page, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.
there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.

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

Drawing him aside

Host
What sayest thou, my bully-rook?

SHALLOW
[To PAGE] Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons.

They converse apart

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

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

Host
My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress; --said I well?--and thy name shall be Brook. Will you go?

SHALLOW
Have with you, mine host.

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

**Host**
Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

*Exeunt Host, SHALLOW, and PAGE*

**FORD**
Though Page be a secure fool, an stands so firmly
on his wife's frailty.
Well, I will look further into't: and I have a disguise
to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not
my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed.
*Exit*

**SCENE II. A room in the Garter Inn.**

*Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL*

**FALSTAFF**
I will not lend thee a penny.

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

**FALSTAFF**
Let her approach.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Give your worship good morrow.

**FALSTAFF**
Good morrow, good wife.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Not so, an't please your worship.
There is one Mistress Ford, sir:--I pray, come a little nearer this ways:-

**FALSTAFF**
Well, Mistress Ford; what of her?

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

**FALSTAFF**
Mistress Ford; come, Mistress Ford,--

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful.

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

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Marry, she hath received your letter, and she gives you to notify that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

**FALSTAFF**
Ten and eleven?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Ay, forsooth.

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

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to
your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you too: surely I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

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

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**
That were a jest indeed! they have not so little grace, I hope: that were a trick indeed!

**FALSTAFF**
Fare thee well: commend me to them both: there's my purse; I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman.

*Exeunt MISTRESS QUICKLY and ROBIN*

This news distracts me!

*Enter BARDOLPH*

**BARDOLPH**
Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain be acquainted with you.

**FALSTAFF**
Brook is his name?

**BARDOLPH**
Ay, sir.

**FALSTAFF**
Call him in.

*Exit BARDOLPH*

Ah, ha! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page have I encompassed you? go to; via!

*Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised*
FORD
Bless you, sir!
FALSTAFF
And you, sir! Would you speak with me?
FORD
Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.
FALSTAFF
Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.
Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.
FORD
There is a gentlewoman in this town; her husband's name is Ford.
FALSTAFF
Well, sir.
FORD
I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance.
FALSTAFF
To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?
FORD
When I have told you that, I have told you all, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.
FALSTAFF
O, sir!

FORD
Believe it, for you know it. There is money;
spend all I have; only in exchange lay an amiable siege to the honesty of Ford's wife: use your art of wooing; win her to consent to you: if any man may, you may as soon as any. What say you to't, Sir John?

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

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

**FALSTAFF**
Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

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

**FALSTAFF**
Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not.

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

**FALSTAFF**
Hang him, Master Brook, thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night.

_Exit_

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**FORD**
What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is
ready to crack with impatience.
See the hell of having a false woman!
God be praised for my jealousy!
Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

Exit

SCENE III. A field near Windsor.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY
DOCTOR CAIUS
Rugby!
RUGBY
Sir?
DOCTOR CAIUS
Vat is de clock?
RUGBY
'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.
He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill
him, if he came.

Enter Host, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE

Host
Bless thee, bully doctor!
SHALLOW
Save you, Master Doctor Caius!
PAGE
Now, good master doctor!
SLENDER
Give you good morrow, sir.

DOCTOR CAIUS
Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?
Host
To see thee fight. Is he dead?

DOCTOR CAIUS
By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show his face.
I pray you, bear witnessthat me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

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

PAGE
'Tis true, Master Shallow.
(aside)
Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

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

Host
Let him die: I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her.

DOCTOR CAIUS
By gar, me dank you for dat: by gar, I love you;

Host
Let us wag, then.

DOCTOR CAIUS
Come at my heels, Rugby.

Exeunt

ACT III
SCENE I. A field near Frogmore.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE

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

SIMPLE
Marry, sir, every way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

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

SIMPLE
I will, sir.

Exit

SIR HUGH EVANS
'Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and trempling of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am!

Re-enter SIMPLE

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

SIR HUGH EVANS
Heaven prosper the right!

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER

SHALLOW
How now, master Parson! Good morrow, good Sir Hugh.

SLENDER
[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

SHALLOW
Here comes Doctor Caius.

Enter Host, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY

PAGE
Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

SHALLOW
So do you, good master doctor.

Host
Peace, I say, soul-curer and body-curer!

DOCTOR CAIUS
Ay, dat is very good; excellent.

Host
Peace, I say! hear mine host of the Garter.
Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions and the motions.
Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs.
Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. Give me thy hand, celestial!
Come. Follow me, lads of peace;
follow, follow, follow.

SHALLOW
Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

SLENDER
[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

SCENE II. A street.
Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN

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

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

MISTRESS PAGE
O, you are a flattering boy: now I see you'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD

FORD
Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

MISTRESS PAGE
Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

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

MISTRESS PAGE
Be sure of that,—two other husbands.

FORD
Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

MISTRESS PAGE
What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

ROBIN
Sir John Falstaff.

FORD
Sir John Falstaff!

MISTRESS PAGE
He, he; I can never hit on's name. Is your wife at
home indeed?

**FORD**
Indeed she is.

**MISTRESS PAGE**
By your leave, sir: I am sick till I see her.
*Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

*Clock heard.*

**SCENE III. A room in FORD'S house.**

*Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE*
*Enter Servants with a Z garment rack*

**MISTRESS PAGE**
Come, come, come.

**MISTRESS FORD**
Here, set it down.

**MISTRESS PAGE**
Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

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

**MISTRESS PAGE**
I'll go hide me.

**MISTRESS FORD**
Mistress Page, remember you your cue.
MISTRESS PAGE
I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.
Exit

Enter FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS FORD
O sweet Sir John!

FALSTAFF
Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, Mistress Ford. 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. What made me love thee? let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee. But I love thee; none but thee; and thou deservest it.

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

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

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

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

**FALSTAFF**
She shall not see me: I will ensconce me behind the arras.

**MISTRESS FORD**
Pray you, do so: she's a very tattling woman.

*FALSTAFF hides himself*

*Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

What's the matter? how now!

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

**MISTRESS FORD**
What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

**MISTRESS PAGE**
Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now: you are undone.

**MISTRESS FORD**
What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend.

**MISTRESS PAGE**
For shame! Bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here.

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

**FALSTAFF**
[Coming forward] Let me see't, let me see't, O, let
me see't! I'll in, I'll in. Follow your friend's counsel. I'll in.

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

**FALSTAFF**
I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never--
*Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen*

**MISTRESS FORD**
*Re-enter Servants*

Go take up these clothes here quickly. Carry them to the laundress; quickly, come.

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

**FORD**
How now! whither bear you this?

**Servant**
To the laundress, forsooth.

**FORD**
*Exeunt Servants with the basket*

Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers; search, seek, find out: I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. follow me, gentlemen.

*Exit*

**SIR HUGH EVANS**
This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**
By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France.
PAGE
Nay, follow him, gentlemen.
Exeunt PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS

MISTRESS PAGE
Is there not a double excellency in this?
MISTRESS FORD
I know not which pleases me better, that my husband
is deceived, or Sir John.
MISTRESS PAGE
Hang him, dishonest rascal!
MISTRESS FORD
I think my husband hath some special suspicion of
Falstaff’s being here; for I never saw him so gross
in his jealousy till now.
MISTRESS PAGE
I will lay a plot to try that; and we will yet have
more tricks with Falstaff!
Re-enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH
EVANS

SIR HUGH EVANS
If there be any pody in the house, and in the
chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses,
heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!
DOCTOR CAIUS
By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.
PAGE
Fie, fie, Master Ford! are you not ashamed? What
spirit, what devil suggests this imagination?

FORD
'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.
Well, I promised you a dinner. Come, come, I pray you,
pardon me; Come, wife; come, Mistress Page. I pray you, pardon me; pray heartily, pardon me.

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

FORD
Any thing.

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

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

FORD
Pray you, go, Master Page.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. A room in PAGE'S house.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE and WILLA FORD

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

ANNE PAGE
Alas, how then?

FENTON
He doth object I am too great of birth--, And tells me 'tis a thing impossible I should love thee but as a property.

ANNE PAGE
May be he tells you true.

FENTON
No, 'tis the very riches of thyself That now I aim at.
WILLA
Tis sweet, la!
ANNE PAGE
Gentle Master Fenton, Yet seek my father's love; why, then,--hark you hither!
They converse apart

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY

SHALLOW
Break their talk, Mistress Quickly: my kinsman shall speak for himself. Be not dismayed.

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

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

ANNE PAGE
I come to him.

Aside to Willa
This is my father's choice.

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

SHALLOW
She's coming; to her, coz.

SLENDER
Mistress Anne...

SHALLOW
Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

ANNE PAGE
Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

SHALLOW
Marry, I thank you for it; She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.
ANNE PAGE
Now, Master Slender,--

SLENDER
Now, good Mistress Anne,--

ANNE PAGE
What is your will?

SLENDER
My will! 'od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven.

ANNE PAGE
I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

SLENDER
Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions: you may ask your father; here he comes.

Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE

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

FENTON
Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

MISTRESS PAGE
Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

PAGE
She is no match for you.

FENTON
Sir, will you hear me?

PAGE
No, good Master Fenton.
Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender, in.

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER
MISTRESS QUICKLY
Speak to Mistress Page.

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

ANNE PAGE
Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY
That's my master, master doctor.

ANNE PAGE
Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth
And bowl'd to death with turnips!

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

FENTON
Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.
Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ANNE PAGE

MISTRESS QUICKLY
This is my doing.

FENTON
I thank thee; and I pray thee,
Give my sweet Nan this ring: there's for thy pains.

MISTRESS QUICKLY
Now heaven send thee good fortune!
Exit FENTON
A kind heart he hath: a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. Well, I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: what a beast am I to slack it!

*Exit*

**SCENE V. A room in the Garter Inn.**

*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**
Bardolph, I say,--

**BARDOLPH**
Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**
Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? You may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,—a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled!

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

**FALSTAFF**
Let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; Call her in.

**BARDOLPH**
Come in, woman!

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

*Exit BARDOLPH*
MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY
Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: Her husband goes this morning; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY
I will tell her.

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY
Peace be with you, sir.

Exit

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

Enter FORD

FORD
Bless you, sir!

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

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

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

FORD
And sped you, sir?

FALSTAFF
Very ill-favoredly, Master Brook.

FORD
How so, sir? Did she change her determination?

FALSTAFF
No, Master Brook; her husband, dwelling in a continual larum of jealousy, comes at me as we spoke the prologue of our comedy; and his companions, instigated by his distemper, to search his house for his wife's love.

FORD
What, while you were there?

FALSTAFF
While I was there.

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

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

FORD
A buck-basket!

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

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

FALSTAFF
Master Brook,. Her husband is this morning gone: I have received from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

FORD
'Tis past eight already, sir.

FALSTAFF
Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed. Adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook!

Exit

FORD
Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Master Ford awake! awake, Master Ford! if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me: I'll be horn-mad.

Exit

ACT IV

SCENE I. A room in FORD'S house.
Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD

FALSTAFF
Mistress Ford, are you sure of your husband now?

MISTRESS FORD
Ay, sweet Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS FORD
Step into the chamber, Sir John.

Exit FALSTAFF

Enter MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD
Why, none but mine own people.

MISTRESS PAGE
Indeed!

MISTRESS FORD
No, certainly.

Aside to her

Speak louder.

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

MISTRESS FORD
Why?

MISTRESS PAGE
Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again: any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility and patience, to this his
distemper he is in now: I am glad the fat knight is not here.

MISTRESS FORD
Why, does he talk of him?

MISTRESS PAGE
Of none but him; but I am glad
the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

MISTRESS FORD
I am undone! The knight is here.

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

FORD
Which way should he go? how should I bestow him?
Shall I put him into the basket again?

Re-enter FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS PAGE
If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir
John. Unless you go out disguised—

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

MISTRESS PAGE
On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he
is: Run up, Sir John.
Quick, quick!
Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS FORD
I would my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford.
But is my husband coming?

MISTRESS PAGE
Ah, in good sadness, is he; he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.
Hang him, dishonest varlet!
We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,
Wives may be merry, and yet honest too!

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

SIR HUGH EVANS
Why, this is mad as a mad dog!

SHALLOW
Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

FORD
So say I too, sir.

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD

Come hither, Mistress Ford; Mistress Ford the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

MISTRESS FORD
Heaven be my witness you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

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

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

**FORD**
Old woman! what old woman's that?

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

**FORD**
Have I not forbid her my house? Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!

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

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

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

**FORD**
I'll prat her.

*Beating him*

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

*Exit FALSTAFF*

**FORD**
Will you follow, gentlemen?

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

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

MISTRESS FORD
What think you? Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?
MISTRESS PAGE
Yes, by all means!
Exeunt

SCENE II. A room in FORD'S house.

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

SIR HUGH EVANS
'Tis one of the best discretions of a 'oman as ever I did look upon.
PAGE
And did he send you both these letters at an instant?
MISTRESS PAGE
Within a quarter of an hour.
FORD
Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt; I rather will suspect the sun with cold Than thee with wantonness:

PAGE
'Tis well, 'tis well; no more: But let our plot go forward: let our wives Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

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

**MISTRESS PAGE**
There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

**PAGE**
But what of this?

**MISTRESS FORD**
Marry, this is our device;
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.

**PAGE**
What shall be done with him? what is your plot?

**MISTRESS PAGE**
That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:
Nan Page my daughter and my little son and three or four more
we'll dress like fairies, green and white.

**MISTRESS FORD**
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,
And mock him home to Windsor.
SCENE III. A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FENTON and Host

Host
I will hear you, Master Fenton.

FENTON
From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;
Who mutually hath answer'd my affection,
I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host.
To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,
Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen;
And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar
To stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one,
And, in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host
Well, husband your device; I'll to the vicar:
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.
Exeunt
Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY
I'll provide you a chain; and I'll do what I can to
get you a pair of horns.

FALSTAFF
Away, I say; time wears: hold up your head, and mince.
Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY

Enter FORD

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

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

FALSTAFF
I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor
old man: but I came from her, Master Brook, like a
poor old woman.
To-night I will be revenged, and I
will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow.
Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.
Exit

SCENE II. Another part of the Park.
Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne

FALSTAFF
The Windsor bell hath struck twelve;  
O powerful love!  
Who comes here? My doe?  
Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS FORD
Sir John! art thou there, my deer? my male deer?  
FALSTAFF  
My doe!  
MISTRESS FORD  
Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.  
FALSTAFF  
Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch: I will  
keep my sides to myself, and my horns I bequeath your husbands.  
As I am a true spirit, welcome!  
Noise within

MISTRESS PAGE  
Alas, what noise?  
MISTRESS FORD  
Heaven forgive our sins  
FALSTAFF  
What should this be?  
MISTRESS FORD MISTRESS PAGE  
Away, away!  
They run off

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised as before; PISTOL, as  
Hobgoblin; MISTRESS QUICKLY, ANNE PAGE, and others, as  
Fairies, with tapers
MISTRESS QUICKLY
Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers and shades of night.
FALSTAFF
They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.
_Lies down upon his face_

SIR HUGH EVANS
Go you, and where you find those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.
SHALLOW
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.
_They burn him with their tapers_

FALSTAFF
Oh, Oh, Oh!
MISTRESS QUICKLY and FAIRIES
SONG.
_During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. FENTON comes and steals away ANN PAGE. A noise is heard within. All the Fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises_

_Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, and MISTRESS FORD_

PAGE
Nay, do not fly!
MISTRESS PAGE
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
MISTRESS FORD
Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet.
I will never take you for my love again; but I will always count you my deer.
FALSTAFF
I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.
FORD
Ay, and an ox too: both the proofs are extant.
PAGE
Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house;
My heart misgives me: here comes Master Fenton.
Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE
How now, Master Fenton!
ANNE PAGE
Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!
FENTON
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy that she hath committed.
FORD
Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:
In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.
PAGE
Well, Fenton, heaven give thee joy!

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

MISTRESS PAGE
Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days!
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

**FORD**
Let it be so. Sir John,
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word
For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

*Exeunt*