

MISTRESS FORD: Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MISTRESS PAGE: I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me. *Exit*

MISTRESS FORD: Go to, then:        *[Enter FALSTAFF]*

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

MISTRESS FORD: O sweet Sir John!

FALSTAFF: Mistress Ford. 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.

MISTRESS 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,

MISTRESS FORD: Believe me, there is no such thing in me.

FALSTAFF: What made me love thee? let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee. I love thee; none but thee; and thou deservest it.

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

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

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

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

MISTRESS FORD: Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

**ROBIN: [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. Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE]*

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

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

MISTRESS PAGE: Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: you are undone.

MISTRESS FORD: 'Tis not so, I hope.

MISTRESS PAGE: Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor 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, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

MISTRESS FORD: What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

MISTRESS 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 deceived me! Look, here is a basket: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, and send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

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

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

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

FALSTAFF: I love thee. Help me away.