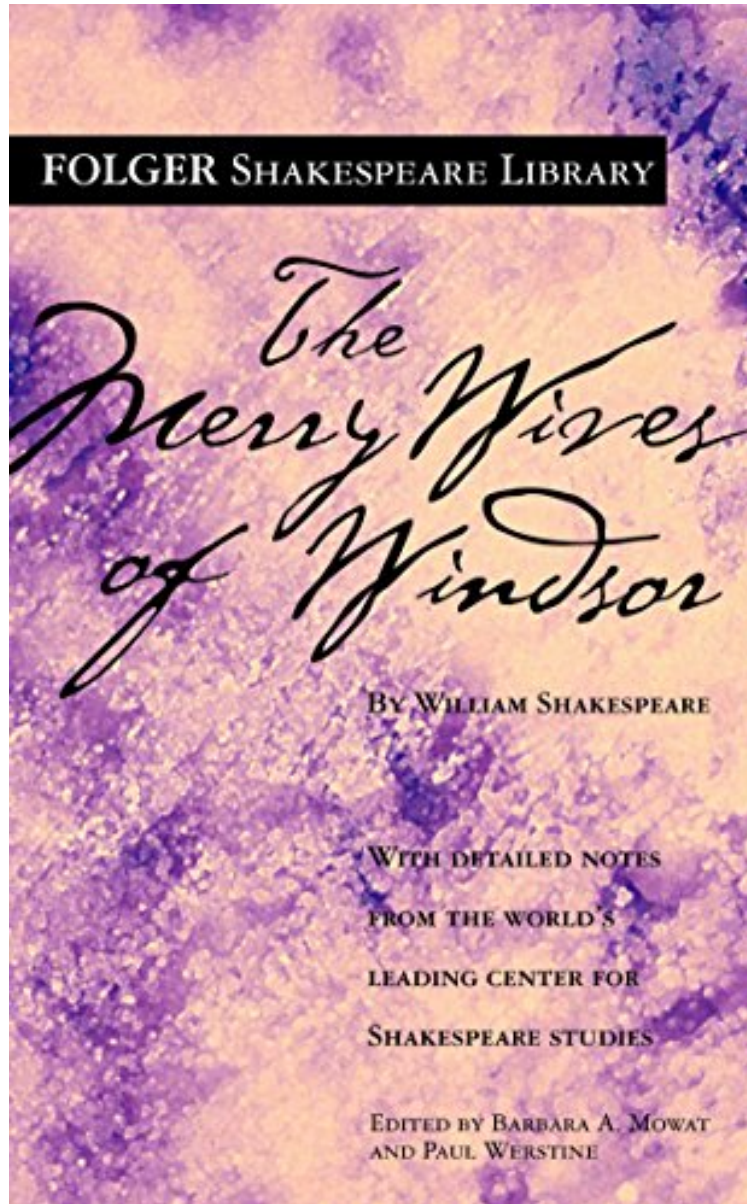


[FREE] The Merry Wives of Windsor (Folger Shakespeare Library)

The Merry Wives of Windsor (Folger Shakespeare Library)

William Shakespeare

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Shakespeare's *Merry Wives* are Mistress Ford and Mistress Page of the town of Windsor. The two play practical jokes on Mistress Ford's jealous husband and a visiting knight, Sir John Falstaff. Merry wives, jealous husbands, and predatory knights were common in a kind of play called *citizen comedy* or *city comedy*. In such plays, courtiers, gentlemen, or knights use social superiority to seduce citizens' wives. The Windsor wives, though, do not follow that pattern. Instead, Falstaff's offer of himself as lover inspires their torment of him. Falstaff responds with the same linguistic facility that Shakespeare gives him in the history plays in which he appears, making him the *hero* of the play for many audiences. The authoritative edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes: -Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play -Full explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play -Scene-by-scene plot summaries -A key to the play's famous lines and phrases -An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language -An essay by a leading Shakespeare scholar providing a modern perspective on the play -Fresh images from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books -An annotated guide to further reading Essay by Natasha Korda The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, is home to the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works, and a magnet for Shakespeare scholars from around the globe. In addition to exhibitions open to the public throughout the year, the Folger offers a full calendar of performances and programs. For more information, visit Folger.edu.

Praise for William Shakespeare: *Complete Works* "Remarkable . . . makes Shakespeare's extraordinary accomplishment more vivid than ever." —James Shapiro, professor, Columbia University, bestselling author of *A Year in the Life of Shakespeare: 1599* "A feast of literary and historical information." —The Wall Street Journal From the Back Cover According to legend, Queen Elizabeth I was so delighted with the character of Sir John Falstaff in *Henry IV, Parts I and II*, that she commanded Shakespeare to create a romantic comedy depicting the jolly old rogue in love. The obedient playwright responded with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a lively and enduring farce that offers a humorous rebuff to lechery and hypocrisy. Falstaff, whose greed and vanity overwhelm his good sense, determines to seduce a pair of well-to-do country housewives. The portly knight meets his match among the gentlewomen of Windsor, however, who counter his every stratagem with witty maneuvers of their own that expose Sir John's tomfoolery to public mirth. Familiar Shakespearean themes and devices—romance, jealousy, disguises, and mistaken identities—enrich the plot, along with a sparkling cast of supporting characters, including rival wooers, informers, and witty go-betweens. Dover (2014) unabridged republication of a standard edition. See every Dover book in print at www.doverpublications.com