

SCENE 1 (FROM *MERRY WIVES* ACT 1, SCENE 3)

SITTING AT A TABLE, PISTOL AND NYM STAND ON EITHER SIDE BEHIND HIM. FALSTAFF FINISHES HIS DRINK (A STEIN?) AND FISHES IN HIS POCKET FOR MONEY AND PULLS OUT 2 COINS.

MISTRESSES FORD AND PAGE ONSTAGE?

FALSTAFF

Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

PISTOL

Why, then, let kibes ensue.

FALSTAFF

There is no remedy. I must cony-catch, I must shift.

If Mistresses Ford and Page start onstage, they can laugh - Ford can laugh a la the Nanny and they exit here.

NYM

Young ravens must have food.

FALSTAFF

Which of you know Ford of this town?

PISTOL

I ken the wight. He is of substance good.

FALSTAFF

My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

NYM

Two yards and more.

FALSTAFF

No quips now, Pistol. Briefly, I do mean to make
love to Ford's wife. I spy entertainment in her. She
discourses; she carves; she gives the leer of invitation.
The hardest voice of her behavior is "I am Sir John Falstaff's."

PISTOL *aside to Nym*

He hath studied her well and
translated her will—out of honesty into English.

NYM *aside to Pistol*

The anchor is deep. Will that humor pass?

FALSTAFF

Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of
her husband's purse. I have writ me here a
letter to her; and here another to Page's wife, who
even now gave me good eyes too.

She bears the purse too.

Go bear thou this letter to Mistress Page—and thou this to Mistress

Ford. We will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Page holds up "applause sign" and audience claps.

Director indicates to "cut" and the scene shifts.

SCENE 2 *(From Merry Wives Act 2, scene 1)*

Mistress Page (a la Peg Bundy from Married With Children) is in her home reading Falstaff's letter.

MISTRESS PAGE

What, have I 'scaped love letters in
the holiday time of my beauty, and am I now a
subject for them? Let me see.

(She reads.)

*Ask me no reason why I love you. You are not young;
no more am I.*

*You are merry; so am I. You love sack,
and so do I. Would you desire better sympathy? Let
it suffice thee, Mistress Page that I love thee.*

*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.*

(end of letter)

What is this! O wicked, wicked
world! What an unweighed behavior hath this drunkard
picked out of my conversation,
that he dares in this manner assay me?
How shall I be revenged on him? For revenged I
will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Enter Mistress Ford (a la Fran Drescher from The Nanny) with her letter from Falstaff - should look identical. PAGE can be cued in by DIRECTOR point.

MISTRESS FORD

Mistress Page! Trust me, I was going to
your house.

MISTRESS PAGE

And, trust me, I was coming to you.

MISTRESS FORD

O Mistress Page, give me some
counsel.

MISTRESS PAGE

What's the matter, woman?

MISTRESS FORD

Here, read, read.

She gives a paper to Mistress Page, who reads it.

What tempest threw this
whale ashore
at Windsor? 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?

MISTRESS PAGE

Letter for letter, but that the name of
Page and Ford differs! To thy great comfort in this
mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin brother of
thy letter.

She gives a paper to Mistress Ford, who reads it.

I warrant he hath a thousand of
these letters writ with blank space for different names.

MISTRESS FORD

Why, this is the very same—the very
hand, the very words. What doth he think of us?

MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, I know not.

MISTRESS FORD

I will consent to act any villainy
against him that may not sully the chariness of our
honesty.

MISTRESS PAGE

Let's consult together against this greasy
knight. Come hither.

"Applause"

"Cut"

Change to FORD'S house. This could be indicated by changing a blanket on the back of a folding chair. Perhaps M. Ford and M. Page review their scripts as things are being set. Maybe Falstaff appears on the side for a make-up touch up.

Scene 3 *(From Merry Wives Act 3, Scene 3)*

MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE begin onstage with the LAUNDRY BASKET (maybe something large and collapsible and filled with used laundry). In Mistress Ford's house.

MISTRESS FORD

Be gone, and come when you are called.

MISTRESS PAGE

I'll go hide me.

MISTRESS FORD

Do so.

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

MISTRESS PAGE

I warrant thee. If I do not act it, hiss me.

MISTRESS PAGE exits. SIR JOHN enters.

FALSTAFF

Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?

Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough.

O, this blessed hour! *(this is not iambic pentameter even though it appears that way)*

MISTRESS FORD

O, sweet Sir John!

FALSTAFF

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.

MISTRESS 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.

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.

During the previous 3 lines, FALSTAFF and FORD should move closer together and begin flirting.

A KNOCK created by FORD - she is ready to get away from FALSTAFF. Maybe he leans in for a kiss and she gets out of it for him to tumble (during and after the line below)

MISTRESS FORD

Here's Mistress Page at the door!

FALSTAFF searches for a hiding place and ultimately throws a blanket over himself (while still standing) - or something similarly ridiculous.

FALSTAFF

She shall not see me.

MISTRESS PAGE enters.

MISTRESS FORD

What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE

OVERACTED AND BAD UNTIL CALMED DOWN BY FORD.

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.

FALSTAFF gasps and begins struggling under his blanket (he can struggle later if that ends up being funnier). FORD and PAGE laugh and struggle to "stay in character."

MISTRESS PAGE

I come before to tell you. If
you have a friend here, convey, convey him out.

MISTRESS FORD

What shall I do? There is a gentleman!

MISTRESS PAGE

Look, here is a basket. If he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking.

MISTRESS FORD

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

FALSTAFF emerges in a panic.

FALSTAFF

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.

FORD and PAGE giggle to each other and then look solemnly at FALSTAFF as he pulls out a piece of laundry. (2 separate beats)

DIRECTOR indicates a cut and wrap - possibly with pulled text. PAGE holds applause sign and AUDIENCE complies. PAGE, FORD, AND FALSTAFF congratulate each other.

"Thank you."

CREW members clear camera, boom, etc. LIVE STUDIO AUDIENCE clears benches. ACTORS clear remaining set pieces and props.