



Welcome



to the 2005 APT Education Viewing Guide
for William Shakespeare's



The Merry Wives of Windsor

AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE
P.O. BOX 819
SPRING GREEN, WI 53588
(608) 588-7401

*Cover Photo: Colleen Madden as Mistress Ford, Kathleen Pirkle Tague as Mistress Page and Jason O'Connell as Falstaff

This study guide is designed to be an interactive compliment to American Players Theatre's production of William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Commentary is primarily based on this particular production, however we do include some information from past productions by APT to use as a contrast.

The amount of information available about William Shakespeare and the play is overwhelming, so this guide is not meant to be a comprehensive source. Rather, it is a supplement to your studies that is production specific. We have suggested several sources to pursue further research in the bibliography section of the guide.

All APT production photos included in this guide are by Zane B. Williams.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the exercises or the information within, please contact David Daniel, APT Education Director, 608-588-7402 x112 or at education@americanplayers.org.

For more information about APT's educational programs, please visit our website at www.playinthewoods.org.

A special thank you to Sarah Kooiman, APT Administrative Intern, for researching and compiling the material in this study guide.

We are grateful to our 2005 Major Education Sponsors for helping to make our program possible:



Go in with us and see...

I cannot tell what the dickens his name is...

p2

So many characters with so much going on! What's a person to do? Fear not. The crazy relationships in the play are enough to make your head spin, but our introduction to the characters will help sort out who's who and what they're up to.

This is the short and the long of it...

p5

If you're new to the play or just want to refresh your memory, take a look at our summary of the plot. It gives you a basic guide to the key moments in the play.

I am in the waist two yards about...

p8

Sir John Falstaff is one of Shakespeare most popular characters and he takes center stage in this play. We show you four very different Falstaffs that have taken the stage at APT.

Only give me so much of your time...

p9

To understand the present, we must first explore the past. Our little history lesson gives you the back-story about the writing of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as well as some of the historical references in the play itself.

If money go before, all ways do lie open...

p14

Such is the stuff essays are made of! We'll take a look at some themes and motifs, exploring what's going on beneath the surface of the action.

Here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English...

p15

You might recognize a few of the one-liners in this play because they have stuck around through the centuries to enter our every-day speech. We'll point out just a few of them for you.

Speak scholarly and wisely...

p16

We've drawn from the best teachers, guides, games and exercises to help you explore the inner workings of the play and the APT Production.

Is this a vision?

P22

Nope, it's probably just a DVD or VHS. We present you with a few productions and adaptations that may be of particular interest.

And there's my harvest-home-page...

p24

If you'd like to venture further into the world of the play, the playwright, or just like surfing the web, we've got a few suggestions to get you started.

I cannot tell what the dickens his name is...

Here are the characters from APT's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.



Sir John Falstaff – First introduced in the *Henry IV* plays. Falstaff is a knight and a scoundrel. Although his intentions are sometimes misguided and he is known to be a drunk and a thief, he is one of Shakespeare's most popular characters thanks to his boisterous, lively and mischievous personality.

Pistol, Nym and Bardolph – Followers of Falstaff. When Falstaff can no longer afford to pay his cronies, Bardolph becomes a tapster for the Host. Pistol and Nym are dismissed by Falstaff, so they reveal his plans to Ford and Page.

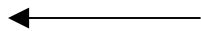


Mistress Margaret Page – Wife to Master Page and friend to Mistress Ford. Mistress Page works in cahoots with Mistress Ford to lead on Falstaff and humiliate him. She disagrees with her husband over who should marry their daughter, Anne Page. While Mistress Page favors Dr. Caius, both Master Page and Anne have other ideas.

Mistress Alice Ford – Wife to Master Ford and friend to Mistress Page. Mistress Ford uses tricks and traps to teach Falstaff a lesson and to prove to her jealous husband that she is indeed a faithful wife.



Master Frank Ford – Husband to Mistress Ford. Master Ford is a very jealous man. He dons a disguise to infiltrate Falstaff's plans and prove his wife an adulteress, but ends up learning a lesson about himself instead.



Master George Page – Husband to Mistress Page. Master Page is a rather easy-going guy. He trusts his wife's fidelity, but disagrees with her choice in suitor for their daughter. Master Page supports Slender in his suit for Anne's hand, but Anne's heart is turned elsewhere.



Anne Page – Daughter of Master and Mistress Page. Several suitors court Anne, both for her beauty and for her inheritance. Anne loves Fenton, of whom her father disapproves and her mother does not favor. What will she do?

Fenton – Though high-born, Fenton does not impress Master and Mistress Page enough for them to accept his suit for Anne Page's hand. Fortunately, Anne loves him and with the help of a few go-betweens, they create a secret plan.



Dr. Caius – Favored by Mistress Page as a suitor for Anne. Caius is French and is frequently teased for his accent. He challenges Sir Hugh Evans to a duel that the Host uses as an opportunity to end their quarrel and have a good laugh.



Abraham Slender – The final suitor for Anne Page's hand, Slender is Master Ford's choice. At Shallow's urging, Slender makes several attempts to speak eloquently to Anne, but ends up just blubbing nonsense.

Robert Shallow – An old country Justice of the Peace. Shallow encourages Slender in his pursuit of Anne Page and even speaks for him at times. He is a rather foolish character himself.



Sir Hugh Evans – A local clergyman. Sir Hugh is Welsh and, like Dr. Caius, is made fun of for his accent and use of English. He eventually takes a leading role in the final humiliation of Falstaff.



Mistress Quickly – Although she is technically Dr. Caius' servant, Mistress Quickly becomes a messenger for just about everyone. She acts as a liaison to Anne Page from her suitors and even gets involved in the tricks being played on Falstaff.

Host – Host of the Garter Inn. The Host saves Caius and Evans from dueling while having a few laughs at their expense. He also helps Fenton in his pursuit of Anne Page.



John Rugby – Servant to Dr. Caius.

Peter Simple – Servant to Slender.



Robin – Page to Falstaff.

John – Servant to the Fords.

Robert – Servant to the Fords.

This is the short and the long of it...

Using various APT production photos and classical artwork, we take you through the key moments in the play.



"I will marry her, sir..."

At Shallow's suggestion, Slender agrees to court Anne Page.



"I am about thrift..."

Falstaff needs money, so he discharges his followers and reveals a plan to woo Mistresses Ford and Page for their money.



"By gar, it is a shallenge..."

Dr. Caius discovers that Sir Hugh Evans is encouraging Slender's suit to Anne Page, so he challenges him to a duel.



"Here's the twin brother of thy letter..."

Mistress Page and Mistress Ford receive identical love letters from Falstaff and they plot how to be revenged on him.



"The horn, I say..."

Pistol and Nym tell Ford and Page of Falstaff's plot. Ford vows to further explore the matter in disguise



"She hath received your letter..."

Mistress Quickly arranges a meeting time for Falstaff and Mistress Ford when her husband won't be home.



"Thou shalt lie with his wife..."

Ford comes to the Garter Inn disguised as "Brook" and pays Falstaff to seduce Mistress Ford for him. Falstaff tells Ford of his appointed meeting time.



"Boys of art, I have deceived you both..."

The Host admits to Caius and Evans that he sent them to the wrong places for their duel.



"We'll teach him to know turtles from jays..."

Mistress Page warns Mistress Ford and Falstaff that Ford is coming home. Falstaff narrowly escapes in a buck-basket and is thrown in the river.



"The water swells a man..."

Though cold and wet, Falstaff accepts a quart of sack and a second invitation to visit Mistress Ford.



"I have my belly full of ford..."

Ford returns to the Garter Inn as Brook and learns of Falstaff's escape in the basket. Ford vows to catch him the next time.



"He beat him most pitifully..."

Falstaff is nearly caught again, but escapes in the disguise of an old woman whom Ford thinks is a witch. Ford chases him out of the house, beating him all the while.



"Marry, this is our device..."

The wives tell their husbands the entire story and they devise a final humiliation for Falstaff.



"Pinch him for his villainy!"

Falstaff comes to the forest and the townspeople, disguised as fairies, pinch him repeatedly.



"She's a great lubberly boy!"

During the commotion, Anne Page sneaks away with Fenton while Slender and Caius elope with boys in disguise.



"Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?"

The trick is finally revealed to Falstaff.



"Heaven give thee joy!"

Fenton and Anne return married. All is forgiven in the end.

I am in the waist two yards about...

Sir John Falstaff appears in three plays by Shakespeare: *Henry IV, part 1*, *Henry IV, part 2*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He quickly became a favorite of Shakespeare's audiences, as he continues to be today. The rotund Falstaff has graced the APT stage four times, including the most recent portrayal by Jason O'Connell. All of them have been distinctly different in design and in character.

What would your Falstaff look like?



Randall Duk Kim as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1984.



Stephen Hemming as Falstaff in *Henry IV, part 1*, 1993.



Jonathan Smoots as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1996.



Jason O'Connell as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2005.

Only give me so much of your time...

Background and history of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Composition

The Merry Wives of Windsor was entered in the Stationers' Register on January 18, 1602, and was printed in the same year with the title *A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr John Falstaffe, and the merrie Wives of Windsor...As it hath bene divers time Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines servants. Both before her Majestie, and else-where.*

The Merry Wives exists in two quite different versions: the Q (quarto) version of 1602, reprinted in 1619, and the F (folio) version of 1623. The progress of the plot is essentially the same in both versions, but the lengths are notably different: 1,624 lines in Q as opposed to 3,018 lines in F. It is generally agreed that the folio version is the more complete and authentic one. Accounting for the difference between Q and F there could be three possible causes: 1) The garbling, by a *reporter*, of the play as actually performed on the stage; 2) the cutting and possible rewriting of the text for acting purposes by a stage *adapter*; and 3) the working over, by an authorized *reviser*, of the original text (the quarto) and the production of a new version (the folio text).

Almost all modern critics have fixed the play between 1596 and 1601. All efforts to place the date in 1596-97 relate to the legend that Shakespeare wrote the play at the command of Queen Elizabeth. The legend is of doubtful authenticity, starting, it seems, when John Dennis in 1702 claimed knowledge that the play was written at the request of Queen Elizabeth who 'commanded it to be finished in fourteen days'. Nicholas Rowe in 1709 embellished the tradition by saying that the Queen asked to see Falstaff 'in love';

She was so well pleas'd with that admirable Character of Falstaff, in the two Parts of Henry the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more, and to shew him in Love. This is said to be the Occasion of his Writing The Merry Wives of Windsor. How well she was obey'd the Play it self is an admirable Proof.

The overwhelming majority of scholars have accepted the story, probably because it so neatly accounts for the startling change in the circumstance of Falstaff, the presence of the characters from the histories in what otherwise seems a contemporary domestic comedy, and for the signs of haste throughout the play.

William Green argues that the play was composed for the annual celebration of the Feast of Saint George, April 23, 1597. This feast was a key ceremonial of the Order of the Garter the year in which George Carey, patron of Shakespeare's company, a favorite of Queen Elizabeth, and the new Lord Chamberlain, was initiated into the order. Certainly the play's many references to the Order of the Garter would have been appreciated by such an audience.

This is the most English of Shakespeare's comedies. No explicit source for the play has been found. The scene where Falstaff hides in a basket of soiled linen could derive from a common motif in Italian stories. Herne the Hunter is a character from English folklore. The outwitting of the would-be lover is an ancient literary convention exemplified in many French fabliaux, in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, and late in numerous popular comedies.

Order of the Garter

The Order of the Garter is the most senior and the oldest British Order of Chivalry and was founded by Edward III in 1348. The Order, consisting of the King and twenty-five knights, was intended by Edward III to be reserved as the highest reward for loyalty and for military merit.

Like the Prince of Wales (the Black Prince), the other founder-knights had all served in the French campaigns of the time, including the battle of Crécy - three were foreigners who had previously sworn allegiance to the English king: four of the knights were under the age of 20 and few were much over the age of 30.

The origin of the emblem of the Order, a blue garter, is obscure. It is said to have been inspired by an incident which took place whilst the King danced with Joan, Countess of Salisbury. The Countess's garter fell to the floor and after the King retrieved it he tied it to his own leg. Those watching this were apparently amused, but the King admonished them saying, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' (Shame on him who thinks this evil). This then became the motto of the Order. Modern scholars think it is more likely that the Order was inspired by the strap used to attach pieces of armour, and that the motto could well have referred to critics of Edward's claim to the throne of France.

The patron saint of the Order is St George (patron saint of soldiers and also of England) and the spiritual home of the Order is St George's Chapel, Windsor. Every knight is required to display a banner of his arms in the Chapel, together with a helmet, crest and sword and an enamelled stallplate. These 'achievements' are taken down on the knight's death (and the insignia are returned to the Sovereign), but the stallplates remain as a memorial and these now constitute one of the finest collections of heraldry in the world.

The insignia of the Order have developed over the centuries: starting with a garter and badge depicting St George and the Dragon. A collar was added in the sixteenth century, and the star and broad riband in the seventeenth century. Although the collar could not be decorated with precious stones (the statutes forbid it), the other insignia could be decorated according to taste and affordability. George IV, well-known for his vanity, left 55 different Garter badges of varying styles.

Over the years, a number of knights have been 'degraded' (for the crimes of heresy, treason or cowardice), the most recent example being the Duke of Ormond in 1715, or even executed - such as Lord Scrope of Masham (a childhood friend of Henry V), and the 3rd Duke of Buckingham in 1521. Charles I wore his Order (ornamented with over 400 diamonds) to his execution in 1649.

From the eighteenth century to 1946, appointments to the Order (and to the Order of the Thistle) were made on advice from government.

Today, the Order has returned to its original function as a mark of royal favour; Knights of the Garter are chosen personally by the Sovereign to honour those who have held public office, who have contributed in a particular way to national life or who have served the Sovereign personally. The number of knights is limited to 24 plus royal knights. For much of its history, the Garter was limited to the aristocracy, but today the knights are from varied backgrounds. If there are vacancies in the Order, appointments are announced on St George's Day (23 April).

Every June, the Knights of the Garter gather at Windsor Castle, where new knights take the oath and are invested with the insignia. A lunch is given in the Waterloo Chamber, after which the knights process to a service in St George's Chapel, wearing their blue velvet robes (with the badge of the Order - St George's Cross within the Garter surrounded by radiating silver beams - on the left shoulder) and black velvet hats with white plumes. The Queen (whose father George VI appointed her and her husband to the Order in 1947), as Sovereign

of the Order, attends the service along with other members of the Royal family in the Order, including The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales and The Princess Royal.

During the Middle Ages ladies were associated with the Order, although unlike today they did not enjoy full membership. One of the last medieval ladies to be honoured was Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII and grandmother of Henry VIII. After her death in 1509 the Order remained exclusively male, except for reigning queens as Sovereign of the Order, until 1901 when Edward VII made Queen Alexandra a lady of the Order.

In 1987, The Queen decided that women should be eligible for the Garter in the same way as men. Women are therefore included in this number and currently Lady Thatcher (formerly Margaret Thatcher, first female prime minister of Great Britain) and Lady Soames (the youngest daughter of Sir Winston Churchill, also a holder of the Order of the Garter) hold this honour.

Since the early fourteenth century, foreign monarchs have been appointed to the Order, as a means of marking and securing alliances - one of the earliest such appointments was that of the Duke of Urbino by Edward IV in 1474. Such appointments were and are occasionally made to non-Christian rulers (for example, the Shah of Persia in 1902), which prompted some debate over removing Christian imagery (the cross of St George) from the Order when it is given to non-Christian recipients; in the end, the design remained unchanged. Foreign monarchs in the Order are known as 'Stranger Knights'. These knights are in addition to the number allowed by statute, and they include the kings of Spain and Sweden and the emperor of Japan.

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page490.asp>

The Town of Windsor



Located in south central England on the Thames River, Windsor is a popular tourist destination thanks to its importance to English history and to the monarchy today. In Elizabethan times, about 70 inns enlivened Windsor. Christopher Wren designed the town hall and Grinling Gibbons did much of the wood carving in the Church of St. John the Baptist.

The town's importance derives from Windsor Castle, the chief residence of English rulers since William I. The castle was improved and rebuilt by successive sovereigns. Henry II erected the Round Tower and Edward IV began the construction of St. George's Chapel, one of the most splendid churches in England, where the Knights of the Garter are installed with medieval ceremony. In the chapel are buried several of England's kings. Some vaults are used to store art treasures, national archives, and museum collections.

The modern castle, which contains about 1,000 rooms and occupies 13 acres, consists of three "wards" – the upper, middle, and lower. In 1992 a fire in the upper ward destroyed or damaged more than 100 rooms; restoration was completed in 1997. The castle proper lies in the Home Park, and beyond it, separated by the tree-lined Long Walk, is the Great Park. In Frogmore, the royal mausoleum, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are buried.



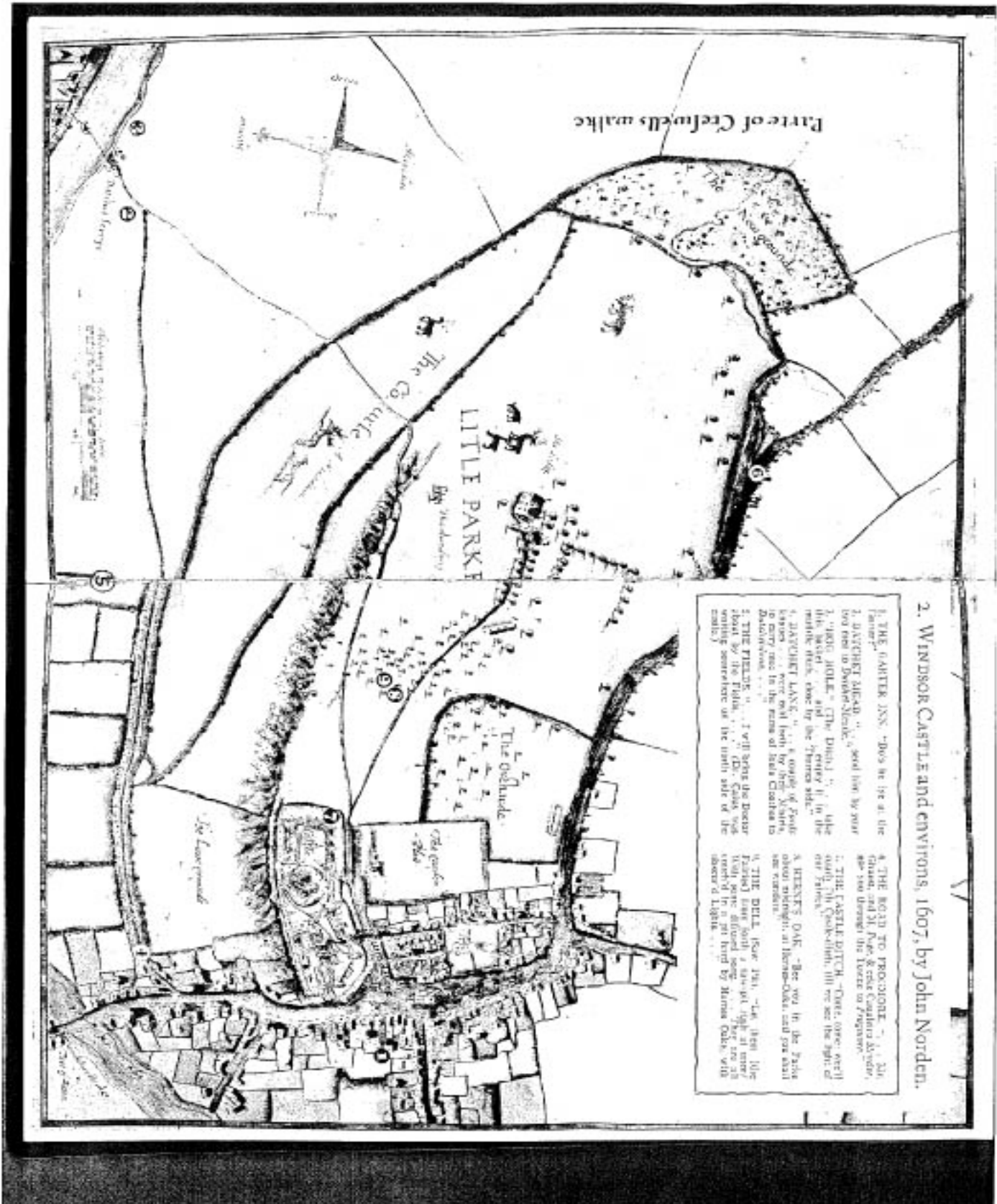
Cuckold

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

A **cuckold** is a man with an unfaithful wife. There are connotations of helplessness and humiliation attributed to the word: implications that the husband is helpless to stop her infidelity, and too cowardly to leave the wife. "Cuckold" appears in older texts as a highly insulting and pejorative term.

Cuckolds are sometimes written of as "wearing the horns of a cuckold" or just "wearing the horns". This goes back to an unsubstantiated reference to a tradition in villages of unknown European location where the community gathers to collectively humiliate a man whose wife gives birth to a child recognizably not his own. This is said to have been a parade where the hapless husband is forced to wear antlers on his head as a symbol of his wife's infidelity. Whether this actually happened or not is irrelevant to the phrase, which survived. In Italy and Spain, "horns" are a metaphor for suffering the infidelity of a partner, not limited to husbands in modern usage. The gesture of the horned hand (👊) can be used to insult the cuckold; the Italian translation, *cornuto* literally means *horned*.

The history of the word is thought to be related to the Cuckoo bird, who is known to put its eggs in another bird's nest. Some think that this points to another hallmark of the cuckold—the raising of a child that is not his own.



If money go before, all ways do lie open...

A discussion of the themes found throughout the play.

Love vs. Money

This play suggests that in Windsor, money is much more important than love in the selection of marriage partners and affairs. Anne Page is a desirable marriage prospect not only because of her appearance, but also because she is to be the heiress of her grandfather's fortune. While this makes her appealing to Slender, Mrs. Page wants Anne to marry Dr. Caius because *he* is quite wealthy and has many friends in the royal court, making him a suitable match despite many of his other unattractive qualities. The substitution of money for love is also important in the Falstaff plot, where he is motivated to woo the wives not from lust, but from a desire to gain a profit. Ford's comment that "If money go before, all ways do lie open" seems to sum up the courting rituals in Windsor. However, Ford changes his tune and by the end of the play, he proclaims, "Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate." How does this resolution apply to the rest of the play? What does it say about Ford?

Social Class and Nationality

Merry Wives is the only Shakespeare play in which the primary characters are members of the middle-class. Unlike the Bard's other comedies, this one is local. The social boundaries of Windsor are made clear by the characters' behavior toward those from outside the community. Slender's pretensions make him look like a fool, Evans is mocked for his Welsh accent, and Caius, the Frenchman, is similarly teased for his external roots. The locals are also hostile to Falstaff, though in their minds they are justified by his lecherous behavior. What are some parallels between the social classes of Elizabethan England and today? What boundaries or barriers do foreigners find in American communities? How are foreign "looks," "behavior" and "speech" used to set boundaries?

Gender Role Reversal / Cross Dressing

The play celebrates the women's autonomy and wit as they triumph over Falstaff and to some extent, their husbands. Slender and Caius both end up eloping with young boys instead of Anne and the cross-dressing mix-ups give Shakespeare a chance to poke fun at the theatrical conventions of his day, where young boys played the roles of women on-stage. So, even though Fenton ends up marrying the real Anne, the trick is on us. The boy gets the girl in audience-pleasing fashion, yet at the same moment Shakespeare reminds the audience that they have willfully believed the same falsehood accepted by Caius and Slender, thus extending the trickery of *Merry Wives* out into the auditorium's seats. Although the lovely Leah Curney will be playing Anne Page in APT's production, the boy dressed as a girl joke would not have escaped Shakespeare's audience.

Here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English...

Famous lines from and the use of language in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Famous Lines

Act 2, Scene 1: "We burn daylight."

Act 2, Scene 2: "Why, then the world's mine oyster. / Which I with sword will open."

Act 2, Scene 2: "This is the short and the long of it."

Act 3, Scene 2: "I cannot tell what the dickens his name is."

Act 3, Scene 5: "I have a kind of alacrity in sinking."

Act 3, Scene 5: "As good luck would have it"

Use of Language

Several characters in this play have a difficult time using the English language. For Sir Hugh Evans and Dr. Caius, it's because they're from another land, but Slender, it appears, is just an idiot. See if you can decipher the intent behind these lines.

EVANS:

I will knock his urinals about his knave's costard

Smite his noddles

Glad to do my benevolence

Our pribbles and prabbles

I do despise a liar as I do despise one that is false

or as I despise one that is not true

CAIUS:

Do intend vat I speak?

Come after my heel

Follow my heels

He is dead already

SLENDER:

I have matter in my head

I am not altogether an ass

I'll never be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, Godly company

If there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance.

I hope upon familiarity will grow more contempt

She shall not dismay me: I care not for that, but that I am afeard

Speak scholarly and wisely...

These activities are designed to be used in conjunction with the American Players Theatre production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. We've drawn from the best teachers, guides, games and exercises to help you explore the play and to think critically about the play in production. So, read the play and enjoy the show!

Activities included are:

<i>Take heed, have open eye...</i>	<i>p16</i>
<i>Character Diagram</i>	<i>p17</i>
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	<i>p18</i>
<i>Theme Wheel</i>	<i>p19</i>
<i>Crossword Puzzle</i>	<i>p20</i>

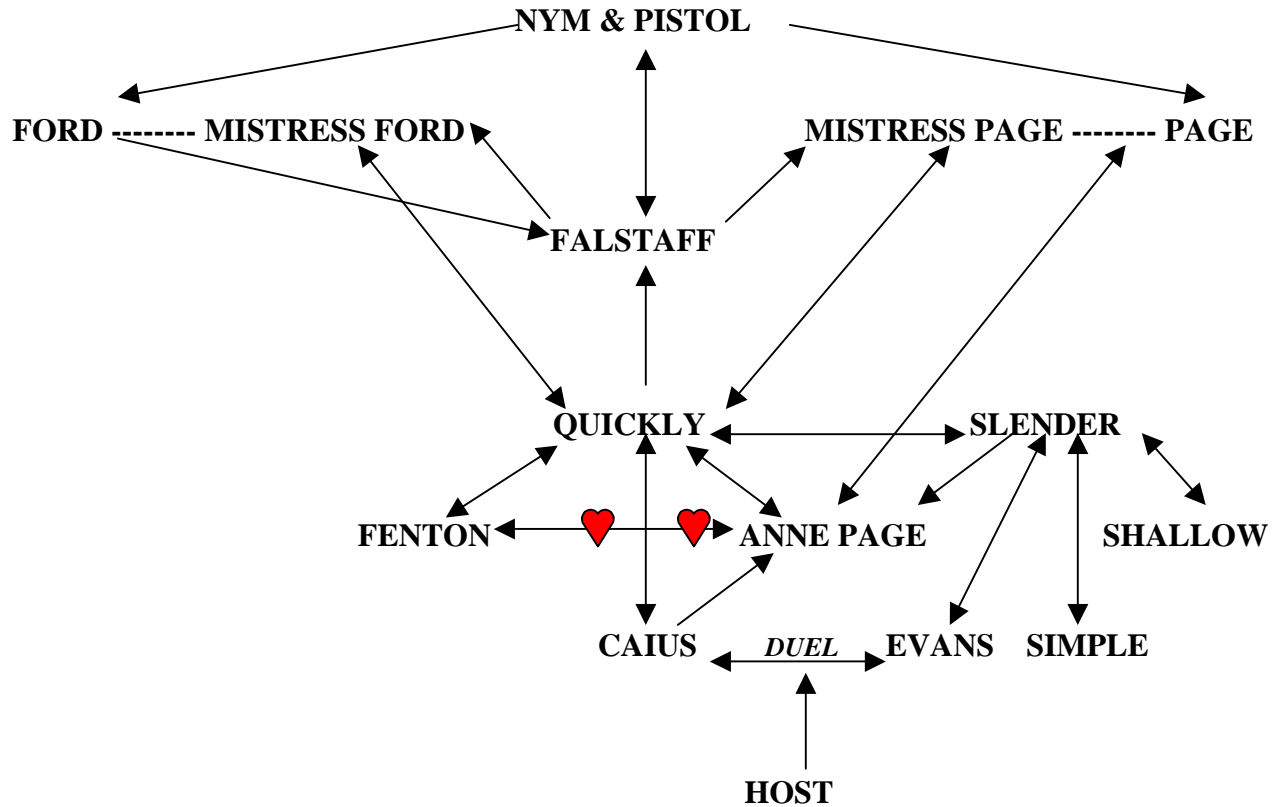
Take heed, have open eye...

The APT production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a multi-faceted show that lets the language be the star. When viewed with a critical eye, it becomes apparent that a lot of elements combine to create the performance you see. Here are some questions to consider when reading, viewing and discussing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

- How were characters' personalities expressed through their costumes?
- What do you think are the elements of a "good" performance?
- How do light, costume, scenery and sound contribute to creating the "world of the play"?
- Were the actors committed to their performance? Do you agree with the choices of the director, actors and designers? What would you have done differently?
- What flaw does each character have that they must overcome by the conclusion of the play? What are the negative implications of these flaws? How do they learn their lesson? How does this "lesson learned" appear on stage?
- Does the conclusion affirm or disavow the various schemes that took place during the scope of the play? Why or why not?
- What kind of representation of England are we given by this play?
- Consider the role of social class in this play. How are characters marked as lower-, middle-, or upper- class? What happens to this hierarchy as the play progresses? Is class dealt with differently here than in today's communities?
- Consider nationality in this play. How are some characters marked as being different than others? How are they treated? How is nationality dealt with differently than in today's world?
- Comment on trickery in this play. Does every schemer win? Does any scheme really pay off? Does any scheme always fail?
- Discuss the women in this play. What kind of freedom or autonomy do they have? What do the "merry wives" teach us? How did the actresses playing these roles convey their different characters?
- Consider marriage as it is portrayed in this play. Is there an overarching theme to the idea of marriage represented here?

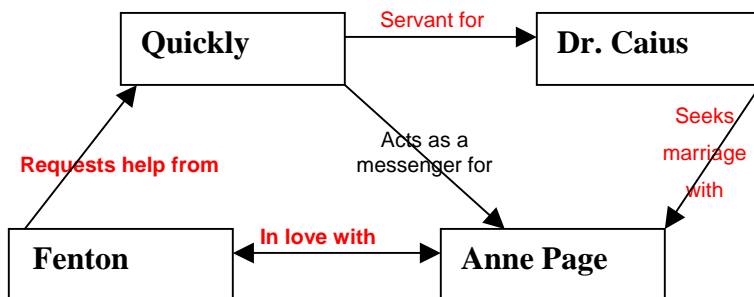
Character Diagram

This diagram illustrates how key characters relate to each other.



Create Your Own Character Relationship Diagram

Example:



Based on your reading of the play and the production you see, create your own diagram that illustrates the relationships between a handful of characters.

Who tricks whom? Who loves whom? Does anyone hate each other? Who works for whom? How do these characters feel about one another?

The Merry Wives of Minocqua

Choose one or two of the following pictures. Using your pictures as though they were production photos, write out a scene or a monologue for the new play, *The Merry Wives of Minocqua*. Let your imagination run wild as you become the playwright for this rip-roaring comedy set in northern Wisconsin.



Joseph Kenny Meadows, *Falstaff and Mistress Quickly* (1869) Wednesbury Art Gallery, England.



Richard Parkes Bonington, *Anne Page and Slender* (1825) Wallace Collection, London.



William Hogarth, *Falstaff Examining His Recruits* (1728) Lord Iveagh, London UK.



George Clint, *Falstaff's Assignation of Mrs. Ford* (1831). The Tate Gallery, London.



George D. Leslie, *Anne Page* (1888) "Graphic," a weekly London newspaper



James Durno, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1802) The Boydell Shakespeare Prints.



Mrs. W.H. Kendal as Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Published by Rotary Photo. London. Card No. 197D.

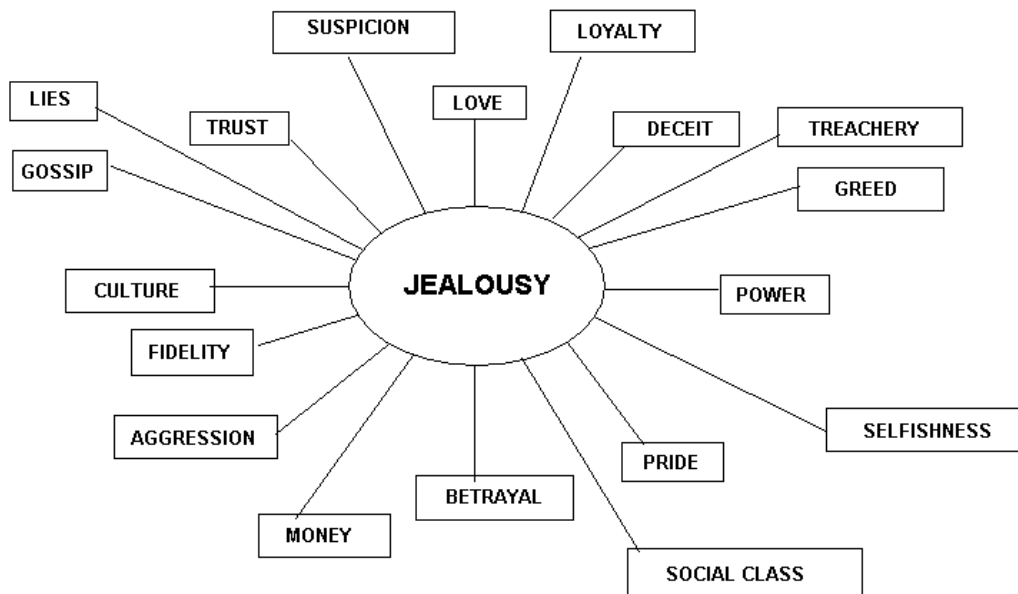


Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Photograph by Window and Grove. London.



Ellen Terry as Mistress Page, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Falstaff, Mrs. W.H. Kendal as Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This painting by John Collier is reproduced by A. E. Wilson, p. 32.

Theme Wheel



Theme Wheel Activity

Divide the class into groups of approximately five students. On the blackboard, print and circle the word *Jealousy*. Give the groups 10 minutes or so to brainstorm words, phrases and examples they associate with this word. One at a time, invite representatives of each group to come up to the board and write down one of their ideas, drawing a line to the first word and explaining to the class the connection. For example:

Jealousy and Greed: Greed for money can lead to jealousy of those who are rich.

As students add their words, slowly a web or spoked wheel will form. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers in this exercise; it is free association, so long as some kind of connection can logically be drawn to the initial word.

Once the spokes are formed, ask students to randomly choose a character from the play and choose three words from the board which they might associate with that character. Then, explain how the words and the character are connected. For example:

Ford: *Suspicion – Fidelity – Jealousy:* Ford develops suspicion about his wife’s fidelity and he ends up in a fit of jealousy.

Following the exercises and discussion, students will repeat the process in their own notebooks, using a word of their own choosing which relates to one of the central themes in *Merry Wives*.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR CROSSWORD

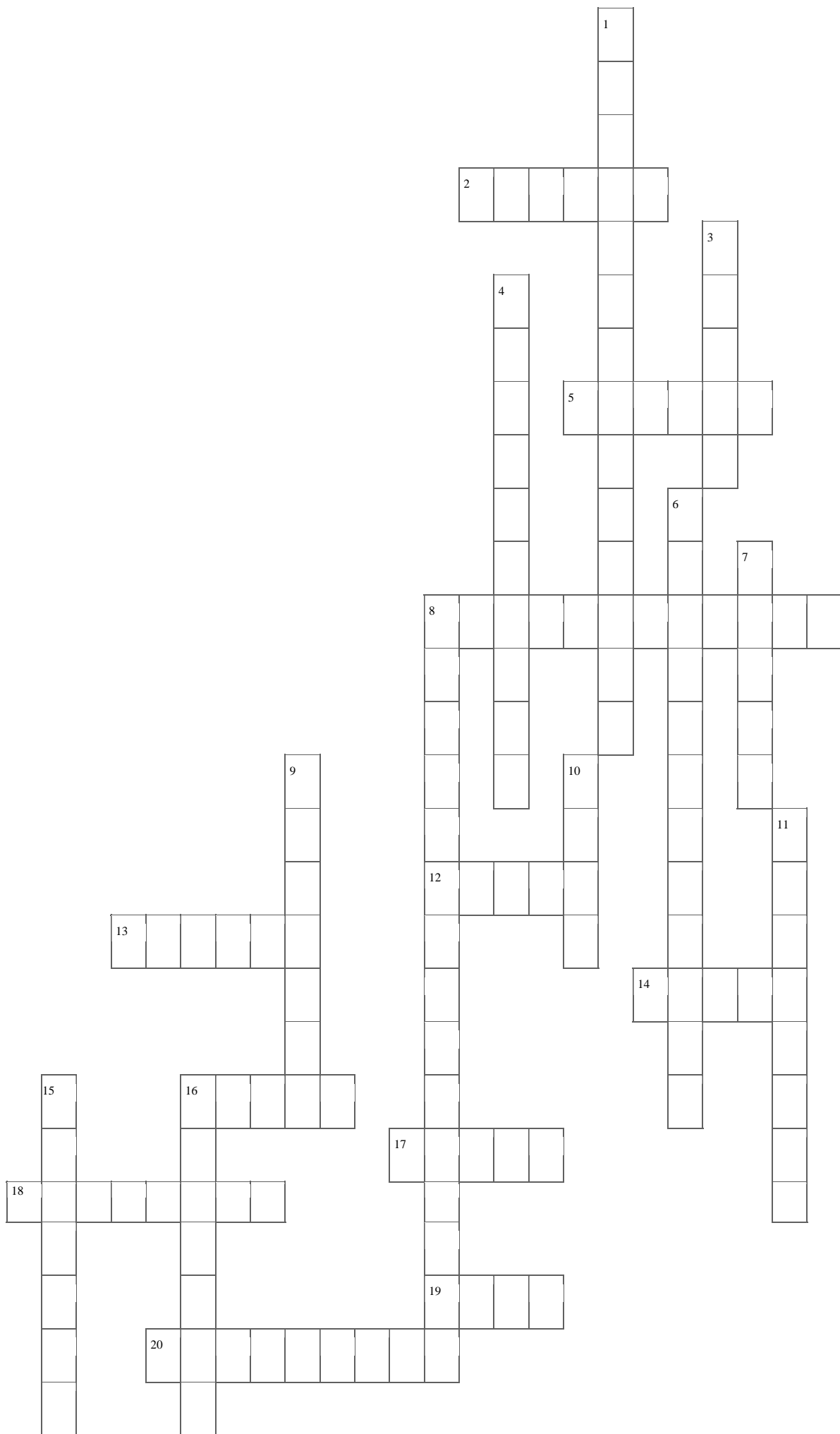
Created by Sarah Kooiman using *Eclipse Software*

Across

- 2) ORDER OF THE _____
- 5) _____ AND NYM TURN ON
FALSTAFF AND REVEAL HIS
PLAN TO FORD AND PAGE
- 8) MARRIED TO A VERY JEALOUS MAN
- 12) THE WELSH PARSON
- 13) THE WINNER OF ANNE PAGE'S
HAND
- 14) TEASED FOR HIS FRENCH ACCENT
- 16) "THIS IS THE _____ AND THE
LONG OF IT."
- 17) FALSTAFF IS DISGUISED AS AN
OLD WOMAN WHOM FORD
THINKS IS A _____
- 18) TRICKS HER PARENTS AND ELOPES
- 19) "AS GOOD _____ WOULD HAVE
IT..."
- 20) LACKEY TO THE FRENCHMAN

Down

- 1) RUMORED TO HAVE REQUESTED TO
SEE FALSTAFF IN LOVE
- 3) MASTER FORD'S DISGUISE
- 4) FALSTAFF'S MEANS OF ESCAPE
- 6) RECIEVES THE SAME LETTER AS
HER FRIEND ALICE
- 7) FALSTAFF WEARS _____ WHEN HE
MEETS THE WIVES AT THE OAK
TREE
- 8) DELIVERS MESSAGES FOR JUST
ABOUT EVERYONE
- 9) PAGE'S PREFERRED SUITOR FOR
ANNE
- 10) PLAYS A TRICK ON CAIUS AND
EVANS
- 11) ROBUST KNIGHT WITH A
PREFERENCE FOR SACK AND
WEALTHY WOMEN
- 15) QUIET, MIDDLE-CLASS ENGLISH
TOWN
- 16) A COUNTRY JUSTICE OF THE
PEACE



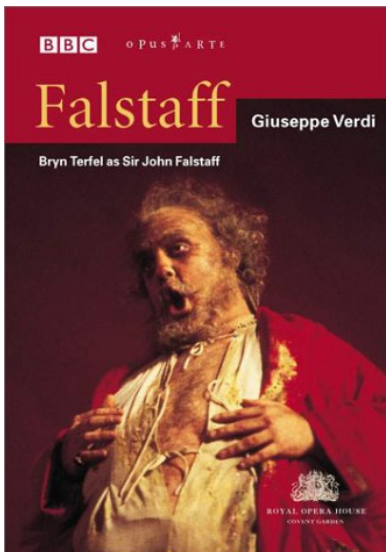
Is this a vision?

Film versions and adaptations of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and the character of Falstaff.



Chimes at Midnight (1966); Directed by: Orson Welles. Black & White. VHS.

Considered Orson Welles' final masterpiece, this powerful and poignant epic was inspired by Shakespeare's plays "Henry IV," "Henry V," "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and "Richard II." Welles stars as Falstaff, the surrogate father of Prince Hal, who shuns Falstaff's friendship when he ascends to the throne of his real father, Henry IV. AKA: "Falstaff."



Falstaff (2001); Opera by Giuseppe Verdi. Royal Opera House. DVD.

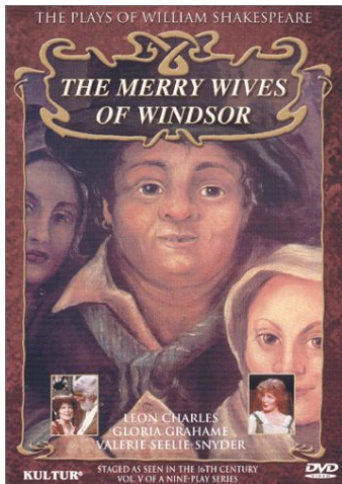
The spectacular opening of London's newly restored Royal Opera House brings a riot of color to Verdi's great Shakespearean masterpiece.



Falstaff (1983); Opera by Giuseppe Verdi. Royal Opera Covent Garden. VHS.

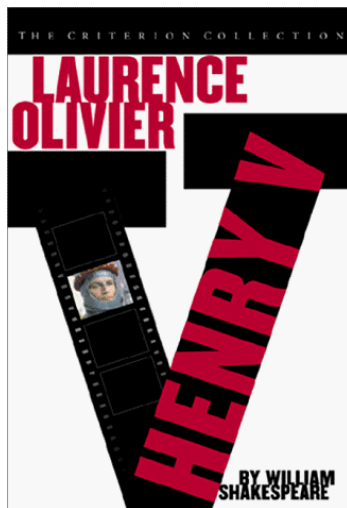
Verdi's last opera (and only his second comedy) is one of the glories of the repertoire and one of history's finest operatic adaptations of Shakespearean material.

It is very much an ensemble performance, but there are excellent individual performances, singing and acting. The sets and costumes create a proper Elizabethan atmosphere.



The Plays of William Shakespeare, Vol. 5 – The Merry Wives of Windsor (1970); Starring: Leon Charles, Gloria Grahame. DVD.

Fairly simple, this production is a timeless comedy about marital fidelity staged as seen in the 16th Century.



Henry V – Criterion Collection (1946); Directed by: Laurence Olivier. DVD.

This adaptation shows Britons taking courage from this tale of a king who surmounts overwhelming odds and emerges victorious. This sumptuous Technicolor® rendering features a thrilling recreation of the battle of Agincourt, and Sir Laurence in his prime as director and actor.

***Note from APT: Though Falstaff does not appear in the text of Henry V, both these film adaptations do include references and scenes with him as background to Henry's reign.*



Henry V (1989); Directed by: Kenneth Branagh. DVD.

Henry V qualifies as the kind of film that comes along once in a decade. Branagh plays it down and dirty, seeing the bard's play through revisionist eyes, framing it as an antiwar story. Branagh gives us harsh close-ups of muddled, bloody men, and close-ups of himself as Henry, his hardened mouth and willful eyes revealing much about this land war.

What may be the crowning glory of Branagh's adaptation comes when the dazed, shaky leader wanders through battlefields, not even sure who has won. As King Hal carries a dead over the hacked-up bodies of both the English and French, you realize it is the first time Branagh has opened up the scenes: a panorama of blood and mud and death.

And there's my harvest-home-page...

BIBLIOGRAPHY / WEBOGRAPHY

General Shakespeare Resource Sites

The Shakespeare Resource Center – www.bardweb.net
Absolute Shakespeare – www.absoluteshakespeare.com
Mr. Shakespeare and the Internet - <http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>
The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust – www.shakespeare.org.uk
The Shakespeare Web – www.shakespeare.com
The Complete Works - <http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html>
Surfing with the Bard – www.shakespearehigh.com/library/surfbard
Includes detailed descriptions of Shakespeare-based “Star Trek” episodes
Shakespeare’s World - <http://shakespeare.emory.edu/index.html>
Shake Sphere - <http://cummingsstudyguides.net/xShakeSph.html#top>

Shakespeare Store

The Poor Yorick Shakespeare Catalogue – www.bardcentral.com

Background / Source Material

Wikipedia – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
Official Website of the British Monarchy – www.royal.gov.uk
 English Monarchy Lineage Charts
 Order of the Garter
 Windsor Castle

Study Guides / Lesson Plans

Kennedy Center-Arts Edge – www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org
Folger Shakespeare Library – www.folger.edu/index.cfm
Trinity Repertory Company - www.trinityrep.com

Other Relevant Sites

Spark Notes – www.sparknotes.com

Helpful Resources

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