

FORD: Bless you, sir!

FALSTAFF: And you, sir! Would you speak with me?

FORD: Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

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

FORD: Good Sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

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

FORD: Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me: if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

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

FORD: I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

FALSTAFF: Speak, good Master Brook: I shall be glad to be your servant.

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

FALSTAFF: Well, sir.

FORD: I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her; fee'd every slight occasion that could but 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.

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: Of what quality was your love, then?

FORD: Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

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

FORD: When I have told you that, I have told you all. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

FALSTAFF: O, sir!

FORD: Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it, 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: O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself: she is too bright to be looked against. 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: O good sir!

FALSTAFF: I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven.

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 wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favored. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer.

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

FALSTAFF: I will stare him out of his wits. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night. Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night. *Exit*

FORD: What a damned 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 fixed; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names! Lucifer, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends: but Cuckold! Wittol!--Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass: he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous. I will rather trust Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself; then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! Cuckold! *Exit*