

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Cast

<i>Sir John Falstaff</i>	<i>Dinsdale Landen</i>
<i>Mistress Ford</i>	<i>Sylvestra Le Touzel</i>
<i>Mistress Page</i>	<i>Penny Downie</i>
<i>Ford</i>	<i>Nicholas Woodeson</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>Philip Jackson</i>
<i>Justice Shallow</i>	<i>Clive Swift</i>
<i>Slender</i>	<i>John Dallimore</i>
<i>Mistress Quickly</i>	<i>Susan Brown</i>
<i>Doctor Caius</i>	<i>Kenneth Jay</i>
<i>Host</i>	<i>David Cardy</i>
<i>Anne Page</i>	<i>Camilla Power</i>
<i>Fenton</i>	<i>Scott Handy</i>
<i>Evans</i>	<i>Alan David</i>
<i>Pistol</i>	<i>Chook Sibtain</i>
<i>Bardolph</i>	<i>Anthony Jackson</i>
<i>Nym</i>	<i>Rupert Mason</i>
<i>Simple</i>	<i>Andrew Fallaize</i>
<i>William</i>	<i>Pascoe Sabido</i>
<i>Robin</i>	<i>Peter England</i>
<i>Rugby</i>	<i>James Reynard</i>

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. Shallow and his cousin Slender believe themselves wronged by Falstaff and his followers. Page invites them to his house to “drink down all unkindness.” Sir Hugh Evans and Shallow encourage Slender to woo Page’s daughter Anne.

Scene 2. Sir Hugh sends Slender’s servant Simple to Mistress Quickly, housekeeper to the French doctor, Caius, with a letter asking her to intercede with Anne on Slender’s behalf.

Scene 3. Poverty-stricken, Falstaff plans to seduce Mistresses Ford and Page, the “Merry Wives,” in order to gain access to their husbands’ purses. Having been dismissed by Falstaff, Nym and Pistol decide to reveal his scheme to Ford and Page.

Scene 4. Mistress Quickly promises Simple that she will help Slender to woo Anne. When Caius returns home, she hides Simple, but he is soon discovered. The doctor, who also loves Anne, rants furiously against Sir Hugh. Later, Quickly encourages Fenton, another of Anne’s suitors, though she privately believes the girl is not interested in him.

ACT II

Scene 1. Mistresses Ford and Page are incensed to receive Falstaff’s identical letters. They decide to revenge themselves by pretending to encourage his advances. Meanwhile, Ford and Page have learnt of Falstaff’s designs upon their wives. Shallow brings news that Sir Hugh and Dr. Caius are to fight a duel. Ford meets Falstaff, introducing himself as “Brook”—he hopes thereby to prove his wife either innocent or guilty.

Scene 2. Quickly brings a message to Falstaff from Mistress Ford, instructing him to visit her. Brook/Ford offers Falstaff money to woo Mistress Ford on his behalf. Falstaff brags that he already has an appointment with the lady; Ford is violently jealous and determines to prevent the meeting.

Scene 3. In a field near Windsor, Caius waits for Sir Hugh and their appointed duel. The Host begs him to “throw cold water on thy choler” and to leave the field, promising to take him to Anne Page.

ACT III

Scene 1. Sir Hugh arrives at a field near Frogmore, expecting to find Caius. When he finally appears, the Host reconciles the two, admitting that he deliberately directed them to different places, hoping to avoid a fight.

Scene 2. Ford meets Mistress Page and learns that her boy Robin was a gift from Falstaff; he is convinced that Page is blind to his wife’s infidelity. Page supports Slender’s suit to Anne, but is opposed to Fenton; his wife is for Caius.

Scene 3. Falstaff arrives at Mistress Ford's. As planned, Mistress Page arrives, with news of Ford's imminent return. The two women hide Falstaff in the dirty laundry basket and once he is well covered with foul linen, servants carry the basket away to dump its contents in a muddy ditch. Ford orders a search of the house and is thoroughly chastened when his wife is proved innocent.

Scene 4. When Page rejects Fenton, the young lovers appeal to Mistress Page. She promises Fenton that she will follow her daughter's wishes.

Scene 5. At the Garter Inn, Falstaff fulminates at his treatment by the ladies. Quickly arrives with a message from Mistress Ford expressing regret and begging him to visit her. Falstaff recounts the story of the laundry basket to Brook/Ford, embellishing, however, by claiming that he had already "embraced, kissed, protested." He then tells Brook/Ford of his appointment with Mistress Ford, making him still more jealous.

ACT IV

Scene 1. Sir Hugh hears young William Page's lessons and Quickly comically misunderstands the Latin and grammar.

Scene 2. Falstaff is with Mistress Ford when Mistress Page arrives announcing Ford's approach. They dress Falstaff in a gown belonging to "the fat woman of Brainford," not disclosing, however, that Ford loathes her and has threatened to beat her. Ford unpacks the laundry basket and, finding it empty of anything but linen, he turns upon the old woman (Falstaff), beating him out of the house.

Scene 3. The Host resolves to get payment from some Germans who have taken over his inn for the past week.

Scene 4. The Fords and Pages, with Sir Hugh, plot a final humiliation for Falstaff. The women will persuade him to a midnight tryst in Windsor Forest, telling him to go dressed as the mythical figure Herne the Hunter. Meanwhile, Sir Hugh and various children, attired as fairies, will appear and pinch Falstaff into a confession. Page intends this to be Slender's opportunity to elope with Anne, whilst his wife has similar ideas for Caius.

Scene 5. The Host has been duped by the Germans who are known tricksters. Quickly brings a letter from Mistress Ford to a bruised and aggrieved Falstaff.

Scene 6. Anne intends to elope with Fenton. The Host will organize a priest to marry them.

ACT V

Scene 1. Falstaff has agreed to the meeting and tells Brook/Ford to go to the forest that night.

Scene 2. Page and Slender await the "fairies." Slender will identify Anne by her white dress.

Scene 3. Mistress Page tells Caius that Anne, dressed in green, will elope with him that night.

Scene 4. Sir Hugh hides with the "fairies."

Scene 5. The midnight assignation takes place, complete with Evans, Pistol and Quickly dressed as sprites. The Pages and Fords appear and reveal all to Falstaff. Slender and Caius arrive having discovered that they each eloped with a masked boy. When Anne and Fenton arrive, married, Page wishes them joy and his wife invites everybody to "laugh this sport o'er by a country fire."

Track list

Disc 1

Track 1	Act I	Scene i
Track 2	Act I	Scene ii
Track 3	Act I	Scene iii
Track 4	Act I	Scene iv
Track 5	Act II	Scene i
Track 6	Act II	Scene ii
Track 7	Act II	Scene iii
Track 8	Act III	Scene i
Track 9	Act III	Scene ii

Disk 2

Track 1	Act III	Scene iii
Track 2	Act III	Scene iv
Track 3	Act III	Scene v
Track 4	Act IV	Scene i
Track 5	Act IV	Scene ii
Track 6	Act IV	Scene iii
Track 7	Act IV	Scene iv
Track 8	Act IV	Scene v
Track 9	Act IV	Scene vi
Track 10	Act V	Scene i
Track 11	Act V	Scene ii
Track 12	Act V	Scene iii
Track 13	Act V	Scene iv
Track 14	Act V	Scene v