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In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace and
'Coram.'
SHALLOW

Ay, cousin Slender, and 'Custalourum.
SLENDER

Ay, and 'Rato-lorum' too; and a gentleman born,
master parson; who writes himself 'Armigero,' in any
bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, 'Armigero.'
SHALLOW

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

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

It is an old coat.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

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

I may quarter, coz.
SHALLOW

You may, by marrying.
SIR HUGH EVANS

It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.
SHALLOW

Not a whit.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SHALLOW

The council shall bear it; it is a riot.

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SHALLOW

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SLENDER

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SLENDER

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

SLENDER

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

SHALLOW

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

SIR HUGH EVANS

I will answer it straight; I have done all this.
That is now answered.
SHALLOW

The council shall know this.
FALSTAFF

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

Pauca verba, Sir John; goot worts.
FALSTAFF

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

Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you;
and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph,
Nym, and Pistol.
BARDOLPH

You Banbury cheese!
SLENDER

Ay, it is no matter.
PISTOL

How now, Mephostophilus!
SLENDER

Ay, it is no matter.
NYM

Slice, I say! pauca, pauca: slice! that's my humour.
SLENDER

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

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

We three, to hear it and end it between them.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la!
SHALLOW

Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

Re-enter ANNE PAGE

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne!
ANNE PAGE

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

I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exeunt SHALLOW and SIR HUGH EVANS
ANNE PAGE

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

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

The dinner attends you, sir.
SLENDER

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

Exit SIMPLE

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

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

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

He loves your wife; there's the short and the long.
My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch; 'tis
true: my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife.
Adieu. I love not the humour of bread and cheese,
and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

Exit
PAGE

'The humour of it,' quoth a! here's a fellow
frights English out of his wits.
FORD

I will seek out Falstaff.
PAGE

I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.
FORD

If I do find it: well.
PAGE

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

'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.
PAGE

How now, Meg!

MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward
MISTRESS PAGE

Whither go you, George? Hark you.
MISTRESS FORD

How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?
FORD

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

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

Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George.

Aside to MISTRESS FORD

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

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

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

Enter Host

How now, mine host!
Host

How now, bully-rook! thou'rt a gentleman. Cavaleiro-justice, I say!

Enter SHALLOW
SHALLOW

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

Tell him, cavaleiro-justice; tell him, bully-rook.
SHALLOW

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

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

Drawing him aside
Host

What sayest thou, my bully-rook?
SHALLOW

[To PAGE]

Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons;

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

FALSTAFF

Very well, sir; proceed.

FORD

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

FALSTAFF

Well, sir.

FORD

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

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

FALSTAFF

Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

FORD

Never.

FALSTAFF

Have you importuned her to such a purpose?

FORD

Never.

FALSTAFF

Ay, ay; I must bear it.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

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

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

'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.
SIR HUGH EVANS

You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as
honest a 'omans as I will desires among five
thousand, and five hundred too.
DOCTOR CAIUS

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

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

Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock
him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house
to breakfast: after, we'll a-birding together; I
have a fine hawk for the bush. 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.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

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

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

Exeunt

Scene 4

A room in PAGE'S house.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE
FENTON

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

Alas, how then?
FENTON

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

May be he tells you true.
FENTON

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

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

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.
MISTRESS PAGE

Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.
PAGE

She is no match for you.
FENTON

Sir, will you hear me?
PAGE

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

Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Speak to Mistress Page.
FENTON

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce, against all cheques, rebukes and manners,
I must advance the colours of my love
And not retire: 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

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

FENTON

Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.

Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ANNE PAGE
MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night
Give my sweet Nan this ring: there's for thy pains.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now heaven send thee good fortune!

Exit FENTON

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

Exit

Scene 5

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH
FALSTAFF

Bardolph, I say,--
BARDOLPH

Here, sir.
FALSTAFF

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

Exit BARDOLPH

Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a

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

Re-enter BARDOLPH with sack
BARDOLPH

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

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

Come in, woman!

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY
MISTRESS QUICKLY

By your leave; I cry you mercy: give your worship good morrow.
FALSTAFF

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

With eggs, sir?
FALSTAFF

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

Exit BARDOLPH

How now!
MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

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

MISTRESS QUICKLY

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

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

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

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

I will tell her.
FALSTAFF

Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Eight and nine, sir.
FALSTAFF

Well, be gone: I will not miss her.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Peace be with you, sir.

Exit
FALSTAFF

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

Enter FORD
FORD

Bless you, sir!
FALSTAFF

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

And how long lay you there?
FALSTAFF

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

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

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

'Tis past eight already, sir.
FALSTAFF

Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall

How now, Sir Hugh! no school to-day?
SIR HUGH EVANS

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 EVANS

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 EVANS

William, how many numbers is in nouns?
WILLIAM PAGE

Two.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Truly, I thought there had been one number more,
because they say, "Od's nouns."
SIR HUGH EVANS

Peace your tattlings! What is 'fair,' William?
WILLIAM PAGE

Pulcher.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Polecats! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.
SIR HUGH EVANS

You are a very simplicity 'oman: I pray you peace.
What is 'lapis,' William?
WILLIAM PAGE

A stone.
SIR HUGH EVANS

And what is 'a stone,' William?
WILLIAM PAGE

A pebble.

SIR HUGH EVANS

No, it is 'lapis:' I pray you, remember in your prain.
WILLIAM PAGE

Lapis.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus
declined, Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Accusativo, hinc.
SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you, have your remembrance, child,
accusative, hung, hang, hog.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

O,--vocativo, O.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Remember, William; focative is caret.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

And that's a good root.
SIR HUGH EVANS

'Oman, forbear.
MISTRESS PAGE

Peace!
SIR HUGH EVANS

What is your genitive case plural, William?
WILLIAM PAGE

Genitive case!
SIR HUGH EVANS

Ay.
WILLIAM PAGE

Genitive,--horum, harum, horum.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her! never name
her, child, if she be a whore.
SIR HUGH EVANS

For shame, 'oman.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

You do ill to teach the child such words: he
teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do
fast enough of themselves, and to call 'horum:' fie upon you!
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Prithee, hold thy peace.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.
WILLIAM PAGE

Forsooth, I have forgot.
SIR HUGH EVANS

It is qui, quae, quod: if you forget your 'quies,'
your 'quaes,' and your 'quods,' you must be
preeches. Go your ways, and play; go.
MISTRESS PAGE

He is a better scholar than I thought he was.
SIR HUGH EVANS

He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.
MISTRESS PAGE

Adieu, good Sir Hugh.

Exit SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exeunt

Scene 2

A room in FORD'S house.

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD
FALSTAFF

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

MISTRESS FORD

He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Within]

What, ho, gossip Ford! what, ho!

MISTRESS FORD

Step into the chamber, Sir John.

Exit FALSTAFF

Enter MISTRESS PAGE

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

Why, none but mine own people.

MISTRESS PAGE

Indeed!

MISTRESS FORD

No, certainly.

Aside to her

Speak louder.

MISTRESS PAGE

Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

MISTRESS FORD

Why?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

Why, does he talk of him?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

How near is he, Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

I am undone! The knight is here.

MISTRESS PAGE

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

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

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

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

There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces. Creep into the kiln-hole.
FALSTAFF

Where is it?
MISTRESS FORD

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

I'll go out then.
MISTRESS PAGE

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

How might we disguise him?
MISTRESS PAGE

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

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

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

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

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

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exit FALSTAFF

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the
devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

MISTRESS FORD

But is my husband coming?

MISTRESS PAGE

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

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him
like the witch of Brentford.

MISTRESS FORD

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

Exit

MISTRESS PAGE

Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,

Wives may be merry, and yet honest too:

We do not act that often jest and laugh;

'Tis old, but true, Still swine eat all the draff.

Exit

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD with two Servants

MISTRESS FORD

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

Exit
First Servant

Come, come, take it up.
Second Servant

Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.
First Servant

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

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

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

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

Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!
SHALLOW

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

So say I too, sir.

Re-enter MISTRESS FORD

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

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

FORD

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

Pulling clothes out of the basket
PAGE

This passes!
MISTRESS FORD

Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.
FORD

I shall find you anon.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Empty the basket, I say!
MISTRESS FORD

Why, man, why?
FORD

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

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

Here's no man.
SHALLOW

By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this
wrongs you.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the
imagination of your own heart: this is jealousies.
FORD

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

No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

FORD

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

MISTRESS FORD

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

FORD

Old woman! what old woman's that?

MISTRESS FORD

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

FORD

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

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Are you not ashamed? I think you have killed the

poor woman.
MISTRESS FORD

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

Hang her, witch!
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

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

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

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

Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.
MISTRESS FORD

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

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

What think you? may we, with the warrant of
womanhood and the witness of a good conscience,
pursue him with any further revenge?
MISTRESS PAGE

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

Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?
MISTRESS PAGE

Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the

figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

MISTRESS FORD

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

MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exeunt

Scene 3

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter Host and BARDOLPH

BARDOLPH

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

Host

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

BARDOLPH

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

Host

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

Exeunt

Scene 4

A room in FORD'S house.

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS
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: now doth thy honour stand
In him that was of late an heretic,
As firm as faith.
PAGE

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

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

How? to send him word they'll meet him in the park
at midnight? Fie, fie! he'll never come.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

So think I too.
MISTRESS FORD

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

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,

Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree and takes the cattle
And makes milch-kine yield blood and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner:
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Received and did deliver to our age
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.
PAGE

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

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

Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come:
And in this shape when you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? what is your plot?
MISTRESS PAGE

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

The children must
Be practised well to this, or they'll ne'er do't.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

That will be excellent. I'll go and buy them vizards.
MISTRESS PAGE

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

That silk will I go buy.

Aside

And in that time
Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away
And marry her at Eton. Go send to Falstaff straight.
FORD

Nay I'll to him again in name of Brook
He'll tell me all his purpose: sure, he'll come.
MISTRESS PAGE

Fear not you that. Go get us properties
And tricking for our fairies.
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exeunt PAGE, FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS
MISTRESS PAGE

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

Exit MISTRESS FORD

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

Exit

Scene 5

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter Host and SIMPLE

Host

What wouldst thou have, boor? what: thick-skin?
speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

SIMPLE

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

Host

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

SIMPLE

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

Host

Ha! a fat woman! the knight may be robbed: I'll
call. Bully knight! bully Sir John! speak from
thy lungs military: art thou there? it is thine
host, thine Ephesian, calls.

FALSTAFF

[Above]

How now, mine host!

Host

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

Enter FALSTAFF

FALSTAFF

There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with

me; but she's gone.

SIMPLE

Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brentford?

FALSTAFF

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

SIMPLE

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

FALSTAFF

I spake with the old woman about it.

SIMPLE

And what says she, I pray, sir?

FALSTAFF

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

SIMPLE

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

FALSTAFF

What are they? let us know.

Host

Ay, come; quick.

SIMPLE

I may not conceal them, sir.

Host

Conceal them, or thou diest.

SIMPLE

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

FALSTAFF

'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

SIMPLE

What, sir?
FALSTAFF

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

May I be bold to say so, sir?
FALSTAFF

Ay, sir; like who more bold.
SIMPLE

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

Exit
Host

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

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

Enter BARDOLPH
BARDOLPH

Out, alas, sir! cozenage, mere cozenage!
Host

Where be my horses? speak well of them, varletto.
BARDOLPH

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

Where is mine host?
Host

What is the matter, sir?
SIR HUGH EVANS

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

Exit

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS
DOCTOR CAIUS

Vere is mine host de Jarteer?
Host

Here, master doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.
DOCTOR CAIUS

I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany: by my trot, dere is no duke dat the court is know to come. I tell you for good vill: adieu.

Exit
Host

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

Exeunt Host and BARDOLPH
FALSTAFF

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

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY

Now, whence come you?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

From the two parties, forsooth.
FALSTAFF

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

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

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

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

Come up into my chamber.

Exeunt

Scene 6

Another room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FENTON and Host
Host

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

Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,

And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar
To stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one,
And, in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.
Host

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

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

Exeunt

Act 5

Scene 1

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY
FALSTAFF

Prithee, no more prattling; go. I'll hold. This is
the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd
numbers. Away 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. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you: he beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam; because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along with me: I'll tell you all, Master Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant and whipped top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow me: I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

Exeunt

Scene 2

Windsor Park.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER
PAGE

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

SLENDER

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

SHALLOW

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

PAGE

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

Exeunt

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

Exeunt

Scene 4

Windsor Park.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised, with others as Fairies
SIR HUGH EVANS

Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts:
be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and
when I give the watch-'ords, do as I pid you:
come, come; trib, trib.

Exeunt

Scene 5

Another part of the Park.

Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne
FALSTAFF

The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute
draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me!
Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love
set on thy horns. O powerful love! that, in some
respects, makes a beast a man, in some other, a man
a beast. You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love
of Leda. O omnipotent Love! how near the god drew
to the complexion of a goose! A fault done first in
the form of a beast. O Jove, a beastly fault! And
then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think
on 't, Jove; a foul fault! When gods have hot
backs, what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a
Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the
forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can
blame me to piss my tallow? Who comes here? my
doe?

Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE
MISTRESS FORD

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

My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain
potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of Green
Sleeves, hail kissing-comfits and snow eringoes; let
there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.
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, my shoulders for the fellow
of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands.
Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter?
Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes
restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

Noise within
MISTRESS PAGE

Alas, what noise?
MISTRESS FORD

Heaven forgive our sins
FALSTAFF

What should this be?
MISTRESS FORD, MISTRESS PAGE

Away, away!

They run off
FALSTAFF

I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the
oil that's in me should set hell on fire; he would
never else cross me thus.

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,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.
PISTOL

Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,

There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.
FALSTAFF

They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.

Lies down upon his face
SIR HUGH EVANS

Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy;
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy:
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

About, about;
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out:
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room:
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flower:
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white;
Let sapphire, pearl and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee:
Fairies use flowers for their charactery.
Away; disperse: but till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.
FALSTAFF

Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he
transform me to a piece of cheese!
PISTOL

Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth.
MISTRESS QUICKLY

With trial-fire touch me his finger-end:
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend
And turn him to no pain; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.
PISTOL

A trial, come.
SIR HUGH EVANS

Come, will this wood take fire?

They burn him with their tapers
FALSTAFF

Oh, Oh, Oh!
MISTRESS QUICKLY

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!
About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.
SONG.
Fie on sinful fantasy!
Fie on lust and luxury!
Lust is but a bloody fire,
Kindled with unchaste desire,
Fed in heart, whose flames aspire
As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.
Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
Pinch him for his villany;
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a boy in green; SLENDER another way, and takes off a boy in white; and FENTON comes and steals away ANN PAGE. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the Fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises

Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, and MISTRESS FORD
PAGE

Nay, do not fly; I think we have watch'd you now
Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?
MISTRESS PAGE

I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
See you these, husband? do not these fair yokes

Become the forest better than the town?

FORD

Now, sir, who's a cuckold now? Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his horns, Master Brook: and, Master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for it, Master Brook.

MISTRESS FORD

Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again; but I will always count you my deer.

FALSTAFF

I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

FORD

Ay, and an ox too: both the proofs are extant.

FALSTAFF

And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies: and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment!

SIR HUGH EVANS

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

FORD

Well said, fairy Hugh.

SIR HUGH EVANS

And leave your jealousies too, I pray you.

FORD

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

FALSTAFF

Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? shall I have a coxcomb of frize? 'Tis time I were choked

with a piece of toasted cheese.

SIR HUGH EVANS

Seese is not good to give putter; your belly is all putter.

FALSTAFF

'Seese' and 'putter'! have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

MISTRESS PAGE

Why Sir John, do you think, though we would have the virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

FORD

What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

MISTRESS PAGE

A puffed man?

PAGE

Old, cold, withered and of intolerable entrails?

FORD

And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

PAGE

And as poor as Job?

FORD

And as wicked as his wife?

SIR HUGH EVANS

And given to fornications, and to taverns and sack and wine and metheglins, and to drinkings and swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

FALSTAFF

Well, I am your theme: you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel; ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me: use me as you will.

FORD

Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pander: over and above that you have suffered, I think to repay that money

will be a biting affliction.

PAGE

Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset
to-night at my house; where I will desire thee to
laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee: tell her
Master Slender hath married her daughter.

MISTRESS PAGE

[Aside]

Doctors doubt that: if Anne Page be my
daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

Enter SLENDER

SLENDER

Whoa ho! ho, father Page!

PAGE

Son, how now! how now, son! have you dispatched?

SLENDER

Dispatched! I'll make the best in Gloucestershire
know on't; would I were hanged, la, else.

PAGE

Of what, son?

SLENDER

I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page,
and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been
i' the church, I would have swung him, or he
should have swung me. If I did not think it had
been Anne Page, would I might never stir!--and 'tis
a postmaster's boy.

PAGE

Upon my life, then, you took the wrong.

SLENDER

What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took
a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for
all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had
him.

PAGE

Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how
you should know my daughter by her garments?

SLENDER

I went to her in white, and cried 'mum,' and she
cried 'budget,' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet
it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

MISTRESS PAGE

Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose;
turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is
now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS

DOCTOR CAIUS

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Why, did you take her in green?

DOCTOR CAIUS

Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy: by gar, I'll raise all Windsor.

Exit

FORD

This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

PAGE

My heart misgives me: here comes Master Fenton.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE

How now, Master Fenton!

ANNE PAGE

Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

PAGE

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

MISTRESS PAGE

Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

FENTON

You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.
You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy that she hath committed;
And this deceit loses the name of craft,

Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.
FORD

Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:
In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.
FALSTAFF

I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to
strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.
PAGE

Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced.
FALSTAFF

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

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

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

Exeunt

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