

The Merry Wives of Windsor

3.4

Enter Master Fenton and Anne Page

FENTON

I see I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

ANNE

Alas, how then?

FENTON Why, thou must be thyself.

He doth object I am too great of birth,
And that, my state being galled with my expense, 5
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me±±
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property. 10

ANNE Maybe he tells you true.

[FENTON]

No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I wooed thee, Anne,
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value 15
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealeÁd bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

ANNE Gentle Master Fenton,

Yet seek my father's love, still seek it, sir.
If opportunity and humblest suit 20
Cannot attain it, why then±±

*Enter Justice Shallow, Master Slender [richly
dressed], and Mistress Quickly*

Hark you hither.

They talk apart

SHALLOW Break their talk, Mistress Quickly. My kinsman
shall speak for himself.

SLENDER I'll make a shaft or a bolt on't. 'Slid, 'tis but
venturing. 25

SHALLOW

Be not dismayed.

SLENDER No, she shall not dismay me.

I care not for that, but that I am afeard.

MISTRESS QUICKLY *(to Anne)* Hark ye, Master Slender would speak a word with you.

ANNE

I come to him. *(To Fenton)* This is my father's choice. 30

O, what a world of vile ill-favoured faults

Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

MISTRESS QUICKLY And how does good Master Fenton?

Pray you, a word with you.

She draws Fenton aside

SHALLOW She's coming. To her, coz! O boy, thou hadst 35
a father!

SLENDER I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell
you good jests of him.±±Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress
Anne the jest how my father stole two geese out of a
pen, good uncle. 40

SHALLOW Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

SLENDER Ay, that I do, as well as I love any woman in
Gloucestershire.

SHALLOW He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

SLENDER Ay, by God, that I will, come cut and long-tail, 45
under the degree of a squire.

SHALLOW He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds
jointure.

ANNE Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

SHALLOW Marry, I thank you for it, I thank you for that 50
good comfort.±±She calls you, coz. I'll leave you.

He stands aside

ANNE Now, Master Slender.

SLENDER Now, good Mistress Anne.

ANNE What is your will?

SLENDER My will? 'Od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest 55
indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank God; I am
not such a sickly creature, I give God praise.

ANNE I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

SLENDER Truly, for mine own part, I would little or
nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath

made motions. If it be my luck, so. If not, happy man
be his dole. They can tell you how things go better
than I can.

Enter Master Page and Mistress Page

You may ask your father: here he comes.

PAGE

Now, Master Slender.±±Love him, daughter Anne.±± 65
Why, how now? What does Master Fenton here?
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house.
I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

FENTON

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

MISTRESS PAGE

Good Master Fenton, come not to my child. 70

PAGE She is no match for you.

FENTON Sir, will you hear me?

PAGE No, good Master Fenton.±±

Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender, in.±±
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton. 75

Exeunt Page, Shallow, and Slender

MISTRESS QUICKLY (to Fenton) Speak to Mistress Page.

FENTON

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce against all checks, rebukes, and manners
I must advance the colours of my love, 80
And not retire. Let me have your good will.

ANNE Good mother, do not marry me to yon fool.

MISTRESS PAGE I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

MISTRESS QUICKLY [aside to Anne] That's my master, Master
Doctor. 85

ANNE

Alas, I had rather be set quick i'th' earth
And bowled to death with turnips.

MISTRESS PAGE

Come, trouble not yourself, good Master Fenton.
I will not be your friend nor enemy.
My daughter will I question how she loves you, 90
And as I find her, so am I affected.
Till then, farewell, sir. She must needs go in.
Her father will be angry.

FENTON

Farewell, gentle mistress.±±Farewell, Nan.

Exeunt Mistress Page and Anne

MISTRESS QUICKLY This is my doing now. `Nay', said I, 95
`will you cast away your child on a fool and a
physician? Look on Master Fenton.' This is my doing.

FENTON

I thank thee, (*giving her a ring*) and I pray thee, once
tonight

Give my sweet Nan this ring. (*Giving money*) There's
for thy pains.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Now heaven send thee good fortune! 100
Exit Fenton

A kind heart he hath. A woman would run through
fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would
my master had Mistress Anne; or I would Master
Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would Master Fenton
had her. I will do what I can for them all three, for so 105
I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word±±but
speciously for Master Fenton. Well, I must of another
errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses.
What a beast am I to slack it!

Exit