

**THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**

**Audition Side 1**

**ANNE, FENTON, SHALLOW, SLENDER, (QUICKLY)**

*Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE*

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

Anne: Alas, how then?

Fenton: Why, thou must be thyself.  
He doth object I am too great of birth;  
And that, my state being 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: 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: Gentle Master Fenton,  
Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir.  
If opportunity and humblest suit  
Cannot attain it, why then – hark you hither.

*[They converse apart]*

*Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

Shallow: Break their talk, Mistress Quickly; my kinsman shall speak for himself.

Quickly: Hark ye, Master Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne: I come to him. *[Aside]* This is my father's choice.  
O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults  
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

Quickly: And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you.

Shallow: She's coming; to her, coz.  
Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slender: Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in Lothian.

Shallow: He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slender: Ay, that I will come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a squire.

Shallow: He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne: Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shallow: Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort. She calls you, coz; I'll leave you.

Anne: Now, Master Slender –

Slender: Now, good Mistress Anne –

Anne: What is your will?

Slender: My will! 'Od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

Anne: I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

Slender: Truly, for mine own part I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions; if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go better than I can.

Anne: Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.  
Alas, I had rather be set quick i' th' earth,  
And bowl'd to death with turnips.

**FALSTAFF, PISTOL**

Falstaff: Well sir, I am almost out at heels. There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift.

Pistol: Young ravens must have food.

Falstaff: Know you Ford of this town?

Pistol: I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

Falstaff: My honest lad, I will tell you what I am about.

Pistol: Two yards, and more.

Falstaff: No quips now, Pistol. Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in her; she gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be English'd rightly, is 'I am Sir John Falstaff's'.

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

Falstaff: Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her husband's purse; he hath a legion of angels.

Pistol: As many devils entertain; and 'To her, boy' say I.

Falstaff: I have writ me here a letter to her; and here another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examin'd my parts with most judicious oeillades; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly.

Pistol: Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Falstaff: O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass! Here's another letter to her. She bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheaters to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me. Go, bear thou this letter to Mistress Page; and then this to Mistress Ford. We will thrive, lad, we will thrive.

Pistol: I will run no base humour. Here, take the letters; I will keep the haviour of reputation.

Falstaff: Hold, sirrah; bear you these letters tightly;  
Sail like my pinnance to these golden shores,  
Rogue, hence, avaunt! Vanish like hail stones, go;  
Trudge, plod away l'th'hoof; seek shelter, pack!

*Exeunt FALSTAFF and SIMPLE*

Pistol: Let vultures gripe thy guts!  
I have operations in my head which be humours of revenge.  
I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

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

*Exit*

**SIR HUGH EVANS, SIMPLE, SHALLOW, PAGE, CAIUS**

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! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have goot opportunities for the ork. Pless my soul!

*[sings]* To shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sings madrigals;

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

*[sings]* Melodious birds sing madrigals –

Yonder he is, coming this way.

*[takes out a book]*

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW*

Shallow: How now, Master Parson! Good morrow, good Sir Hugh.

Page: Save you, good Sir Hugh!

Evans: Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

Shallow: What, the sword and the word! Do you study them both, Master Parson?

Evans: There is reasons and causes for it.

Page: We are come to do you a good office, Master Parson.

Evans: Fery well; what is it?

Page: Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.

Shallow: I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Evans: What is he?

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

Evans: He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen, and he is a knave besides – a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal. I will smite his noddles.

Shallow: Keep them asunder; here comes Doctor Caius.

*Enter CAIUS and SIMPLE*

Page: Nay, good Master Parson, keep in your weapon.

Shallow: So do you, good Master Doctor.

Page: Disarm them, and let them question; let them keep their limbs whole and hack our English.

Caius: I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear. Verefore vill you not meet-a me?

Evans: *[aside to Caius]* Pray you use your patience; in good time.

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

Evans: *[aside to Caius]* Pray you, let us not be laughing stocks to other men's humours; I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or another make you amends.

*[Aloud]* I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogscorb for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius: Diable! Have I not stay for him to kill him? Have I not, at de place I did appoint?

Evans: As I am a Christians soul, now, look you, this is the place appointed.

Page: Peace, I say, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer. Shall I lose my doctor? No; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? No; he gives me the proverbs and the noverbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. Give me thy hand, celestial; so. We have deceiv'd you both; we have directed you to wrong places; your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow.

Shallow: Follow, gentlemen, follow.

Evans: This is well; I desire you that we may be friends. Pray you follow.

*Exeunt*

**MRS PAGE, MRS FORD**

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter*

Mrs Page: What! have I scap'd 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 precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I; go to, then, there's sympathy. You are merry, so am I; ha! ha! then there's more sympathy. You love sack, and so do I; would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page – at the least, if the love of soldier can suffice – that I love thee. I will not say, Pity me: 'tis not a soldier-like phrase; but I say, Love me. By me,  
Thine own true knight,  
By day or night,  
Or any kind of light,  
With all his might,  
For thee to fight,  
John Falstaff.'

O wicked, wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show himself a young gallant! What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard pick'd – with the devil's name! – out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth. Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men. How shall I be reveng'd on him? for reveng'd I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

*Enter MISTRESS FORD*

Mrs Ford: Mistress Page!

Mrs Page: I was coming to you. You look very ill.

Mrs Ford: Nay, I have to show to the contrary. O Mistress Page, give me some counsel.

Mrs Page: What's the matter, woman?

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

Mrs Page: Hang the trifle, woman; take the honour. What is it? Dispense with trifles; what is it?

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

Mrs Page: What? Thou liest. Sir Alice Ford!

Mrs Ford: We burn daylight. Here, read, read; perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking. How shall I be revenged on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like?

- Mrs Page: Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs. I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names – sure, more!
- Mrs Ford: Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the very words. What doth he think of us?
- Mrs Page: Nay, I know not; it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he know some strain in me that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.
- Mrs Ford: 'Boarding' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.
- Mrs Page: So will I; if he come under my hatches, I'll never go to sea again. Let's be reveng'd on him; let's appoint him a meeting, give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead him on with a fine-baited delay.
- Mrs Ford: Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O that my husband saw this letter! It would give eternal food to his jealousy.
- Mrs 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 us consult together against this greasy knight. Come hither.

**FORD, FALSTAFF**

Ford: Sir, 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, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith yourself know how easy is it 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 lov'd her, and bestowed much on her; briefly, I have pursu'd 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.

Falstaff: Have you receiv'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

Ford: Never.

Falstaff: Have you importun'd her to such a purpose?

Ford: Never.

Falstaff: To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

Ford: Some say that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic on your place and person, generally allow'd for your learned preparations.

Falstaff: O, sir!

Ford: Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it; spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife; use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Falstaff: Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

Ford: She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour that the folly of my soul dares not present itself. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves; I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too strongly embattle'd against me. What say you to 't, Sir John?

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

Ford: 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, her husband, will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

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

Falstaff: Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not; yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favour'd. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest home.

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

Falstaff: Hang him! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know him for a knave and cuckold, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

Ford: What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him; the hour is fix'd, the match is made. See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names! Cuckold! Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is a secure ass; he will trust his wife; I will rather trust Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese than my wife with herself. God be prais'd for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be reveng'd on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

*Exit*

**FENTON, QUICKLY**

Fenton: How now, good woman, how dost thou?

Quickly: The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fenton: What news? How does pretty Mistress Anne?

Quickly: In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way; I praise heaven for it.

Fenton: Shall I do any good, think'st thou? Shall I not lose my suit?

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

Fenton: Well, I shall see her today. Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf. If thou seest her before me, commend me. Farewell; I am in great haste now.

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?

**THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**

**Audition Side 7**

**CAIUS, SHALLOW, PAGE, SIMPLE**

Caius: Vat is de clock? 'Tis past the hour, that Sir Huge promis'd to meet. By gar, he has save his soul dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible well dat he is no come; by gar, he is dead already, if he come.

*Enter SHALLOW, PAGE and SIMPLE*

Shallow: Save you, Master Doctor Caius!

Page: Now, good Master Doctor!

Caius: Vat be all you, one, two three, come for?

Shallow: To see thee fight, to see thee foyn, to see thee traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy montant... Is he dead?

Caius: By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he is not show his face. I pray you, bear witness that me have stay 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.

Shallow: Master Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace; you have show'd yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, Master Doctor.

Simple: Pardon, Justice Shallow. A word.

*[aside]* Justice Shallow, and Master Page, go you through the town to Frogston. Sir Hugh is there. See what humour he is in; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields. Will it do well?

Shallow: *[aside]* We will do it.

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

Simple: *[Aside to Caius]* Sheathe thy impatience; go about the fields with me through Frogston; I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house, a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her.

Caius: By gar, me dank you vor dat; by gar, I love you.

Simple: For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page. Said I well?

Caius: By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Page, Shallow and Slender: Adeiu, Good Master Doctor.

*Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW and SLENDER*

Simple: Let us wag, then.

*Exeunt*

**FALSTAFF, MRS FORD, MRS PAGE**

Falstaff: Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?  
Why, now let me die, for I have liv'd long enough; this is the period of my ambition.  
O this blessed hour!

Mrs Ford: O sweet Sir John!

Falstaff: Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish;  
I would thy husband were dead; I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee  
my lady.

Mrs Ford: I your lady, Sir John? Alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

Falstaff: Let the court of France show me such another. I see how thine eye would emulate  
the diamond; thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes any tire  
of Venetian admittance.

Mrs Ford: A plain kerchief, Sir John; my brows become nothing else, nor that well neither.

Falstaff: Thou art a tyrant to say so; thou wouldst make an absolute courtier. I see what thou  
wert, if Fortune thy foe were, not Nature, thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs Ford: Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

Falstaff: What made me love thee? Let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary  
in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say thou art this and that; I cannot; but I love thee,  
none but thee; and thou deserv'st it.

Mrs 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.

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

Falstaff: Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

Simple [*within*]: Mistress Ford! Mistress Ford! here's Mistress Page at the door, sweating and  
blowing and looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

Falstaff: She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

*Falstaff hides himself.*

*Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and SIMPLE*

Mrs Ford: What's the matter? How now!

Mrs Page: O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're sham'd, y'are over-thrown, y'are  
undone forever.

Mrs Ford: What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

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

Mrs Ford: What cause of suspicion?

Mrs Page: What cause of suspicion? Out upon you, how am I mistook in you!

Mrs Ford: Why, alas, what's the matter?

Mrs Page: Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Em'burgh, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

Mrs Ford: 'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs Page: Pray heaven it be not so that you have such a man here; but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Em'burgh at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey him out. Be not amaz'd; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs Ford: What shall I do? There is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril.

Mrs Page: For shame! Your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceiv'd me! Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him. It is whiting-time – send him by your man to Stockbridge.

Mrs 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.

Mrs Page: What, Sir John Falstaff!

*[Aside to Falstaff]* Are these your letters, knight?

Falstaff: *[Aside to Mrs Page]* I love thee and none but thee; help me away. – Let me creep in here;

**FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, SLENDER, PAGE, EVANS, PISTOL**

- Falstaff: Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the queen?
- Shallow: You have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge. This shall be answer'd.
- Falstaff: I shall answer it straight: I have done all this. That is now answer'd. Slender, what matter have you against me?
- Slender: Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your cony-catching rascal, Pistol. He carried me to the tavern, and made me drunk, and afterward pick'd my pocket.
- Pistol: You Banbury cheese!
- Slender: Ay, it is no matter.
- Evans: Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand: that is, Master Page; and there is 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.
- Evans: Fery goot. I will make a prief of it in my note-book; and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.
- Falstaff: Pistol! Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?
- Slender: Ay, by these gloves, did he – of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-boards that cost me two shillings and two pence apiece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.
- Falstaff: Is this true, Pistol?
- Pistol: Froth and scum, thou liest.
- Slender: By this hat, then, 'twas he. Though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.
- Falstaff: What say you, Pistol?
- Pistol: Why, sir, for my part, I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.
- Evans: It is his five senses; fie, what the ignorance is!
- Pistol: And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashier'd; and so conclusions pass'd the careers.
- Slender: I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again. If I be drunk, I'll be drunk in honest, civil, godly company, and not with drunken knaves.
- Falstaff: You hear all these matters deni'd, gentlemen; you hear it.

**FALSTAFF, QUICKLY**

Quickly: Give your worship good morrow.

Falstaff: Good morrow. *[pause]* What with me?

Quickly: There is one Mistress Ford, sir – I pray, come a little nearer this ways. I myself dwell with Doctor Caius.

Falstaff: Well, on; Mistress Ford, you say –

Quickly: I pray your worship come a little nearer this ways.

Falstaff: I warrant thee nobody hears. *[pause]*. Well; Mistress Ford, what of her?

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 –

Quickly: Marry, this is the short and the long of it: you have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful. There has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all musk, and so rushling, in silk and gold; that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they would never get an eye-wink of her.

Falstaff: But what says she to me? Be brief, my good she-Mercury.

Quickly: Marry, she hath receiv'd your letter; and she gives you to notify that her husband will be absence between ten and eleven; and then you may come to the Steamie and see the picture, she says, that you wot of. Master Ford, her husband, will be engaged from town.

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

Quickly: Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you too; and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer; and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home, but she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man; surely I think you have charms, la! Yes, in truth.

Falstaff: Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms. But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me?

Quickly: They have not so little grace, I hope – that were a trick indeed! But Mistress Page would desire you to send her Robin Simple of all loves. Her husband has a marvellous infection to the lad; and truly Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Em'burgh leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, all is as she will; and truly she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Em'burgh, she is one. You must send her the lad; no remedy.

Falstaff: Why, I will. Fare thee well; commend me to them both. There's my purse; I am yet thy debtor.

**QUICKLY, SIMPLE, CAIUS**

Quickly: Robin Simple you say your name is?

Simple: Ay, for fault of a better.

Quickly: And Master Slender sent you?

Simple: Ay, forsooth.

Quickly: O, I should remember him. Does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

Simple: Yes, indeed, does he.

Quickly: Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for Master Slender. Anne is a good girl, and I wish –

Simple: Here comes the doctor.

Quickly: We shall all be silent. Run in here, good young man; go into this closet. [*shuts him in the closet*]. He will not stay long. [*singing*] And down, down, adown-a, etc.

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

Caius: Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys. Pray you, go and vetch me in my laundry un boitier vert – a box, a green-a box. Do you intend vat I speak? A green-a box.

Quickly: Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you.

Caius: Fe, fe, fe, fe! Ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais a la cour – la grande affaire.

Quickly: Is it this, sir?

Caius: Oui; mette le au mon pocket: depeche, quickly. I must take-a my rapier, and come to the court.

Quickly: 'Tis ready, sir, here.

Caius: By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me! Qu'ai j'oublie? Dere is some simples in my pockets dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

O, diable, diable! Vat is in my laundry? Villainy! Larron! [*pulling Simple out*] Quickly, my rapier!

Quickly: Good master, be content. The young man is an honest man.

Caius: What shall de honest man do in my laundry? Dere is no honest man sat shall come in my laundry.

Quickly: I beseech you; hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

Caius: Vell?

Simple: Ay, forsooth, to desire her to –

Quickly: Peace, I pray you.

Caius: Peace-a your tongue. Speak-a your tale.

Simple: To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good work to Mistress Anne Page, for Master Slender, in the way of marriage.

Quickly: This is all, indeed, la!

Caius: Sir Huge send-a you? Quickly, baillez me some paper. Tarry you a little-a-while.  
*[writes]*

Quickly: *[Aside to Simple]* I'll do you your Master Slender what good I can; and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master – I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, and do all myself –but notwithstanding – to tell you in your ear – my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page; but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind.

Caius: You jack-nape; give-a this letter to Sir Huge; by gar, it is a challenge; by gar, I will cut all his two stones; by gar he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog.

*Exit SIMPLE*

Quickly: Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius: It is no matter-a ver dat. Do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest; and I have appointed mine host of de Jarteer to measure our weapon. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

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

Caius: I come to the court. By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door.

*Exit CAIUS*

Quickly: You shall have – An fool's head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that; never a woman in Holyrood knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

**FORD, PAGE, MISTRESS FORD**

Ford: Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain! Now shall the devil be sham'd. What, wife, I say! 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 pinion'd.

*Re-enter MISTRESS FORD.*

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, do I?

Mrs 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]*

Mrs Ford: Are you not ashamed? Let the clothes alone.

Ford: I shall find you anon.

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

Ford: Empty the basket, I say.

Mrs Ford: Why, man, why?

Ford: Master Page, as I am a man, there was one convey'd out of this place yesterday in this basket. Here I am sure he is; my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs Ford: If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

Page: Here's no man. This is not well. Master Ford, this wrongs you.

Ford: Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page: No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

Ford: Help to search this steemie this one time. If I find not what I seek, let me for ever be your table sport; let them say of me 'As jealous as Ford, that search'd a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.' Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

Page: I'll obey this humour a little further. Come.