

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Adapted by Ernest Cabrera

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Mistress Page and Mistress Ford are up to paying back the mischievous Falstaff for his duplicity. "The Merry Wives of Windsor," one of Shakespeare's most popular plays, features the huge and conceited Sir John Falstaff at his funniest. Because the play is filled with a large variety of character types including two with outrageous accents, students will find this condensed version (which uses the Bard's own words), manageable, enjoyable and rewarding. Playing time: approx 2 hours.

This version was first performed at Essex High School,
Essex Junction, Vermont, on December 4, 1986.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(14 men, 4 women, extras)

Males

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF: Mischievous.

FENTON: A gentleman.

SHALLOW: A country justice.

ABRAHAM SLENDER: Cousin to Shallow.

FORD: Gentleman of Windsor.

PAGE: Gentleman of Windsor.

SIR HUGH EVANS: Welsh parson, speaks with an accent.

DOCTOR CAIUS: A French physician.

HOST: Of the Garter Inn.

PISTOL: Follower of Falstaff.

NYM: Follower of Falstaff.

ROBIN: Page to Falstaff.

PETER SIMPLE: Servant to Slender.

JACK RUGBY: Servant to Doctor Caius.

Females

MISTRESS FORD:

MISTRESS PAGE:

MISTRESS ANNE PAGE: Her daughter.

MISTRESS QUICKLY: Servant to Doctor Caius.

FAIRIES: Any number.

SERVANTS: Any number, minimum 2.

ACT I, Scene 1

(AT RISE: Windsor, Before Page's house. Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER and SIR HUGH.)

SIR HUGH: Ay, Justice Shallow, and there is also another device in my prain, which peradventure prings good discretions with it. There is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master Page.

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

SIR HUGH: It is that fery person for all the world, as just as you will desire, Master Slender; and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver, is her grandsire; upon his death's bed give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old. It were goot motion if we desire a marriage between Master Abraham and Mistress Page.

SLENDER: Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

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

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

SIR HUGH: Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

SHALLOW: Well, let us see honest Master Page.

SIR HUGH: I will peat the door for Master Page. What hoa!

Got pless your house here!

PAGE: *(Within.)* Who's there?

(MASTER PAGE enters.)

SIR HUGH: Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale, if matter grow to your likings.

PAGE: I am glad to see your worships well.

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SHALLOW: Master Page, I am glad to see you. How doth good Mistress Page?-and I thank you always with my heart, la! With my heart.

PAGE: Sir, I thank you.

SHALLOW: Sir, I thank you: by yea and no, I do.

PAGE: I am glad to see you, good Master Slender. (*ANNE PAGE enters with wine.*) Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

SLENDER: O heaven! This is Mistress Anne Page.

PAGE: Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner. Come, gentlemen.

(ANNE PAGE and PAGE exit.)

SLENDER: I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here

SHALLOW: Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz; marry, this, coz; there is, as 'twere a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here; do understand me?

SLENDER: Ay, sir, you find me reasonable: if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

SHALLOW: Nay, but understand me.

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

SLENDER: Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says.

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

SHALLOW: Ay, there's the point, sir.

SIR HUGH: Marry, is it, the fery point of it; to Mistress Anne Page.

SLENDER: Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.

SIR HUGH: But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth: therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

SHALLOW: Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

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

SIR HUGH: Nay, Got's lords and his ladies! You must speak possitable, if you can carry her, your desires towards her.

SHALLOW: That you must. Will you upon good dowry, marry her?

SLENDER: I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

SHALLOW: Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz: What I do, is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid?

SLENDER: I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there be no love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another: I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt: but if you say, 'marry her,' I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

SIR HUGH: It is a fery discretion answer; save, the fault is in the 'ort 'dissolutely': the 'ort is, according to our meaning, 'resolutely. His meaning is goot.

SHALLOW: Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

SLENDER: Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la.

SHALLOW: Here comes fair Mistress Anne. (*ANNE enters.*) Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne.

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

SHALLOW: I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.

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

(*SHALLOW and SIR HUGH exit.*)

ANNE: Will't please your worship to com in, sir?

SLENDER: I am not a-hungry, I thank you for-sooth.

ANNE: I may not go in without your worship: They will not sit till you come.

End of Freeview

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